

International Masterclasses: Moderators' training

Part 10: Communication with students and technicalities

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There will be usually 2 or 3 moderators running the videoconference:

- they should talk about equal amounts, e.g. answer QA or read quiz alternately
- OR two can be moderating and the third person can be "technical" - sharing screen, typing answers in QA/chat - up to you how you divide it
- if you feel you talked too much, hand over to your co-moderators
"That sounds like a great question for XY because she works on Higgs analysis."
- if you are new, it could be useful to have a short zoom to get comfortable with your co-moderator, eg. few days before your session
- you can join another session before yours (write to Uta to ask for link)
- for technical problems, contact Uta by email or ask on Mattermost

Most of the students are not native English speakers:

- speak slowly and clearly
- avoid using complicated and long sentences
- use simple vocabulary
- don't use acronyms, abbreviations, physics/academia slang = CERNish (most people don't know who is postdoc or DG)
- test and try to improve your audio quality
 - audio is much more important than video, especially for non-native speakers

Think about few messages you want to convey to students:

- CERN/physics/technology are fun/great/fascinating
- internationality, collaboration
- no need to be genius to study HEP/STEM
- possibilities for students to engage with CERN and HEP/STEM:
 - CERN programmes - visits, S'Cool lab, many are now virtual (<http://visit.cern> and CERN/experiments social media)
 - BeamLine for Schools 2022 - competition for teams to do experiment with beam, deadline April 15 cern.ch/bl4s
 - high-school internships (now paused, <http://cern.ch/HSSIP>)
 - research done in their city/country, they can contact the local organizers

Typically most difficult part:

- getting students to ask questions

Technicalities: sound and video setup

- sound is more important than video quality
- if you have bad connection or unstable wifi, turn off your camera (and add a profile photo to your zoom account in advance)
- check in advance your gain level, background noise etc.
- ideally use headphones/headset (avoids feedback and echo)
- try to disable zoom's automatic volume control and set "Suppress background noise" to Medium or High (Settings → Audio → Microphone)
- turn off notifications from other apps on your laptop and phone

Some problems and solutions:

- too silent or too distorted when speaking louder → adjust mic gain
- people can hear you breathing → mic too close
- mic on headset making noise when touching clothes → move it
- bluetooth headset losing signal (clicking noise or no sound)
- echo, reverb or boomy-sounding voice → put mic closer to you and lower gain (pro tip: check room treatment tricks, usually few pillows/curtains help a lot)
- disturbing doorbell sound when somebody enters/leaves zoom
→ disable: participant list - More (next to Mute all)

- check your image and background
- you can use zoom virtual background, LHC tunnel and IMC backgrounds can be downloaded from [moderator manual](#)
- your face should be lit - try adding soft light from front
- use ethernet cable instead of wifi if you can (it helps a lot!)

Usual problems:

- too dark or too light
- you are too small, we see only part of face and lot of ceiling
- disturbing flickering stripes from fluorescent lights - try changing lamp
- shaky camera as you move/type
- pop-ups when you share screen → disable in Zoom Settings - Share Screen - Block all other pop-ups while window sharing
- virtual background steals your arm/hair → check your the virtual background in advance, it depends a lot on lighting and your clothes

- if you have CERN zoom account, sign in before you want to connect to VC
- if you have problems with zoom account, submit a ticket to the zoom support as soon as you find out (being logged in with your CERN account) or contact CERN zoom support zoom-support@cern.ch or on <https://mattermost.web.cern.ch/it-dep/channels/zoom>

To test your setup:

- record your voice/video locally in advance
- if you wish to get some help, contact Ina Carli (@ina on Mattermost) to setup a test call (I can help you with mic/camera/light setup, basic sound treatment of your room)
- check youtube for videos with zoom meeting hacks
- always test your mic and video after logging in to the webinar practice session