

Take turns to speak

Videoconferences need to be just a little more disciplined than a meeting taking place in one room. Try to avoid people talking over each other and chair meetings so that everyone gets the opportunity to speak. Allow time at the end of the session for questions.

Keep to time

Try to set a timetable and keep to it. Remember that people might need to get away to meet other commitments and, particularly with ISDN, connection time costs money.

Multipoint conferences

When there are three or more locations involved, chairing must be more disciplined. People need to be introduced, or introduce themselves, as they speak. When one person is presenting a talk, ask the other sites to mute their microphones to reduce the background noise. Techniques such as 'taking the floor', where one site's image fills the screen in all the other locations, can be useful but you will probably need some assistance from our AV technicians.

Other factsheets available include:

[Videoconferencing and teleconferencing](#)

[Room bookings](#)

[Powerpoint design for presentation](#)

[Troubleshooting Powerpoint and data protection](#)

[Business cards – ordering and re-ordering](#)

[Sprinters – printing services](#)

[Accessing the Clinical Image Library](#)

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Factsheet

Good practice Videoconferencing

Videoconferencing is very intuitive and once you have learnt the basic operation of the system you can normally concentrate on communicating much the same as if the person you're talking to is in the room with you. However, if you are not familiar with the equipment Media Studio can give you some basic instruction to get you started. Contact Bob Croft on extension 6128, bleep 152 154, or email rac1000@cam.ac.uk.

This factsheet gives advice on arranging and running a videoconference. For information on videoconferencing facilities at the Hills Road site, see our **Factsheet:** [Videoconferencing and teleconferencing at CUH and the Clinical school.](#)

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Introductions

People who are unused to videoconferencing need a few minutes to get used to communicating through a TV, so it is worth checking a few things while they settle down and become accustomed to it. Start by introducing everyone in the room. A wave has to take the place of a handshake at the beginning and end. Use a wide angle to show the whole room, then zoom in closer. Let the people at the other end know about anyone who is in the room but out of vision and confirm that they're happy to go ahead.

Explain how the meeting will run. For example, who is chairing, how participants know it is their turn to speak and whether it is OK to interrupt. You should be able to look directly at the person you are speaking to and it will look as though you are meeting their eye.

Sound and picture quality

Check that everyone can see and hear clearly. If you are not getting the view you want, ask the person at the other end to adjust their camera. Microphones should be placed close to the people you are speaking to and not near any cooling fans. If a microphone is placed on the table, check that it is not going to get buried with papers or knocked during your videoconference. Doors to noisy corridors and windows onto noisy streets should be shut. If someone is presenting at the other end it is good practice to mute your microphone to cut down on the amount of general background noise.

Pictures are heavily compressed when they are sent and that can mean that rapid movements either become juddery or reduce the overall picture quality. Try to avoid dramatic movements and, if you are presenting in PowerPoint, avoid complex slide transitions and allow a second for each new slide to settle down after switching images.

Time of day

Be sensitive to the time differences when carrying out international videoconferences. It might be lunchtime for you, but it could be breakfast time in Canada.

Catering

If you have organised tea and biscuits for your participants, suggest that your correspondent do the same at their end – otherwise it might serve to emphasise your separation. For catering on the Hills Road Campus, contact Langley Larder 01783 838918 food@langley-larder.co.uk or WRVS: 01223 244749 (x2477).

Sharing information

If you are referring to documents, or if things need to be signed, make sure there are copies at both ends. Either email documents in advance or fax them on the day. You can also use visualisers in rooms that have them to show a document using the videoconferencing system.

Protecting patients and yourself

If you are using videoconferencing for patient consultations, or to share any patient information, you must take care that it is only seen by the appropriate people and with the patient's consent.

Videoconferences are not normally recorded and patients should be reassured that the only records you make will be in their clinical notes, just as if they have come to a normal outpatient clinic.

If any recordings are made you must follow the Trust Policy, 'photography and Video recording of patients: confidentiality and consent, copyright and storage' (see the Trust document library on Connect). In particular, written informed consent should be obtained prior to making any such recording.

Turn off the self-view monitor

Some people – particularly children – get distracted by seeing themselves on the monitor. Sometimes it is best to turn the self-view monitor off after cameras have been set up.

Avoid 'off-camera' comments

The microphones used for videoconferencing are very sensitive and can pick up sound from anywhere in the room.