

NFER Guide: Online Meeting Etiquette

Introduction

This guidance is intended to support our workforce in holding productive, inclusive and respectful online meetings.

This guide is provided to support:

Inclusive Meetings where everyone has an equal opportunity to contribute.

Engaging Meetings where participants are actively involved and prepared.

Respectful Meetings where people's time and attention are valued, and everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

Purposeful Meetings with a clear objective and outcome.

Accessible Meetings where technology and meeting practices support all participants.

This guidance is provided to support NFER colleagues and Associates who attend online meetings. It details the standards and expectations for online meetings, whether held internally or with external partners, suppliers, or clients.



Before the meeting

For meeting organisers or the chair, here are a few points to consider:

- Set a clear purpose and agenda
- Ensure a Teams link is included
- Consider whether an online meeting is the best format
- Test room technology before important meetings
- Share relevant documents and papers in advance.

As participants, it is advised that you prepare for the online meeting by:

- Reviewing documents and papers ahead of the meeting
- Joining on time
- Checking that your camera, microphone and connection are working
- Choosing a location with minimal noise and distractions, and somewhere you can stay for the full duration of the meeting
- Being ready to contribute constructively.

At the start of the meeting

The meeting organiser or chair:

- Should introduce all parties at the beginning to create a welcoming environment and stimulate engagement.

- Ensure that everyone is visible on camera, unless the format of the meeting is cameras off, which should be set by the meeting organiser or chair.
- Allow all attendees a chance to speak, unless the format of the meeting is microphones off, which should be set by the meeting organiser or chair.
- If you are waiting for participants to join, please be clear with those already in attendance when the meeting will start.
- If you can't see participants' raised hands or what's been posted in the chat because you're sharing your screen, nominate someone to alert you.

Online meeting etiquette

Camera use

Unless otherwise agreed, please have your camera switched on.. Using your camera helps with engagement during the meeting, builds relationships, and supports participation.

There may be circumstances when switching your camera off is appropriate and reasonable, such as a connectivity issue or personal circumstances. If this is the case, please make the meeting chair aware by explaining the reason at the start of the meeting or by messaging them directly.

Avoid moving around during the meeting (for example, to another room); however, if this is not possible, please turn your camera off and let the meeting chair know.

In some cases, all cameras may be turned off by the meeting organiser or chair.

Mute function

It is recommended that your microphone be muted when you are not speaking; this is to avoid background noise from conversations, notifications or other devices.

In some cases, all microphones may be muted by the meeting organiser or chair.

Participation

Please use the raise hand function during meetings. This allows the chair to manage the meeting, helps avoid interruptions, and makes space for all participants to contribute.

Teams Background

Please ensure you are in an appropriate space and that your background does not provide a distraction to others. You are welcome to use a professional virtual background.

NFER has a [Teams background](#) available for colleagues to use. This helps keep your presentations and meetings looking consistent and professional.

Recording and Transcribing

Where there is a legitimate business purpose, online meetings may be recorded and/or transcribed. All attendees must be informed before recording or transcription begins, and any

recordings or transcripts must be stored, used and deleted in accordance with NFER Data Protection Policy.

This function can be used to support formal minute-taking, allow those unable to attend to listen back, and to ensure there is an accurate record of decisions and actions.

At the end of the meeting

Before closing the meeting, the meeting organiser or chair should:

- Summarise the key points discussed and any decisions made.
- Confirm actions, owners and timescales.
- Check that participants have had an opportunity to raise any final questions or comments.
- Confirm any follow-up meetings if required.
- Remind participants of any confidentiality requirements where sensitive matters have been discussed.
- Ensure any recording or transcription is stopped.



Appropriate behaviour or conduct

All NFER colleagues and associates are expected to act in accordance with our Values and Behaviours.

In order to maintain a respectful and professional environment during online meetings, all participants should:

- Treat everyone with courtesy and respect at all times.
- Use appropriate and professional language.
- Avoid comments, jokes, images, or messages that may be offensive, discriminatory, intimidating, or harassing.
- Stay focused on the meeting and avoid distractions such as social media, unrelated messaging, or multitasking.
- Adhere to confidentiality requirements and do not record, share, or distribute meeting content unless otherwise agreed and permission granted.
- Use chat functions appropriately and only for meeting-related purposes.
- Challenge inappropriate behaviour promptly and respectfully or report concerns through appropriate channels.
- Remember that the same standards of conduct apply in virtual meetings as they do in the workplace.

All NFER colleagues and associates are expected to behave professionally and respectfully during online meetings. Any behaviour that is inappropriate, offensive, discriminatory, bullying, harassing, disruptive, or otherwise inconsistent with our values and policies will not be tolerated.

Where there are instances of such behaviour and conduct, NFER may seek to take further action, which could include an investigation and disciplinary action or the equivalent for associates.

Related Documents – NFER Employees

[Our NFER values](#)

[Anti-harassment and bullying policy 2026](#)

[Grievance Policy](#)

[Disciplinary policy and procedure](#)

[Complaints policy \(External\)](#)

Related Documents – NFER Associates

NFER Values and Behaviours for Associates (available upon request)

[Policy and training hub for Associates](#)

[Anti-harassment & Bullying Policy](#)

[Complaints Policy](#)

This document was last updated: September 2026