Remote meetings don’t have to be more challenging than the traditional face-to-face meeting. To help make them a positive experience for all attendees, and one which meets your objectives, some senior colleagues have shared their top tips.
Professor Patrick Maxwell

1. Preparation is even more important.
2. Having a separate screen for the agenda and relevant papers is invaluable.
3. Establishing the protocol for people getting your attention if they wish to make a point is important, and making sure that this doesn’t break down.
4. Avoid the temptation to read e-mails, think about other things, lose concentration.
5. Give people comfort breaks / time to stretch their legs.

Professor Loraine Gelsthorpe

1. Start with housekeeping – how people can indicate that they wish to speak (including the chat function and mechanical hand function).
2. Know who is coming – as far as you can.
3. Have a very structured agenda.
4. Assume that a Zoom meeting will take longer than face to face meetings – everything is a bit slower as you scan faces or for signals of people wishing to speak, and there can be delays as people switch off ‘mute’ etc.
5. End on a positive note if you can… and with things to think about further.

Professor David Cardwell

1. Explain clearly how you expect the technology platform to be used at the start of the meeting (for example, the raising of hands, the use of the chat box and any issues with lack of visual sight of any of the participants).
2. Remind the meeting participants to mute their microphones when they’re not speaking.
3. Monitor the chat box for additional comments that relate to meeting agenda items. It is often helpful to summarise these comments to the rest of the meeting as you go, which often saves time.
4. Be tolerant of domestic interruptions (by pets and children, in particular).
5. Check that all the attendees have been circulated with the relevant access information ahead of the meeting.

Download the full guide to online meetings | Visit www.ourcambridge.admin.cam.ac.uk/resources/effective-meetings for additional resources on effective meetings