The following recommendations can help get you started holding an online class in Zoom.

Prepare for your online class.

Install Zoom on your computer.

Install the Zoom client (opens new window) on your PC or Mac, and/or add the Zoom app to your mobile device.

Schedule your class session(s) in UVACollab.
Follow the steps in [How do I schedule online meetings?](#) to set up your class in your UVACollab site.

**Set up your space.**

When teaching online, you should work in a physical space that is conducive to holding class. To make your virtual classroom more engaging:

- Work in a quiet room, with minimal background noise and distractions.
- Connect a webcam to your computer so you can be visible to your students during class.
- Use a good microphone. A noise-cancelling headset is recommended.

**Get familiar with Zoom.**

**Join a practice session.**

Before class, join a [Zoom test session (opens new window)](#) to test your audio and webcam, and familiarize yourself with the chat and other controls.

💡 **Tip:** When you enable your webcam in the test session, you might check that no distracting items appear on camera in the background.
Learn about accessibility features.

If you use a keyboard only, screen reader, or other assistive technology when navigating the web, learn about [Zoom’s accessibility features and keyboard shortcuts](https://www.zoom.us/help/articles/accessibility) (opens new window).

Make sure accessibility accommodations are in place.

If a student has a special need for online courses, such as a requirement for live captioning, coordinate with the [Student Disability Access Center](https://www.zoom.us/help/articles/student-disability-acces) (opens new window) to ensure that everything is set up for the student to participate.

Enable the Mute Participants option.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting Options</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Require meeting password</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enable join before host</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mute participants upon entry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enable waiting room</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Record the meeting automatically</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

When creating your meeting for class, select the option **Mute participants upon entry** so students’ microphones will be disabled by default when they join the room.

For steps to enable this option, see [How do I schedule online meetings?](https://www.zoom.us/help/articles/schedule-online-meetings)
Tip: Muting the microphone of anyone who is not speaking is a best practice to avoid background noise and allow students to stay focused on the lecture or discussion.

Test your audio and video.

Join your meeting a few minutes before class to check that your audio and video are working.

Prepare a lesson plan.

Create a document or slide with an agenda or list of topics for each class that you can share with students.

For steps to share documents and slides in Zoom, see the Zoom Help: Sharing your screen (opens new window).

Record your meeting.

Recording your class meeting to the cloud will allow students to review the discussion later. This will help students who could not attend the class or who want to reinforce their understanding of the lesson.
**Recommended:** Whenever possible, record multiple short segments of lectures (rather than a single, full-length recording) so that Zoom recordings will process more quickly.

**Important:** Give students the option to opt out of a recorded session, in which case they can select **Leave Meeting** and view the recording later.

**Tip:** Consider following the steps to enable the audio transcript feature on your Zoom account before starting a recorded meeting. Students can then use a transcript to easily search for and skip to specific points in a video.

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**Zoom's Tips and Tricks**

The following tips were copied from Zoom's [Tips and Tricks: Teachers Educating on Zoom (PDF)](https://zoom.us/e/teachers/zoom).  

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**Tips for Virtual Lessons**

- Watch the **In Meeting Controls (Basic)** video from Zoom to become familiar with some fundamental meeting controls.
- For your first class, set aside some time to introduce your students to Zoom and ensure that they’re able to connect their audio and video.
- Give an agenda or plan for each class by screen sharing a document or slide at the beginning of class. This gives students a clear idea of how the class will progress, what will be covered, and the activities they’ll engage in. For steps to share documents and slides in Zoom, see the Zoom Help: [Sharing your screen](https://zoom.us/e/teachers/zoom#sharing-your-screen) _opens new window_.
- Discuss online etiquette and expectations of the students in your first virtual class and periodically revisit the topics. You may also refer students to UVACollab’s [Tips for Attending Class in Zoom](https://collab.vcu.edu/wiki/spaces/TEACH/pages/Tips+for+Attending+Class+in+Zoom).  
- Utilize the whiteboard or annotate a shared document and let your students engage as well. For steps to use the whiteboard and annotation tools, see the Zoom Help: [Sharing a whiteboard](https://zoom.us/e/teachers/zoom#sharing-a-whiteboard) _opens new window_ and [Using annotation tools](https://zoom.us/e/teachers/zoom#using-annotation-tools) _opens new window_.

Suggested uses of the annotation tools:
• Try whiteboarding math problems.
• Have a student use annotation to highlight key ideas in a document you’re sharing.

• Take time to promote questions, comments, and reactions from your class. Give a minute to allow your students to utilize reactions, write their questions in chat, or be unmuted to ask their questions live. For more information about these features, see the Zoom Help: Meeting reactions (opens new window), In-Meeting Chat (opens new window), and Push to Talk (opens new window).

• Divide into smaller groups for a discussion on a certain topic. You can use Zoom’s Breakout Room feature to either pre-assign or auto-assign students into groups for a short period of time so they may discuss things together. For steps to use Breakout Rooms, see the Zoom Help: Managing Video Breakout Rooms (opens new window).

• Have students be the presenter and share projects with the class. This allows your students to show what they’re working on while practicing their presentation skills. It also allows students to hear from one another. You can allow a student to present by making them a co-host during the meeting. See the Using Co-Host in a Meeting section on the Zoom Help page: Enabling and Adding a Co-Host (opens new window).

**Tips for Teaching Over Video**

• Look at the camera to create eye contact with your students. This helps to create a more personal connection while teaching over video.

• Take a second to check chat or your student’s video (if on camera) to check-in with your students and get feedback.

• Speak as if you’re face-to-face with the class while ensuring you’re at the appropriate distance from the microphone for the best audio experience.

• When delivering a presentation, sharing images, files or video, give your students a moment to open or take in what you’ve shared.

• Embrace the pause. Take a moment after the end of your comments and allow for students to engage before continuing on.