



Virtual Events Guidelines and Process

Version 1.0

July 9, 2020

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Overview

This document provides guidelines and processes for any campus event that will occur using a virtual platform. Virtual events are defined as events that occur entirely online or occur in-person with the addition of an online presence. For the purpose of this document, virtual events will be considered within 2 categories:

- **Complex Virtual Events:** virtual events that require multiple campus support services
- **Client Run Virtual Events:** virtual event that can be organized and managed within the requesting unit/organization with little to no campus support services

Please Note: *This is a living document and will have iterative updates as information changes or becomes available per University and departmental processes that impact these services.*

Virtual Event Guidelines and Resources

Virtual event requests may be made via 25Live, selecting preferred virtual platform as location. If a client is unaware of the appropriate category, an event request should be submitted to the ITS Ticketing System (<https://its.gmu.edu/submit-a-ticket/>). The ITS team will follow up with guidance on the event category given the specifics of the request, assign a virtual space resource, and identify and reserve technology needs. In the event the client submits an ITS ticket for a virtual event request, ITS will coordinate the information with the Events Team to ensure it is documented in 25Live

In preparation for making the initial request, units/organizations should consider the following features of their event and begin to determine the type of support they will need. Providing as much information as possible in the event request phase will ultimately help in the successful planning and execution of the event.

Please Note: *It is acknowledged that virtual events may occur by students, faculty or staff that do not require University resources or support by Mason (i.e. Facebook, Instagram). It is still encouraged to submit those events via 25Live in the case the client is using on-campus space, has Mason VIPs attending or would like the event published on today@mason as well as any other Mason published calendar that receives a feed from 25live. Submitting all virtual events via 25Live also allows for events to be de-conflicted with other University events, encouraging maximum participation.*

Event Planning Considerations

- Goal of the event
- Scope of the event
- Number of presenters
- Number of potential attendees
- Special guests/VIP invitees
- Degree of audience participation (e.g. breakout rooms or small group work required, live questions)
- Audience and types of access needed - Faculty/Staff/Student/external partners (alumni, perspective students, external groups)
- Collaboration tools needed
- Information security needs for secure environments

- Setup Support
- Technology management before and during the event (e.g Enterprise Collaboration group, GMU-TV, IT support Center, University Events, Event Services)
- Support from other campuses (e.g. Fairfax, Sci tech, Arlington)
- Internal team resources (see **Key Event Team Roles** section)
- Pre-event practice session for complex events with multiple tech support needs
- Time Zone adjustments

Event Team

As part of the event planning process it is important to identify all internal and external resources that will be needed to support the event. For virtual events, to ensure everything runs smoothly during the event the following roles are recommended to have within the unit/organization hosting the event. Support for some of these roles can be provided from the Event Management, Event Services and ITS teams as needed. The event team should meet during the planning phase and clearly describe each team members' role/responsibility in support of the event.

Key Event Team Roles

Role	Responsibilities
Event Manager/ Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary point of contact overseeing planning, organizing and execution of the event • Meets with all stakeholders and resources to ensure all needs are met for the event • Can be internal to the unit/organization requesting the event or supported by ITS or Mason's Event Management Team
Moderator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master of ceremony for the event, ensuring live event runs smoothly between presenter and audience members • Monitors questions from audience via chat, raise hand features – calling on speakers, reading questions, mute/unmute lines, etc. • Ensures presenters keep to allotted time
Presenter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main speaker at the event, will usually present information and/or facilitate discussion with audience
Tech/Tool Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports set up of the videoconferencing platform and any other additional tools to support the virtual event • Troubleshoots technical issues with technology as they arise during the event • For multiple breakout rooms, may need a representative in each session • May request support for this role from ITS
Event Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support for a specific area as outlined in the University Support Options table below

University Support Options

Organization	Support Type	Contact Information
Enterprise Collaboration/GMU-TV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determining appropriate virtual platform • Account creation and licensing for virtual platforms • Assisting in the testing and run-through of event and agenda as necessary • On-call support through support center as needed • Live event support as needed 	Ecinfo@gmu.edu
Events Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring reservation is in 25live & tagged appropriately for virtual events, today@mason etc • Coordinating connections between client and other campus service providers • Assisting in the testing and run-throughs of event and agenda • Coordinating between all parties involved, setting up planning meetings • Assistance with registration, event promotion as needed 	<p>SciTech Events eventsst@gmu.edu</p> <p>Potomac Science Center pscevent@gmu.edu</p> <p>University Events (25live admin) gmuevent@gmu.edu</p> <p>Arlington Events alrevent@gmu.edu</p>
Event Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre and live-event support. Provider of portable A/V equipment (audio, video, lighting) for hybrid events 	<p>Sean Cox scox8@gmu.edu</p> <p>Krisztina Roder kroder2@gmu.edu</p> <p>Es@gmu.edu</p> <p>Arlington (arlevent@gmu.edu)</p> <p>Sci-Tech & Potomac Science Center William Smith wsmith41@gmu.edu</p>
GMU-TV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully supported • Live streaming • Video production 	<p>Gmutv@gmu.edu</p> <p>703-993-3110</p>
ITS Support Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call-in assistance during event 	Support Center

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please contact the Support Center prior to your event to ensure it has the correct contact information and any necessary passwords 	Support@gmu.edu 703-993-8870
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Technology

There are several virtual meeting platforms that can be considered for virtual events. It’s important to note that not all commercially available platforms are supported by Mason. To assist with determining what type of technology would be best for a virtual event, please refer to the Available Videoconferencing Options table below. These options are all fully supported by the Mason ITS team. Clients may choose the type of technology they believe would be best in their 25Live request and also have the opportunity to get assistance with choosing the right technology via the checklist process or by contacting ecinfo@gmu.edu. Please note that some technology solutions require request and approval by the ITS department given license provisioning. Clients may also choose to request the services of Events Management and Event Services for their event.

Available Videoconferencing Options

Technology Type	Capabilities
Zoom Large Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple user interface • Can see up to 49 participants simultaneously • Recently announced enhanced security and privacy capabilities • Solid collaboration tools and a wide range of user controls • Audio tweaking capabilities • Multiple screen-sharing and co-annotation • Recording and transcription • Zoom Basic and Pro allow for up to 50 break- out sessions - at max capacity of 500 participants, limited to 20 breakout rooms • Allows for special sub accounts that are HIPPA compliant • Allows for 500 participants • Waiting rooms available for security • No limit to site-wide simultaneous meetings
Zoom Webinar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video limited to hosts and panelists • Hard mute of attendees – which allows exceptions to individuals • Simple user interface • Can see up to 49 participants simultaneously • Recently announced enhanced security and privacy capabilities • Solid collaboration tools and a wide range of user control • Audio tweaking capabilities • Multiple screen-sharing and co-annotation • Recording and transcription • Allows for 500 participants • There is a limit of 100 simultaneous webinars using this platform

MS Live Event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can see up to 25 participants simultaneously • File and screen sharing • Provides text transcripts of meetings • Up to 250 people can join traditional virtual meetings and 10,000 for live streaming events. • There is a limit of 15 simultaneous Live Events
Blackboard Collaborate Ultra Best for Courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 500 participants • Allows for 20 break-out sessions • FERPA compliant • Allows for one person to host an unlimited amount of simultaneous meetings • Meetings can be set up to allow many different audio/video configurations • ADA compliant • Browser based (no download or apps needed) • Meetings can be recorded • Can invite guests • Moderator can share two videos at once (webcam/doc cam)
GMU-TV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professionally produced events capable of being streamed globally • No limit on number of people who can view • Can use in conjunction with all videoconferencing options • Can accommodate video roll ins • All meetings can be live close captioned (Fee associated)

Using Technology to Host Event

It is important to determine as part of the planning process how attendees of the virtual event will connect to the event. For example, will the event be hosted on a website, portal or will a link to for event access be sent directly to attendees? The expected hosting location should be included in the 25Live request in the event resources are needed to support.

Virtual Event Request and Execution Process

When clients are ready to initiate a virtual event request for either a complex or client run event the following processes will be followed. As a reminder, it is highly encouraged that client run events also submit an event request.

In the event a client-led event needs to shift to a complex event during the planning phase, the event requestor should contact the event coordinator or scheduler who were identified via the initial client run 25live request. If a 25live request was never submitted, the client should submit a request (even late in the planning process). If a client does not have a 25live account, they can go to events.gmu.edu/scheduling to request one.

Complex Event Request

Process

1. Request is placed by client in 25Live, selecting preferred virtual location as location
 - a. In the event the client submits an ITS ticket for a virtual event request, ITS will coordinate the information with the Events Team to ensure it is documented in 25Live
2. Events team assigns coordinator and tentatively schedules event in 25Live
3. 25live reservation creation initiates an ITS ticket
4. Available technologies for event are identified or confirmed (i.e. Zoom, MS Teams) by ITS and communicated to client.
5. Once platform is determined, a checklist is assigned by event coordinator and given to client to complete.
6. Completed checklist is submitted to Event Team and subsequent meetings to plan event can commence, including but not limited to: account creation for virtual platform, training for client and their team, testing the technology and practicing the event structure
7. Virtual event occurs
8. Post-Event debrief as needed

Checklist

The checklist will detail specific tasks within the following areas to ensure are considered. Follow up meetings with these offices will likely be needed.

- ITS / Enterprise Collaboration/ GMU-TV
- University Events, Arlington Events, SciTech Events
- Event Services – ONLY IF ACTUAL SPACE IS BEING USED
- Housekeeping – ONLY IF ACTUAL SPACE IS BEING USED
- Health & Safety – ONLY IF ACTUAL SPACE IS BEING USED
- Fiscal services if cash handling
- OSI if student event

Tech Options

Please refer to **Available Videoconferencing Options** section within this document.

Resources

- 25live Training for space requests (<https://events.gmu.edu/scheduling/>)
- ATI@Mason (Assistive Tech Initiative) (<https://ati.gmu.edu/livecaptions/>; ati@gmu.edu)
- Today@mason (gmutoday@gmu.edu)
- Mason360 (<https://mason360.gmu.edu/>)
- Student Media (<https://studentmedia.gmu.edu/>; stumedia@gmu.edu)

Client Run Event Request

Process

1. Optional request is placed by client in 25Live, selecting preferred virtual location as location

- a. In the event the client submits an ITS ticket for a virtual event request, ITS will coordinate the information with the Events Team to ensure it is documented in 25Live
2. Events team assigns coordinator and tentatively schedules event in 25Live
3. Events Team submits ITS ticket for requested technology
4. A list of available technologies that are both Mason supported (i.e. Zoom, MS Teams) is provided to client. ITS to assess if capacity is already met on Mason supported platforms and therefore not an option to the client.
2. Once platform is determined, guidelines are given to the client to assist them in the process. Completion and submittal of the checklist/guidelines are not required for client run virtual events, but can help in their planning process.
3. Virtual event occurs

Tech Options

- Internal
 - MS Teams
 - Zoom
 - GMU-TV

Resources

- 25live Training for space requests (<https://events.gmu.edu/scheduling/>)
- ATI@Mason (Assistive Tech Initiative) (<https://ati.gmu.edu/livecaptions/>; ati@gmu.edu)
- Today@mason (gmutoday@gmu.edu)
- Mason360 (<https://mason360.gmu.edu/>)
- Student Media (<https://studentmedia.gmu.edu/>; stumedia@gmu.edu)

Best Practices and Considerations

To ensure the most success for a virtual event, please consider the following tips and considerations:



Allow for Enough Lead Time - to ensure availability of resources and proper planning time it is good to submit the initial virtual events request as soon as the event is known, no later than 3 weeks in advance. This allows for time to coordinate, assign all resources and complete a test/walk through prior to the event.

Good Internet Connection – its best for the host and presenter of the virtual event to be located with good internet connection, which will help prevent interruptions or delays throughout the session due to bandwidth issues or loss of internet connectivity.

Tips on Keeping Your Virtual Event Safe – as events are held virtually there are more potential threats with outside entities hijacking a meeting or attending without an invitation. Please see the link below for information on keeping your online meeting safe:

<https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/how-do-i-secure-my-online-meeting/>

Good Videoconferencing Etiquette - remember that you are in a meeting; give participants your full attention as if you were in the same room. Here are some key dos/don'ts:

- **The 8 Do's of Video Conferencing Etiquette**
 - Do be courteous to other participants
 - Do speak clearly
 - Do keep body movements minimal
 - Do move and gesture slowly and naturally
 - Do maintain eye contact by looking into the camera
 - Do dress appropriately
 - Do make the session animated
 - Do be yourself and have fun!

- **The 7 Don'ts of Video Conferencing Etiquette**
 - Don't make distracting sounds
 - Don't shout
 - Don't make distracting movements
 - Don't interrupt other speakers
 - Don't carry on side conversations
 - Don't wear "noisy" jewelry
 - Don't mute your video