

VIRTUAL EVENTS HANDBOOK

In accordance with the *Policy on Virtual Events* (VPS-2)

SCOPE

This Handbook does not replace or supersede anything contained in the Virtual Events Policy ([VPS-2](#)). Unless otherwise defined herein, all capitalized terms shall have the meaning ascribed to them in the Policy.

DEFINITIONS

“Cybersecurity” means the art of protecting networks, devices, and data from unauthorized access or criminal use and the practice of ensuring confidentiality, integrity, and availability of information.

“Webinar” means a seminar presented over the web (group oriented). In most cases a webinar has a presenter and although the software might allow attendees to interact, there can be restrictions in place so that they cannot interact or see each other. Some webinar tools allow for questions to the presenter only and are usually features that can be turned on and off.

BEST PRACTICES

For the Event Organiser

1. Familiarize yourself with the platform and its features and settings prior to your session. Being comfortable with the platform helps your participants feel comfortable.
2. Consider creating a variety of virtual backgrounds that participants can use while participating in the Virtual Event.
3. Join the session at least 30 minutes before the Virtual Event to run a practice round before-hand to check for time, confirm all your settings, and work out any changes.
4. Assign a tech support facilitator to be the tech point person for participants and help you with any technical problems.
5. State expectations and procedural points at the beginning of the Virtual Event to all the participants.
6. An important piece of any Virtual Event is to set group norms, expectations, and rules of engagement or etiquette. During Q&As, keep a speakers list. Tell participants to raise the hand icon to be added to the speakers list.
7. Ask participants to mute themselves during presentations, as background noise can be disruptive. You can also mute all participants and ask them to turn their microphone on individually.
8. If participants need technical assistance, please ask them to message the appointed tech support person mentioned at the beginning of the session directly through the chat.

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9. Ask participants to limit distractions by enabling full screen view, closing other windows, disabling notifications on their devices, and/or physically distancing themselves from their phones.
10. Ask participants to use the icons in the participant box to raise their hand, answer questions, etc. If they cannot find these features, ask them to reach out to your tech support person.
11. Let participants know that they can use their thumbs to express themselves, or the thumbs up and clapping icons in the “reactions” features of the platform if applicable.
12. State behavioural expectations.
13. If there is a message option in the waiting room, consider using this feature to post important information.

In advance of the Virtual Event, the Event Organiser should communicate the following information to the Participants:

Technological considerations

1. Make sure you have the appropriate technological devices to participate in the event (i.e. a computer, a smartphone or a tablet with audiovisual capabilities and a microphone).
2. Ensure that your technological device and all corresponding applications are up-to-date.
3. Make sure that you have a stable, high-speed and secure internet connection.
4. If you have bandwidth constraints and are using a laptop, consider joining by video from your computer and audio from your phone.
5. If feasible, ask other members of your household to minimize the use of WiFi or devices using internet connections during the session.
6. Ensure that your technological device is fully charged and plugged.
7. Consider a headset, if possible, to reduce background noise. When you are not speaking, please be sure to mute yourself.
8. Ensure that you are set up in a quiet and comfortable space and that you are visible on video.

The day of the event

1. Be sure to join the event at least 10 minutes before the event is set to begin. If the event is not a DIY Virtual Event, you will be placed in a virtual waiting room until the Event Organizer confirms your identity and allows you to join the event.
2. To avoid disruptions, all non-essential technology should be turned off during the Virtual Event. Be sure to turn off notifications on devices that cannot be turned off.

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3. Do not interrupt people who are speaking. If you have questions, try to ask your questions only when directed by the host/chair. You can also use the raise your hand or chat feature to signal to the chair of the Virtual Event that you have a question.

RESPONSABILITIES OF ALL EVENT ORGANISERS & PARTICIPANTS TO VIRTUAL EVENT

Sustainable, Accessibility & Inclusivity

1. Follow the [Sustainable Virtual Event Guide](#) to organise a Virtual Event that will be sustainable, accessible, diverse, and inclusive, and make sure to promote your practices to your participant. Optionally, seek Sustainable Virtual Event Certification.
2. Virtual Events should be as inclusive and accessible as possible. For any specific requests related to accessibility, please complete the Virtual Events Consent/Accessibility Form.
3. Start Virtual Events by acknowledging the traditional territory on which the event is taking place. Take the time to learn how to properly pronounce Indigenous names and do the acknowledgement in a meaningful and not tokenistic way.
4. Ensure diversity is spread among all speaking roles during the Virtual Event.
5. Speakers should be aware of the importance of using non-binary gender terminology and gender-neutral language when possible.
6. Consider a diverse range of voices for your speakers, guests and industry representatives.
7. Make sure clear language, large fonts, and high colour contrast is used at all touch points—including presentations. Use a recommended accessible font (not below 18 points), avoid glaring white backgrounds, and limiting the amount of text on a slide. <https://teachingacademy.concordia.ca/accessibility/> - <https://www.businessinsider.com/how-to-add-alt-text-in-powerpoint>
8. Provide captions and visuals where possible for audio and provide descriptions for visuals. <https://www.concordia.ca/ctl/digital-teaching/zoom-live-closed-captioning.html>
9. Ensure the conference is an event that equally appeals to and provides a platform for Canada's English-and French-speaking communities.

Security & Privacy related to Virtual Events

1. If recording a meeting or a Virtual Event is necessary, each participant should receive an advanced notice and if the recording will be stored, the Event Organiser must

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- comply with the prior consent requirements per the Policy and require the participants to complete the Virtual Events Consent/Accessibility Form.
2. The purpose of the recording and who intends to record should be clearly stated.
 3. Participants should receive a repeated notice at the beginning of the meeting or event, before recording has started.
 4. Participants should be provided the contact information for someone who can assist with any questions or concerns about recording, such as not wishing to be recorded, being in a significantly different time zone, not having the technological means to participate, or being disadvantaged in any way by video/audio recording.
 5. Consider to not record the entire event—for example, turn off recording for the last 5 minutes of the final Q&A period.
 6. Provide way(s) for questions to be received anonymously during the Virtual Event via a moderator—whether through the videoconference platform itself or outside the platform (such as through email).
 7. If recording is for the purpose of taking notes, consider setting up closed captioning when setting up the meeting or Webinar. A transcript will be saved.
 8. Promoting registration in advance to pre-screen attendees is crucial to block nuisance attendees from negatively impacting on the Virtual Event.
 9. Familiarize yourself with the platform’s functionality on how to immediately remove an attendee or end an event in the case of unwanted guest(s)
 10. Any unsolicited chat should not be accepted from people with suspicious profile during the Virtual Event.
 11. Event Organiser & participants should not give their email addresses to other attendees they don’t trust.
 12. Event Organiser & participants should refrain from sharing their screens with fellow attendees or anyone during the event if it’s not part of your event scenario.
 13. Event Organiser & participants should always check their computer or mobile device for the latest security update before joining an event.
 14. Monitoring of the audience and removal of unwanted guests and contents are part of the best practices.
 15. Event Organiser to always assign someone to monitor attendee behavior during Virtual Events, looking for complaints from other attendees, foul language, or other disruptive behavior. Keep an eye on anyone who has registered with a generic ID or email address.
 16. Use a waiting room to screen participants before they’re granted access to the Virtual Event.
 17. Consult the platform’s functionality on secure best practices related to Cyber Security or make a request for an event consultation with IITS.

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Procedures in the event of hosting persons per section 15 of the Policy

1. Where a person is being hosted, as provided for in section 15 of the Policy, the Event Organizer shall ensure that the Director of the Campus Safety and Prevention Services (“CSPS”) and/or Executive Director, Government Relations or their respective designates are advised in advance of the Virtual Event so that the event may be reviewed.

VIRTUAL EVENTS CODE OF CONDUCT

Expected behavior:

1. Participants should always exercise consideration and respect in their speech and actions.
2. Participants should always attempt for collaboration before conflict.
3. Participants should refrain from demeaning, discriminatory, or harassing behavior and speech.
4. Harassment and discrimination are not acceptable during virtual event. This includes any verbal, physical, or visual conduct based on sex, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, transgender status, race, age, national origin, disability. Inappropriate use of nudity and/or sexual images; deliberate intimidation, stalking or following; harassing, photography or recording; sustained disruption of sessions, talks or other events; inappropriate physical contact, and any unwelcome sexual attention.
5. Participants asked to stop any harassing behavior are expected to comply immediately.
6. Participants should always be mindful of their surroundings and of their fellow participants. Alert CSPS if you notice a dangerous situation, someone in distress, or violations of this Code of Conduct, even if they seem inconsequential.
7. Participants should not make audio or visual recordings of the Virtual Event on their personal device—and do not have the permission to distribute audio or visual recordings of the Virtual Event (via social media or any other means). Only the Event Organizer or their representatives may do so, after warning participants to give them an opportunity to opt out.
8. Participants should not take or distribute pictures of or copy research posters/presentation materials unless explicit permission is granted.

Consequences of Unacceptable Behavior

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1. Unacceptable behavior will not be tolerated. Anyone asked to stop unacceptable behavior is expected to comply immediately.
2. If a participant engages in unacceptable behavior, the Event Organizer may take any action they deem appropriate, up to and including expulsion from the event without warning or refund and if appropriate involvement of local law enforcement.
3. Breaches of this rules provided for in this Handbook, including the Virtual Events Code of Conduct can also result in disqualification from participating in future events.

How to report Unacceptable Behavior or Suspicious Person/Behavior

1. If you experience or witness a life-threatening emergency, please contact CSPA at 3717. If you have a complaint or concern about harassment, discrimination, bullying or any other conduct that violates the University's Code of Rights and Responsibilities, we encourage you to contact the Office of Rights and Responsibilities at rights@concordia.ca If you witness this happening to someone else, please report that, too.

Authorized payment platform

1. The University has certain authorized payment platforms/service providers that are to be used for the organization of any Virtual Event. Where the registration for a Virtual Event includes payment of registration fees and/or sale of any tickets, consult with Hospitality Concordia before organizing the Virtual Event. Only an authorized payment platform (e.g., Grenadine) can be used for Virtual Events.

This Handbook has been approved by:

Sarah Dorrell-Caille 24 November 2023