

# Inclusive meeting guidance: Getting the most from your meetings

The purpose of this guidance is to ensure that all colleagues have the opportunity to participate in meetings and are not consistently excluded by the timing of when these meetings are held.

These inclusive guidelines not only ensure that all colleagues have the opportunity to engage in discussions and decisions that affect their workplace environment, but ensure that meetings benefit from a wide range of perspectives that maximise the opportunities for effective discussion and best use of everyone's time. This guidance fully supports the University's ambition to have an inclusive workplace culture, and aim to ensure that work-life balance is optimised wherever possible.

Consideration should be paid when scheduling meeting at a certain time mindful of attendees' working patterns, including caring for relatives, school drop-offs, and part-time working. Good practice includes:

- Checking that your planned meeting doesn't clash with any other big events in the local unit, Faculty or University that are already scheduled, and/or any major religious festival or school/university holidays. The Inter-Faith network has a [list of religious festivals](#) (major and minor) celebrated every month in the UK, which is regularly updated and you may find helpful. Scheduling outside the school and/or University term times might limit the attendance of parents and carers and those university colleagues undertaking a period of research or scholarship outside their teaching responsibilities.
- Thinking about the timing during the day. In some areas of the University, some regular meetings (e.g. seminar series, group meetings, staff meetings) now take place in locally agreed meeting hours. It is not that meetings can only be held during these times, but careful attention should be paid to arranging meetings at times when all colleagues may not be able to attend.
- Due to the time difference it is often necessary to arrange meetings involving colleagues in Singapore and Malaysia either at the start or end of the day. This is unavoidable, however, in addition to the guidance above, organisers could also consider alternating the timing of meetings with those campuses so it is not solely one party that is staying late/coming in early.
- If one-off meetings outside agreed local hours are necessary then the organiser(s) should consider: if the event is a one-off or less frequent social gathering that will take place at the end of the working day then ensure plenty of notice is given or consider allowing staff to bring their children (please note that some university venues are not suitable for this)
- Giving participants plenty of notice (at least two weeks where possible) to allow alternative caring arrangements or similar to be put in place.
- Sending meeting documents at least 1 week in advance so that people who don't work on a full-time basis have equal opportunity to read documents in advance of the meeting to allow full participation.
- Ensuring that if a member of staff is unable to attend that they are not disadvantaged in any way and are given the opportunity to comment before or after the meeting as appropriate
- Rotating the timing and location of the meetings if possible to encourage attendance from staff with different commitments and working patterns.
- Where a meeting is scheduled outside the local agreed meeting hours, giving the reason for the timing of the meeting in the meeting request (e.g. to involve Singapore-based colleagues, diary clashes, to allow for clinic hours for NHS staff).
- Allowing deputies to attend meetings where appropriate, which also provides development opportunities.
- Give consideration as to whether the meeting room has an induction loops and check this in advance using University information about rooms.

Approved by Newcastle University Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, Jan 2020.