

## Guidance for conducting online HR meetings during COVID-19

### Before the meeting

- The chair should advise all parties of the technology to be used in the meeting and issue a copy of the agenda and format/timings of meeting. Ideally Webex or Microsoft Teams should be the technology that is used for these meetings.
- All parties should test the technology (audio & video) on their device at home, along with their internet connection before the meeting. If you have any technical issues, you should contact the IS helpdesk (ISServiceDesk@napier.ac.uk) for assistance. Please let the chair know if you are having any problems with technology.
- Video calls use quite a lot of bandwidth – try to position yourself near the Wi-Fi router if this is possible.
- Consider the background and what is behind you – a neutral background is better for a formal meeting and ensure you have the correct light to ensure your picture is clear for everyone on the call to see. If you can sit close to a window this will give you the best lighting.
- If you have headphones, you should use them to help concentrate on the meeting and reduce echoes on the call.
- Try to eliminate outside noises that may interfere with the meeting – find a quiet space, if possible.
- It can be helpful to share your mobile number with another participant on the call, e.g. your accompanying colleague/representative in case there are any problems during the call and to facilitate a follow up discussion straight after the meeting.
- Online meetings may take longer than face-to-face meeting and if further time is required to conclude the meeting, a further online meeting will be arranged.

### During the meeting

- The chair is responsible for ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to speak in relation to each point before moving on to the next point.
- The chair should open the meeting by explaining that the meeting is being carried out remotely because of the current restrictions due to COVID-19. In addition to the normal introductions, the chair should cover the following:
  - The format/timings of the meeting.
  - How discussions will be handled – people should be reminded not to speak over each other and to simply raise their hand or use the chat feature if necessary to note their intention to speak. If anyone has any concerns with the flow of the meeting or their ability to participate, they should make the chair aware (either simply by raising their hand or using the chat feature) and the chair will address this.
  - If the employee or their accompanying colleague/representative wish to pause the meeting and take a break, they should alert the chair and it will be accommodated. If the employee becomes upset during the meeting, the chair will enquire if they wish to take a break and if so, the meeting will be paused.

- If there are any technology issues, if anyone has any difficulty hearing or has connection issues during the meeting, they should flag this immediately and in response the chair will pause and ensure that all parties are reconnected and if required repeat the questions or discussion.
  - If technology issues persist and are having a significant impact on the flow of the meeting, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled.
  - All parties should be advised to put their microphones on mute when they are not talking as this will help to limit background noise. If anyone does not mute their microphone, the chair can mute participants if the technology permits, or remind them to do it.
  - At the end of the meeting, the chair will summarise the key points and check if anyone has any additional that they wish to raise before the meeting concludes.
  - As the meeting is being conducted remotely, parties should be advised that after the call, they can submit any points to clarify matters or provide any additional information to the chair.
- During the meeting it is advisable to close down emails and other applications to avoid getting distracted or accidentally sharing your screen during the call.
  - It can be helpful to leave a few additional seconds for a response and also before attempting to speak to give people a chance to hear, reflect and respond and to compensate for any lag time.
  - It is best not to walk around or move about too much on a video call as it can be distracting for the others.
  - If any miscommunication occurs, it may be necessary to repeat discussions and clarify points.

### After the meeting

- After participating in a remote meeting, it can be helpful to 'check in' with your accompanying work colleague or representative. If you were not accompanied at the meeting and have any questions or concerns following the meeting, please contact your manager or HR.
- If you wish to submit any points to clarify matters or provide any additional information to the chair, you should do this via email immediately after the meeting.