

Gillings Guidelines for Gatherings through Spring 2022

Q: I'm organizing meetings or events for Spring 2022. Should I use a virtual format (on Zoom) or shift to in-person?

A: When planning Gillings events or meetings, we recommend organizers:

- ❖ **Consider meeting or event objectives, topics** and (especially) **participant needs** very carefully and how, specifically, an in person versus virtual format may improve the meeting outcome.
- ❖ Where feasible, understand and seek to **honor participant preferences**.
- ❖ **Monitor campus community standards**, and shift to virtual format if warranted.
- ❖ **We may still hold larger meetings online**, recognizing that other some of the below may be applicable.

Strong reasons for using Zoom/virtual for meeting or event:

Zoom/virtual meetings work better when:

- Main purpose of meeting is information-sharing (e.g., seminars, trainings, town halls).
- Virtual meeting has had track record of high attendance, good engagement & outcomes.
- Participants know one another, have established working relationships.

People and logistics: Consider using Zoom/virtual platform if:

- Some participants have concerns & barriers with transportation to/from campus.
- Some participants may feel pressured to come to campus when not comfortable.
- You are seeking more equitable participation (Zoom auto-transcription helps hearing impaired people participate fully).
- All your participants have regular access to broadband; don't have tech issues.
- Meeting space is unavailable or cost prohibitive.

Strong reasons to hold in-person meetings or events:

In-person works better when top meeting priorities include:

- Building relationships, creating community (social events, for example).
- Fostering free-flowing discussion & conversation.
- Building trust among participants.
- Providing a venue where participants can "read" each other (e.g., body language, facial expression) to tackle challenging discussions productively.

Logistics are manageable:

- Space is available with suitable capacity, configuration and technology.
- It's feasible to meet outdoors.
- All people are comfortable meeting in person, do not feel pressured to join (see above).

What about hybrid (some participants in person, some virtual/remote)?

Hybrid meeting and events are more challenging to manage well. Consider using this format when:

- An in-person group wants to offer occasional flexibility to participants.
- Room technology has been tested and verified to work well for remote participants.
- Leaders have track record of managing meeting effectively for in-person *and* remote participants.
- Group has strong track record of equitable and inclusive participation (e.g., in-room participants do not dominate; multiple conversations/sidebars are kept to an absolute minimum, etc.).

Food and drink

You may seek permission to hold indoor social events by submitting a request via the [Gillings Room Reservations webpage](#). Refreshments should be "grab and go," with no shared utensils. We continue to encourage outdoor events, weather and space permitting. Consider offering refreshments in "shifts" for large groups. Nobody should be *required* to attend or serve.

Community Standards

We are no longer required to wear a mask indoors, and no physical distancing requirements are currently in place. Courses and meetings may be held at normal room capacity. We will continue to make masks easily accessible and encourage all who wish to wear them to do so. There may be some instances when we may ask people to wear masks, but we cannot require people to wear masks. Nobody should be penalized in any way for either wearing, or not wearing, a mask. Employees should work with their supervisor or HR Consultant if they have concerns about participating in gatherings. Additional information on accommodations and flexibility can be found at <https://hr.unc.edu/covid-19/concerns/>.