Starting with Zoom for Students

Zoom is a video chatting service for which the University of Scranton purchased a license in response to the COVID-19 situation. Zoom provides a video chat feature that allows a lot of users to share their screens at the same time, and it also allows one user at a time to share his or her screen. In addition, it allows a room to be divided into Breakout Rooms, which is important for labs and group activities. This guide seeks to give a brief overview of Zoom as intended to be used by students attending labs and classes.

Zoom may take a few attempts to learn due to the amount of settings available. The easiest way to learn it, however, is by experimentation. Because the University of Scranton has purchased a schoolwide license, any student of faculty member can host a meeting. Thus, one good way to learn would be to start a meeting yourself (see below) and experiment with all the features.

Logging In

To log in to Zoom using your university-provided account, first sign in to my.scranton.edu. On the top right of the screen, click on the square of nine dots next to your name, and you will see a menu. The Zoom icon is at the bottom-right of that menu; click it.

After you do this, you will reach a screen that gives you three options: join a meeting, host a meeting, or sign in. I recommend that you always click on Sign In as you can do the other two things after you have logged in. This guide assumes you have done this. No further credentials are needed; you will be brought to your Zoom home page.

Adjust Settings

One of the first things you should do when you launch Zoom is investigate your settings. You can access your settings by looking on the left of the screen under the Zoom logo and clicking on **Settings**. The amount of settings you can adjust is nearly overwhelming. However, I would like to turn your attention to a few particular settings.

For convenience, under Schedule Meeting, it would probably be convenient to enable **Join before host** so that attendees do not have to wait to open the Zoom app, which could delay the start of a class, lab, or meeting.

Under In Meeting (Basic), for certain classes, especially labs, you may want to enable **File Transfer**. This will allow you to send files within a meeting chat. If you are concerned about security, you can check the box below it to allow specific file types to be sent. For example, for Computer Science students, you can put .java, .zip, .pdf, .docx, .xls .

Next, under In Meeting (Advanced), under Breakout Rooms, you should **check the box**, This will allow the host to partition attendees into Breakout Rooms before the meeting starts. This may be critical for certain labs in which students work in groups. By having every student allow this, the groups can be created before the meeting starts, so the lab can begin quicker. There is more information about Breakout Rooms below.

Finally, note that there is a section in Settings called Email that controls what email notifications you will receive for your Zoom meetings. While the default settings will likely suffice, you can go here to control your notifications. However, be careful if you do this; you may miss classes or important meetings if you turn off too many notifications.

IMPORTANT: If you are in a meeting and use the web interface to adjust your settings, your changes may not be applied to the current meeting. Especially if you are an instructor, make sure you configure your settings appropriately before going into a meeting.

Join a Meeting

When you receive an email notification about a Zoom meeting to which you are invited, you will receive either a URL, a Meeting ID, or a Personal Link Name. If you receive a URL, to join the meeting, you simply click on the URL.

The Meeting ID is a randomly generated code; it is contained at the right of the URL. If you only have the Meeting ID or the host’s Personal Meeting ID, go to your Zoom home page and click on **JOIN MEETING** on the upper right of the web page. You will be prompted for the Meeting ID or Personal Link Name; paste it into the box and click Join to join the meeting.

Once you complete any of these steps, several screens will appear. These screens are part of the Zoom app. Your browser performs temporary downloads that enable the app to run every time you enter a meeting (you do not need to download the app separately). Wait a moment for all the pop-ups to appear. The top one should ask you if you want to use computer audio or a phone-in. If your computer’s speakers have poor quality, you can call into the meeting by clicking Phone Call and calling one of the numbers. You will then need to enter the meeting ID and your Participant Number. Otherwise, you can join the meeting using the computer audio. Once at least one person enables video sharing, you will see the video screens of yourself and the other users in the meeting.

Note: If the host did not enable Join before host, you must wait until the meeting start time before you join the meeting.

Schedule and Host a Meeting

Your professors and TA’s should be the ones who host class meetings. However, being that we are no longer on campus, to imitate study groups and other meetings, you may want to consider hosting your own meetings. To create a meeting for which you are the host, on the upper right of your Zoom home page, click **SCHEDULE MEETING**. You will then be given a variety of options to set up your meeting. Make sure you make the correct start time and date, and make sure you use an appropriate duration (you cannot make a meeting last indefinitely). If you want to have a meeting occur periodically, such as a weekly study group or a biweekly virtual club meeting, you can make the meeting a Recurring Meeting. In addition, make sure the people joining the meeting are aware of the time zone for the meeting because attendees may be in many different time zones.

Once you schedule the meeting, you will be taken to another screen that has the URL for the meeting. To have others join your meeting, simply copy this URL and distribute it to the people you wish to invite (email, etc.). You can also provide the meeting ID for people to use to join the meeting.

Meeting: Video and Audio Control

Once you are in the meeting, you should see the videos of all people in the meeting. If someone joined but is not using video, only his or her name and profile picture will be displayed. On the bottom left of the Zoom app, you will notice a **microphone symbol** and a **video symbol** on the bottom left. To mute or unmute yourself, click on the microphone symbol. To stop or resume your video, click the video icon. There are also some shortcuts to do this (**Alt + A** for audio, **Alt + V** for video) that you can find in the detailed Zoom tutorials. If you want to switch your audio or video source input or output (for example, you start a meeting, and then you plug in your mic, which allows you to use your mic output), hover over the the mic or audio symbol and find the arrow that appears to the right of it, and click it. This will allow you to select your input and output sources for audio and video. To make things easy, you can select, “**Same as System**.”

Meeting: Screen Share and Annotation

In a meeting, one person can share his or her screen at a time. For lectures, the instructor may disable screen share because there is no need for students to use it then. However, for other occasions such as labs, it will probably be enabled, and when screen share is enabled, once the video chat is enabled, you will see a **yellow button** at the bottom of the app if you want to share your screen. Once somebody shares his or her screen, the app layout will change including going full screen; you can minimize the screen after this happens on the top right of the app. By default, everyone’s video displays will appear at the right of the shared screen.

After clicking on Share Screen, the user has a variety of options. You can share any active applications (for example, jGRASP for computer science), your screen, or a whiteboard. Clicking on a specific application will only show that application even if you have another window over it. Sharing the screen will show the screen as it appears to the sharer except that the Zoom app will not appear to viewers. The whiteboard is a plain white space intended for annotation only.

Once a user has activated screen share, everyone can see the user’s screen with one exception: the screen sharer’s Zoom app will not be displayed, meaning that others will immediately be able to view the application under the Zoom window. The user’s audio will still work. The person sharing the screen can end the share by finding a button at the top. Other users will see the shared screen until the screen share ends.

After selecting any of the screen share options, as long as it is enabled (it is by default; this can be changed in the settings), the sharer and all views can annotate the shared screen. The annotations include text, basic drawing utilities, and markers. The viewers and the sharer can clear their own annotations, and the sharer can clear all the annotations. To annotate a shared screen, click on the **dropdown menu at the top**, and then click, “**Annotate**.” This will open the annotation menu near the top of the screen, which contains all the annotation tools. To stop annotating the screen, click the **red “X”** at the right of this menu. To save the annotated screen, there is a button next to this “X” that allows this. The sharer will see these options automatically until the screen share ends. The sharer can always annotate the screen.

PROFESSORS: When you are sharing the screen, there is an important option to record the share. To find this, move your cursor to the top of the screen until the menu appears, and under the More dropdown menu, you can use Record to the Cloud or Record on this Computer. If you want to save the recording locally, you must use a supported version of the client. To view recordings saved to either the cloud or your machine, go to your profile page on the web application and find Recordings on the left. You can also find the supported versions of the client here.

Recordings are a very useful feature, but they can take a long time to process to the cloud, even if they are very short. If you plan to record a lecture or a presentation that needs to be distributed on a strict schedule, remember to record the lecture well before it needs to be available. A safe move would be to record the presentation a day before it needs to be made available to others.

Meeting: Remote Control

When a user is sharing his or her screen, other users can request remote control in the **same dropdown** (in the top menu when a screen is being shared). If the sharer allows this, the user who requested it will be able to use keyboard and mouse controls while hovering over the shared screen. This can be useful for activities such as preparing data sheets in groups, editing a paper, or paired programming. Only one user can have remote control of the screen at a time. While this is happening, the sharer can still control the local machine.

While Remote Control can be very useful for certain activities, make sure there is proper communication to avoid buggy behavior. If both users are trying to control the machine at the same time, unexpected behavior may occur. In addition, please be aware that this feature can lag a lot depending on the connectivity for both users. Remote Control does not affect how other users see the shared screen.

Meeting: Breakout Rooms

The host of a meeting has the option to divide participants into Breakout Rooms. These rooms act as their own individual rooms during a single meeting. This can be ideal for labs where groups are formed or group work in class. Users in a Breakout Room can only see each other, and any chat created in a Breakout Room will only be visible to those who were in the room at the time the messages were posted. Like the viewers, the host can only be in one of the rooms at a time, but the host can move between the rooms. The host cannot see chat posted by users if the host is not in the same room. However, any user in a Breakout Room can request that the host come to the room by clicking a button on the bottom menu. The host can end the Breakout Rooms at any time. This will cause a temporary stop before everyone returns to the main meeting.

Further Info

If you are running into issues, you have a few ways to get help. First, you can simply contact the professor or TA in charge of one of your classes. The majority of faculty are resorting to using Zoom for classes and labs, so the person in charge of the class will likely be able to help you with using Zoom as a student. Second, if you are on your Zoom home page (the page after you sign in), you can look on the left to see a small rectangle containing Attend Live Training, Video Tutorials, and Knowledge Base options. The video tutorials may be helpful when you are first using Zoom or a feature of Zoom. The Knowledge Base may be useful for advanced usage.

If you encounter a bug or unusual performance, you can go to the top right of any of the web pages and click on Support to get a list of support options.

There are more features to Zoom than presented here. This guide should alert you to all the features needed to function with Zoom as a student. Feel free to experiment with the software at your leisure.

IMPORTANT: If Zoom goes down due to an overload or crash, stay on alert in your emails as your professors and TA’s will inform you of when Zoom will be back up or if another service will be used for one or more of your classes.