Figure 1: logo for Deafness Cognition and Language (DCAL) Research Centre

Accessible Remote Working Guide *for BSL interpreters, deaf and hearing participants.*

- **Technical and physical limitations mean virtual meetings cannot operate in the same way as face-to-face meetings. For full participation and inclusion consider shortening meeting length, implement effective turn taking (vital), and be mindful of problems with individual internet connections.**
- *This guide focuses onto deaf-hearing BSL-English interactions in remote meetings. Remote working will impact on the access of other disabled people, for further information please refer to guidance compiled by the UCL Disability Equality Steering Group,: Click here for UCL Disability Equality Steering Group (DESG) Guidance*
- *These guidelines should be adapted to the needs and preferences of individuals.*
- *Please note there are likely to be revisions and updates, so these guidelines are work in progress.*

This guidance can be shared externally but the '*UCL Deafness, Cognition and Language (DCAL) Research Centre*' must be credited.

Prior to meeting

- Test, test, test if possible!
- Send as much advance preparation materials as possible e.g. agenda, minutes, slides with notes and this guide.

Interpreted meetings

- Begin the meeting with everyone visible on camera. (use Gallery View if using Zoom)
- Chair:
  - introduce themselves and the interpreters
  - explains how the meeting will work (these guidelines)
  - appoint designated persons to be visible on camera (i.e. chair & 'active visible' interpreter)
  - asks everyone else to turn their video and audio off. *Note: Reducing audio & visual clutter supports easier visibility and focus for all, helps internet bandwidth issues and effective chairing and turn-taking.*
- Unless you are a deaf sign language user, use spoken English during meetings to make modality switching easier and free up bandwidth
- Only turn on your video &/or audio and raise your hand if you want to contribute
  - Wait until chair has given the go-ahead before you start to contribute.
  - Give your name and ensure you pause for a few seconds before contributing to allow others to configure settings (e.g. change pins)
  - Turn your video off once you finish.

TIPS for Zoom users:

- Pin a video to make a certain person's video screen larger on your screen (i.e. chair or interpreter) Click here for Zoom guidance
- Hide non-video participants to reduce 'clutter' on screen: Click here for In-Meeting Controls guidance

Tips for Interpreters:

- Co-worker to turn on video when they are ready to swap. 'Active' interpreter to indicate on video when swap is imminent so that those viewing the interpreter can have time to adjust ('pin' on Zoom) settings.
- Include participant's name when starting to interpret for a new contributor.

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- Use the chat function to support 'feeding' to co-worker instead of feeding verbally as this could distract minute-taker/chair and other participants accessing the active participant.
- Have on hand a secondary device or mode of audio communication for feeding e.g. main meeting in one ear and audio feed in second ear
- You may want to consider using live captions to support misheard/missed information

Non-interpreted meetings

BSL used throughout the meeting, if BSL user(s) are present.

For groups of six or fewer, it may be workable to have everyone visible on video to facilitate a balance of visual cues. Otherwise, the chair should follow much of the above guidance (Interpreted meetings).

1. On joining the meeting, microphone on mute but camera on.
2. Once meeting starts, chair asks everyone else to switch of cameras… only chair is visible.
3. If the Chair asks you a question or you want to contribute, turn your camera on.
4. Wait until the chair invites you to start contributing – please allow a pause before contributing.
5. If more than one person wants to contribute, Chair will indicate order. Chair to ask contributors to turn off camera off until their turn.
6. Contributor turns camera off again as soon as they finish.
7. Meetings conducted in BSL with participants of varying fluency: the chair/designated fluent BSL user is responsible for repeating/clarifying contributions as needed. Note: Only recommended for occasional clarifications, where more regular translations as required, an interpreter should be used.

GENERAL NOTES:

- Reinforce eye breaks for all (cameras off helps reduce strain due to intensity of visual focus)
- Issue more regular breaks; for meetings over 1 hour, a break every 30 mins.
- Virtual meetings with mixed modalities can be challenging. Everyone should watch the interpreter who will indicate if the contributor needs to hold/slow down for smoother information relay, for adjusting technical settings (i.e. pinned video settings) or if there is a technical breakdown.
- There are delays in relaying between BSL-English and English-BSL, Deaf BSL users often fall behind in receiving information. *Chair must ensure inclusive practice throughout the meeting.*
- ONLY interrupt if URGENT – e.g. if interpreters miss information or if internet connection fails.
- Note: virtual meetings raises challenges in engaging eyegaze which makes turn-taking (and co-working) more difficult to manage.
- Consider including live captions or transcriptions (e.g. MS Teams/Otter.ai for Zoom Pro or higher accounts). This can also be useful for taking minutes and recording meeting notes. Note: ALL participants should be aware that the participant(s) using captions have a lag in receiving information compared to those directly receiving information audibly.
  TIP: Ensure good pacing of dialogue so that everyone can have an opportunity to contribute.
- Accessibility tips for Zoom & other virtual meetings, by Christian Vogler, Gallaudet University: an extensive guide

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Presentation/Talks
Preparation:
- Presenter to email copy of slides (slides must be numbered) to all participants
- Set up recommended technical settings for your device(s) depending what set up you have

Technical set-up (if using Zoom)
- One screen: Set up Zoom with Side-by-Side Mode
  - The Side by Side mode allows you to adjust size by the slide marker in the middle; whether you'd want to expand more on the pinned presenter/interpreter or slides.
  - If you are concerned about the size of your screen you may want to have the slides available for viewing offline on a separate device (e.g. tablet)
- Two screens: Set up Zoom for use with dual monitors
  - The dual monitor mode allows you to choose what content you want on each screen to help with optimal viewing e.g. have an interpreter/presenter on one screen and slides on a second screen.

Start of talk
- Everyone aside from chair, presenter and interpreters should join the meeting with video and audio off
- Allow the first few minutes to be for technical set-up and checking
- When ready to start, non-active interpreter to turn their video and audio off

During talk
- *There should be slides and two videos – presenter and active interpreter*
- Chair to introduce presenter and explain basic chairing rules (structure of talk and times and managing Q&A at end). Chair to turn video off once introductions are done
  - If you think you will have a question relevant to a specific slide, please make a note of the slide number
  - Chair will pop up/unmute briefly to give time warning(s)
  - Avoid using the chat box during a presentation unless if urgent
- Co-working interpreter will pop up on video when ready to swap and active interpreter to indicate when swap is imminent
- When presentation ends, screen share should be stopped. Chair to turn video/audio on, presenter to turn video/audio off. Allow a short break before Q&As

Q&A
To be led by presenter, but chair to moderate and check
- At the end of the talk, if you have questions type in the chat box your question(s)
- Presenter to manage questions and answer questions in the order they come up
  - Presenter to read out the name of questioner, question or give everyone time to read + verify with interpreters before answering question from questioner

Alternative less preferred option is (note – this may cause additional technical lag+load):
  - Type in 'I have a question in the chat box'. Presenter to follow questions in the order they come up. Wait for presenter to indicate when it is your turn
  - Turn your video/audio on and proceed with your question
  - When we move to the next question, please turn your video/audio off
- Chair to indicate when Q&A is drawing close and end meeting

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