

Adapting to virtual teaching and learning

The transition between face to face and virtual learning has been challenging. Many of you reading this will already have had some experience with the virtual environment. This guide is meant to serve as a simplified reminder of some of the essential points involved in making a virtual event run smoothly and provide the content expected. The focus is mainly for those who either need to convert their educational program to a virtual platform or those who have already converted and would benefit from some additional tips.

The document provides information on logistical planning and suggestions on how to optimize the learning experience for faculty and learners. It is also directed towards synchronous learning (i.e. real time) vs asynchronous (i.e. pre-recorded sessions supplemented by reading and assignments).

Following the main section an appendix has been attached with examples of briefing documents that you are free to adapt.

Preparation

For all planning there is a commonly accepted formula that states 2/3 of your time needs to be spent in preparation, and 1/3 in delivery. Much thought and time is involved in ensuring success of a virtual program as many possibilities exist for potential problems. Following are a few aspects we encourage you to address as you are preparing. One rule applies consistently: do not assume you can “copy and paste” what you have traditionally done.

If your program is intended for an international audience, it may not be possible to provide the program only in “real time” as time zones can make attendance difficult. If this is the case, planning will include the possibility of pre-recorded presentations. A platform that allows participants to send in questions and engage in digital conversation should also be considered.

Based on how much experience you have with program and event planning, some of these suggestions will appear self obvious. In case you are new to the arena we do suggest you start with a list of necessary tasks. This will be helpful in avoiding feeling overwhelmed. Here are a few ideas for the contents of a task list.

Necessary tasks

- Creating a scientific planning committee (SPC) whose purpose is to decide on the content and methodology most appropriate in meeting the learning needs of your audience. For many the SPC is in place already and has

experience in planning face to face meetings. It is the responsibility of the SPC to decide on the format for the meeting. Will it continue as a live face to face meeting, a virtual meeting or perhaps have a blended approach?

- Prepare the planning committee for the transition to virtual learning by providing information on what the shift implies. (I.e., Less traditional approaches to learning, careful planning of the agenda to accommodate and avoid fatigue for learners, technical requirements that might affect planning.)
- Conduct a learning needs assessment of the target audience and share with SPC. Different types of learning needs assessment may be appropriate. In addition to the traditional assessment of participants perceived learning needs and wishes the SPC might decide to conduct an objective test to determine knowledge gaps. This can be a self assessment completed by participants and can be very helpful for faculty when planning their presentations. It is also helpful to the SPC especially if a post test is also conducted that allows collection of data on knowledge gained.
- Create/adapt goals and specific instructional outcomes for the program (learning objectives)
- Another useful source of information that can help guide development of content is to share the learning objectives of the course and each presentation with the participants. Participants are asked to read these and comment on whether they find anything missing they would like the program to address. This information is shared with faculty to aid in preparation.
- Determine content
- Determine appropriate learning methodology to meet learning objectives and keep the participants involved
- Create/adapt program agenda
- Select faculty
- Create/adapt an evaluation strategy that is appropriate for the program. This would include methods to determine achievement of learning objectives, satisfaction with learning methods, highlights, and key learning points for participants as well as suggestions for improvement. Additional questions may be important to provide feedback on aspects of the virtual format

2.Choosing a platform

Once the decision has been made to move forward with a program it is essential to choose a platform that will meet your needs and those of your learners and faculty. Zoom is a well trusted and commonly used platform but there are many others for

instance, WebEx, GoToMeetings, and Pedagogue. A simple Google search will provide you with possible options and word of mouth between trusted colleagues is often a time saving strategy.

Attributes of the platform that are important to virtual learning include:

- The number of participants that can be engaged
- Video capacity
- Band width
- Ability to record sessions
- Features to allow interaction such as screen sharing of documents and slides, breakout rooms for small group discussion, question and answer, hands up and reactions.
- Meeting vs. webinar mode
- Cost
- If relevant, the ability to transcribe conversation
- App for laptop, tablet, or phone

In making a choice, questions you might consider include:

Does the platform provide technical help in learning more in making the transition?

As mentioned earlier, “cutting and pasting” your traditional program or ways of designing programs face to face will not be effective in a virtual environment. More ways of engaging the audience are required with less time in simply listening. To help with this a platform that provides the capability to use electronic quizzes, polling functions, gamification, breakout rooms, question and answer functions is necessary. Although straightforward once you have some experience, the learning curve can be steep. Choosing a platform that also provides tutorials and support can save time and frustration. You may want to consider a few questions as you compare platforms.

- Does the platform provide a dedicated customer contact point? Having help when you need it is crucial. It might be a better choice have a separate technology team to trouble shoot during the program. This allows organizers to focus on the program and not stress over technical difficulties. An example used by the ADVAC program is Artcast. A technology team can manage difficulties participants may have in connecting, in hearing, in accessing video as well as

have back up for unexpected problems such as power outages. They can also ensure recording is turned on and off when required and provide transcripts of presentations.

- Note: most large programs also engage learning platforms see point 3.

- If relevant to your audience, you may want to ask if the platform provides speech to text and text to speech features.
- What measures are in place to prevent unauthorized access?
- How easy it is for participants and faculty to maneuver?

The size of your audience will also determine the features you require of a learning platform.

3.Considering a Learning Management System (LMS)

A learning management system is designed to work in tandem with the virtual platform. Examples of LMS include Moodle, Pheedloop, Basecamp, Microsoft teams and Slack. There are several more options available if you simply Google "learning management systems". Systems such as these allow for communication amongst organizers, faculty, and registered learners. The platform can contain required readings, announcements, networking groups, and daily announcements. Practice using this platform early with planning group members and faculty.

4. Creating a timeline

Determine deadlines for:

- Establishing how to work with differing time zones (if applicable) Determining the time zone most likely to work for the majority of your audience is crucial. This can make or break the success of the program.
- Finalizing the program agenda
- Deciding on pre sessions requirements, if relevant, i.e., reading, knowledge quizzes.
- If asynchronistic components are part of your program, determining whether (and which) sessions will be recorded, when and how they will be accessible to participants

- Finalizing registration of participants
- Finalizing faculty
- Designing and administering re assessment of participants" knowledge (if applicable)
- Prepare and send briefing documents for participants and faculty
- Establish dates for orientation/tutorials on chosen learning platform for faculty and participants
- Insist all participants and faculty test their technology beforehand, this can be done during the orientation session as well. Some may feel overly confident that their organization has "everything covered" only to find firewalls in place that prevent connection to the meeting. In other cases, the Internet connection is not strong enough and another location might be needed.

5. Preparing faculty and participants

Provide tutorials to faculty and learners at least one month before the event. Tutorials should include how to sign into the event, whom to contact if there are connection problems, phone number/email of IT support, and what to do if participants cannot hear, are "kicked off" and so forth.

Faculty also need to become familiar with the features of the virtual platform and how to use functions such as breakout rooms, Q. and A, polling, chat box, annotations, white board, and reactions if relevant to their presentations. The same will apply for re facilitators of workshops. It will save time during the event if the tutorial for participants also includes a short practice session using chat box, Q and A and reaction.

If possible, test run a few sessions with selected faculty and adjust if needed.

Preparation from the educational perspective

Sitting and staring at a computer screen is tiring even if we are enthusiastic and interested in the content being provided. We cannot expect people to be able to simply listen if they are to retain and process information. If a program is designed to run over several consecutive days, no more than 5 hours of attendance should be expected of participants

Ideally each day should include a variety of activities.

When planning the schedule and educational methodology for the event, consider the following:

- Zoom fatigue is a real

- If lectures are involved, make them shorter than a normal lecture to maintain attention. Keep them as simple as possible i.e., avoid embedding videos as this will increase risk of technological complications.
- Give people frequent, short breaks (5 minutes) between presentations to stretch, get a drink of water, reflect on what has been presented, and write down questions.
- Ensure ample time is allotted for robust Q and A sessions
- Consider what is a reasonable amount of time to sit in front of a screen and plan in a variety of activities to help combat fatigue, Examples:
 - Vary the day(S) by providing lectures interspersed with breakout groups, virtual debates, quizzes, or polls, and debriefing with other learners
- Provide Virtual happy hour. consider providing interest themes and providing smaller breakout groups to support social connection.
- Invite speakers and experts to the happy hour and give learners the opportunity to ask as many questions as they would like
- Use the social networking platforms to facilitate private and public discussion between participants
- Encourage participants to give feedback on what is working for them and be adaptable enough to make changes. If changes are not possible, acknowledge this.
- Consider how evaluation will be conducted online. Provide time within the event for participants to complete the questions.

6. Launching

During the event a variety of roles will be at play.

Technology Support

IT-support needs to oversee preparing and pretesting the equipment, creating, and starting the educational events, troubleshooting any connection issues, recording the meeting. As mentioned earlier, an important function of support is ensuring back up equipment is available in case of power outages or other technical failures.

Faculty

Faculty oversee delivering content and preparing material for the participants including any prereading or follow up materials.

Co-facilitators

To lessen facilitator's load, co-facilitators are required to manage the chat box (if used) and the Questions asked in the Q and A. They may also be used to create and assign participants to breakout sessions.

Interaction with participants will also need to be managed.

Chat box

Using the chat box to share ideas, ask and answer questions can help people stay focussed. If you plan to use this function, let the participants know how it will work. If you have employed a LMS you may wish to skip chat box and encourage participants to share their thoughts on the LMS platform.

Questions from the audience

Be clear about how questions will be managed with faculty and participants. Can they be asked verbally? In the chat box? Only by Q and A? If verbal, instruct people to make themselves visible on video. Remind them to unmute while speaking and mute when not.

The Q and A (question and answer) function

Instruct participants to write their questions in the Q and A box function if using Zoom. Be clear whether questions can be asked spontaneously or if there is a specific time reserved for Q and A. Participant to ask questions themselves though question could be first written using.

Post event:

- Debrief with faculty
- Debrief with technicians
- Collate evaluation results
- Send follow up requirements to learners
- Prepare certificates of attendance

7. Prevention of Zoom fatigue for faculty and learners

When the pandemic started, although there was resistance to virtual learning and muttering about how it is not as effective or enjoyable, most of the world got down to accepting that this is what was happening and so got on with it. Zoom was effective, it provided what was needed. What came along with this though was a form of fatigue referred to as "Zoom fatigue".

Fatigue occurs for a few reasons.

1. We must focus more intensely and for longer periods of time.

Virtual learning involves more staring at a screen and intense eye contact. In a live face to face meeting, we have choices about where to look. We only have to look at the speaker, rarely a whole row of faces at once. We can choose to look away. We can look for awhile at the instructor, we can look at our notes, at the slides, casually glance as

fellow learners but on Zoom everyone is trying to look at everyone. We are constantly looking at other faces that appear to be looking at us.

Seeing yourself – apparently (Bailensen) it's like looking in a mirror and when we see reflections of ourselves, we are often more critical of ourselves. This adds to stress and preoccupation.

During lectures take yourself off video view but don't go away!

Tips

- Zoom has a "Hide self view" function. Click the blue ellipses at the top right corner of your image, then select "Hide Self View". Your camera will remain on, so everyone else will still be able to see you.
- Take mini breaks -During long meetings, take visual breaks by looking out a window or just looking away from the screen for a few moments. This eases eyestrain and refocuses the brain.
- Take your eyes off the screen by taking notes.

2.Lack of physical movement

Tips

If possible, use an external/remote keyboard to give yourself more room to move. Turn your camera off from time to time and stretch!

3.Distractions – temptation to multitask

Tips

It is very tempting to try to save time and keep awake by engaging with phones, email, and social media during Zoom presentations. Multitasking drains energy. Hard though it might be, eliminate distractions like email, texting and social media browsing during virtual meetings. Silence your cell phone, close other browsers, and apps on your computer. Focus on writing down questions and thoughts. If allowed, participate in the chat box discussions. Engage in the Q and A.

We hope this guide has provided you with useful information and tips for enhancing enjoyment and effectiveness of your virtual learning event.

Written by

Jane Tipping MAEd MCC

Educational consultant

Continuing Professional Development

Appendices

Following are examples of information that can be sent to faculty and/or participants

1.Preparation information for faculty

Technological requirements

The following is written on the assumption that Zoom will be used as the chosen learning platform. If that is not the case the information needs to be adapted accordingly.

If you are using a laptop, ensure you have good battery capacity (minimum of 120 minutes) in case of power outage and if you are using a desktop computer in areas where power outages can be common, then it is best if your computer is plugged in on a loaded UPS system.

If you use a professional version of Zoom, you will need to make sure that there are no restrictions imposed by the administrator of your system.

At the link below you will find more specific information about system requirements in case you encounter some problems:

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362023-System-requirements-for-Windows-macOS-and-Linux>

Attend the tutorial scheduled for you on the use of Zoom

Check your audio

Most computers are equipped with speakers/microphones and in most cases, a separate headset/microphone is not required. However, for enhanced sound quality we recommend you have a headphones/microphone with noise cancelling features to avoid background sound interference. These must be pretested to ensure good performance.

Prepare your space -Lights

Good lighting enhances communication for all participants to view each other well. Arrange lighting so that your face will appear clearly.

Other

Arrange for someone else to manage Q and A and chat box functions. you cannot present and be on top of these functions simultaneously.

Have a second screen one for seeing the audience and one for your slides

Zoom functions

There are several functions Zoom offers to help engage learners. We suggest you familiarize yourself with the following and consider if and how you might incorporate them in your presentation/discussion. Practicing several times before the program begins will increase your confidence and skill. You might be surprised how useful they are.

1.Reactions – provides nonverbal interaction between you and participants. This enables you to check for understanding, whether they are following, and whether the pace of your presentation is too fast. R

- Thumbs up
- Clapping hands
- Heart
- Happy face
- Yes, No
- Please go slower, faster

2.White board – allows you to share a virtual whiteboard on which everyone can write and share. This can be helpful as well as save time in gathering answers to questions

3.Annotation features – This allows everyone to annotate a shared screen, add their views, make corrections etc.

4.Chat box. Participants can ask questions, react to each other, provide resources by typing in the chat box. This can be challenging for you to follow unless you have a colleague co-facilitating with you. You can save the chat box conversation if you wish and react later.

5.Q and A

More information and directions for use can be found through the Zoom Help Centre

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/>

TIP: Consider recording and timing yourself presenting. View the recording and adjust. Zoom can help you practice - you can book a "meeting" with yourself, record it, and play it back. If you are happy with what you see – great. If not, there is time to adjust.

Test run the session

Before the start of each session, facilitators, with IT support should have a five-minute test run, checking all aspects of the software, the most important being video transmission, screen sharing, screen annotations, breakout sessions, muting/unmuting, signals, and chat management to ensure that all participants are comfortable with the meeting software.

Preparation - Educational aspects

Remember sitting in front of a screen is tiring for participants and no matter how interesting or important your content, it needs to be given in shorter "bites" than if you were teaching to a live audience.

Shorten your normal lecture to 3-5 major points

Avoid animation, if possible, to lessen technological surprises

Vary the tone and pitch of your voice

Highlight key points

Consider sending participants a summary post session to reinforce key messages, and/or a reflective exercise to help consolidate their learning.

During the event

- Remove all distractions
- Put aside a minimum of 15 minutes before the session starts to troubleshoot technological issues.
- Look directly into the camera
- Speak directly into the microphone
- Consider turning camera off when presenting materials
- Vary pitch and tone of your voice to create energy and keep attention

Post event

- Provide feedback to organizers
- Follow up with feedback to learners (if applicable)

2.Preparation information for participants

Really important - Attend the scheduled tutorial before the event

Technological requirements

If you are using a laptop, ensure you have good battery capacity (minimum of 120 minutes) in case of power outage and if you are using a desktop computer in areas where power outages can be common, then it is best if your computer is plugged in on a loaded UPS system.

If you use a professional version of Zoom, you will need to make sure that there are no restrictions imposed by the administrator of your system.

Check your computer or laptop connectivity and hardware.

Check you video and audio system and make sure they are functioning properly.

Prepare your environment.

ENVIRONMENT

Choose a space that has comfortable seating, is quiet and well lit. If possible, use earbuds or headphones to cancel out background noise.

Eliminate predictable distractions such as interruptions by children, pets, phone calls etc.

Have water on hand, paper to write notes.

Sign in 15 minutes before event is due to begin.

3. Netiquette

Netiquette is a term coined from combining two words, internet, and etiquette. The following recommendations are crucial in making this virtual event a success for everyone.

Join early and make sure your camera and microphone are working properly. Plug into the Ethernet if possible. Plug your computer into a power source – do not rely on battery power.

Check your surroundings and remove distractions

Distractions include background noise, a cluttered space, the possibility of family member or pets interrupting.

Do not multitask!

Multitasking never works to your advantage! Unless you are expecting urgent calls, put your phone out of reach. Turn off notifications. Avoid doing other work while listening and other temptations such as online browsing.

Turn on your video during the meeting and make sure your correct name is next to your profile. Unless instructed otherwise, take breaks from the visual intensity by shutting off your camera while a presentation is taking place and back on-again during Q and A or discussion. Cameras should be on during break outs and workshops.

Mute when you are not speaking. Unmute when you wish to speak. Follow the speaker's instructions and preferences, most will want you to wait until the end of their presentation before hearing and answering questions.

Write down your questions as they occur to you and then check if you still want to ask them at the end of each presentation. Not all questions will be answered, a moderator will determine which questions to direct to the speaker. If your questions are not answered, hold onto them and address later through the what's app group.

Use the chat box to write in your questions or to communicate your thoughts to others. Do not say anything online you wouldn't face to face. Be careful not to send messages intended for an individual to the entire group.

Use the reactions feature on Zoom (bottom right corner of your Zoom screen) – do not use hands up unless the speaker has requested that you do.

If Q and A is live or when participating in a small group/case discussion, **start your comment or question by stating your name**. This helps others identify who is speaking.

When possible, **avoid interrupting others** as they are speaking.

Talk directly into microphone. Do not turn head side to side while talking or your voice will fade in and out.

Speak to the camera, not the screen

4.Prevention of Zoom fatigue for faculty and learners

When the pandemic started, although there was resistance to virtual learning and muttering about how it is not as effective or enjoyable, most of the world got down to accepting that this is what was happening and so got on with it. Zoom was effective, it provided what was needed. What came along with this though was a form of fatigue referred to as “Zoom fatigue”.

Fatigue occurs for a few reasons.

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Virtual learning involves more staring at a screen and intense eye contact. In a live face to face meeting, we have choices about where to look. We only have to look at the speaker, rarely a whole row of faces at once. We can choose to look away. We can look for awhile at the instructor, we can look at our notes, at the slides, casually glance at fellow learners but on Zoom everyone is trying to look at everyone. We are constantly looking at other faces that appear to be looking at us.

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Tips

It is very tempting to try to save time and keep awake by engaging with phones, email, and social media during Zoom presentations. Multitasking drains energy. Hard though it might be, eliminate distractions like email, texting and social media browsing during virtual meetings. Silence your cell phone, close other browsers, and apps on your computer. Focus on writing down questions and thoughts. If allowed, participate in the chat box discussions. Engage in the Q and A.

5. Guide for session chairs Example ADVAC 2021

Thank you for agreeing to serve as a chair during the ADVAC lecture sessions.

Although we had all hoped we would be able to meet face-to-face, circumstances continue to prevent this from happening. Thankfully, the technology exists that enables us to provide a virtual venue. Much work has been taking place in the background to make this virtual event enjoyable and productive for everyone.

We are aware of the challenge in providing participants with as much valuable information as possible while taking into consideration the difficulties of sitting in front of a computer for several days running.

Your role is important to the success of ADVAC. As session chair, you can help participants understand the connection between topics, presentations, and exercises. Your role in orchestrating a session can make the difference between an event that is mediocre and one that is exciting, engaging, and productive for both audience and panellists.

The following are some tips and expectations in the context of ADVAC that you may find useful.

Planning

1. Research your topic

You know the field covered by the lecturers and therefore you have been selected to chair. If needed, you can familiarize yourself with the lectures and their specific objectives by looking at the slide sets ahead of time. We will make the recordings available to you. It is also important to review the specific objectives (attached) assigned to each session and lecture. Preparing questions that can “stir up the pot” as need be, can also be helpful though usually ADVACers are not short of questions.

2. Know the course attendees – what professions, practices and interests are represented in this particular audience? The short bios of all participants (with photos) are attached.

3. Know your speakers

The short bios of all speakers (with photos) are attached. If you do not already know them well, have a discussion before the event (if feasible) and discuss how you can be helpful in choosing and relaying questions from the audience to the speaker, and the time to spend on each question.

Setting the stage and managing the session

1. Establish the expectations for audience participation and questions. This will allow more people to articulate their thoughts and questions and increase the likelihood of greater variety and volume of questions asked.

2. Welcome the speaker and introduce them BRIEFLY (no more than 30 seconds) Participants can read more about faculty in the short bios available online.

3. Make an enthusiastic statement about your interest in the topic and your intention to keep the discussion lively, informative and engaging.

4. Make sure that the presenter stays on time.

5. Manage the Q and A. This is a very important component of the virtual program in which you play a major role. Each session will include 20 minutes for Q and A between the participants and the speakers.

Participants are asked to write their questions using the Chat box. A computer will be dedicated and titled "Ask your questions" and participants will send their questions in writing to this box. A discussion Facilitator based in Les Pensières will help you facilitate these questions, and upon your instructions will call the participants in turn to read their questions. You will then ask the speaker to answer the questions.

The goal is to answer as many questions as succinctly as possible. Participants will be asked to read their question while making their faces and names visible. The purpose of this is to personalize the interaction. Participants should be on mute and must unmute when they ask their questions, and mute again while they wait for the answer. During the interactions, we will aim to have the videos enlarged of the Chair, Speaker, Facilitator, and person asking the question.

ADVACers will likely have many questions and the discussion time is short. Even if there are more questions, you will still need to bring the discussions to a close at the scheduled time.

Participants will be asked to make sure they have written down their questions and arrangements will be made to answer further questions via email.

A major challenge with ADVAC is that the questions asked might be answered by one of the subsequent lectures or in another session. In this case, please do not hesitate to indicate that the question will be answered later.

6. Closing the session. Summarize the key points and what you personally are taking away from the discussion.

Thank the audience and then the speakers.

Kindly remind the participants of the time set aside for reflection and importance of completing their digital reflection journal.

6. Example of assignments of tasks (ADVAC virtual course)

Task/specifications for Artcast

1. The Zoom platform will be used alternatively in webinar or meeting mode depending on the type of session (webinar for plenary and meeting mode for break-out sessions). Participants will have to disconnect and reconnect quickly in meeting mode at a different link.
2. The distribution in breakout groups will be done ahead of time so that the assignment in the various break-out/work groups will be fast. The assignments in the groups will vary depending on the exercises but where flexibility will be left to the participants, the assignment will be on a first come first serve basis (based on expressed wishes trying to have an equal number of participants in each break-out. Except for the parallel sessions, this will be possible if participants all have a private account.
3. For the break-out sessions the dispatching will be done centrally by the technical platform and facilitators onsite or outside can then move to a smaller room to avoid noise interference and benefit from bigger screen
4. System to automatically record participation/connexions for each session
5. Need for back-up of access to the platform in case of power failure. Two independent systems will be used as main host.
6. Need for back-up with different access in case of technical failure.
7. Need phone contacts of participants and two technical focal points from Artcast to be contacted immediately in case of problems (WhatsApp). Creation of a WhatsApp group for the facilitators only.
8. Creation of up to 7 subgroups on the platform and need to limit the number of participants in the small group exercises to 10-11.
9. Display setting
 - a. During presentation lecturer's view and full screen of presentation
 - b. During the discussion period, view of the lecturer in big, view of the facilitator in big, and either 75 vignettes or rotating vignettes 25 to 35 of the participants on video mode. When a participant asks a question his/her video vignette goes big and replaces the video of the facilitator
10. Use the Q and A box for requesting questions. No questions allowed if anonymous.
11. Name of the participant to appear together with the video vignette
12. Unanswered questions not to be seen by participants.
13. Arrange for observer access to be given to selected invitees and possibly to all alumni. This will be done for the lectures only and via livestreaming on protected Youtube channel

14. Recording of sessions with discussion will be done with keeping the livestreaming.
15. All lectures should be pre-recorded. The recording can be shared ahead of time with the participants but without expecting that the participants would watch it ahead. The recording of all lectures is still being debated in view of logistical challenges/cost. To reassess soon. Option is not to record for small team and to have lectures record from their end
16. The technical support company will check the lectures to make sure of the quality and duration.
17. An automated transcript of all questions and answers will be kept indicating which ones were answered or not. This will also allow to tabulate participation for the prizes.
18. Poll to be used during debates and repeated as debate progresses and possibly during some lectures. Limited number of polls during lectures and all orchestrated by the technical support company.
19. A test of how participants' equipment is performing will be done at least 4 weeks prior to the course. This should include asking them to test their band width and if need be, secure the right equipment for the course.
20. Need for initial orientation briefing of the participants on the administrative arrangements for the course (2 month ahead) and the virtual setting and netiquette. This will be done breaking the entire set of applicants in 3 to also accommodate their availability better.
21. Participate in the orientation briefing for the participants and for the lecturers and facilitators
22. Need for a briefing and testing of functionalities for Chairs and discussion facilitators as well as break-out session facilitators.
23. Posting recordings and material on the repository platform.

7. Sample letter to session chairs ADVAC 2021

Dear ADVAC Session Chair,

I hope that this message finds you well.

Thank you for completing the Declaration of Interest form from the European Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education and for updating your short bio.

Attached you will find two separate compilations of the short bios: one of all faculty and one of the participants.

You will also find attached a copy of the final program for ADVAC 2021 as well as the final set of objectives for the course.

Considering that you are all very busy and that many of you are already quite familiar with Zoom virtual lecturing, rather than providing an orientation briefing for the virtual setting as initially mentioned in my December email, we thought that it would be simpler to provide you with the attached brief guide. Of course, I am happy to address any questions that you would still have.

As previously indicated, we have asked for all lectures to be pre-recorded. The intent is to have a back-up in case of last-minute connexion problems. Recordings will also be shared ahead of time with the participants (by April 27) and some of them may opt to watch them beforehand. During the Course we have requested lecturers to present live, but, if they prefer, we will use the recording prior to the discussion at which time they will then be expected to actively participate.

The lecturers have all been asked to connect 30 minutes before their scheduled lecturing time to minimize the risk of connexion problems.

You will receive later the access links for Zoom directly from Artcast, the company that manages the technical platform. If any of you would still like a direct orientation session or an opportunity to participate in a practice session with Zoom in case you are new to the technology and would like to practice, then please let us know. Artcast will also organize a test of your equipment ahead of the Course.

With kindest regards and thanks for your support.

Philippe

Philippe Duclos,
Director, ADVAC
CMU- Centre of Vaccinology
1, rue Michel-Servet, CH1211- Geneva 4, Switzerland