ONLINE Etiquette for Continuing Education Classes at Gates Chili

Leave the keyboard alone

Whether you're diligently taking notes like a model employee or sneakily chatting with your work bestie, the sound of your typing is distracting. It's not only distracting everyone else in the meeting (because your laptop's internal microphone is inches away from your keyboard), it's also preventing you from devoting your full attention to the meeting. Opt for a quality headset or pick up your notebook and pen to take meeting notes instead.

Dress appropriately

Just like you wouldn't show up to an office meeting with pj's on, you should dress appropriately for a virtual conference. Dress as you would in the office conference room. It'll help you stay focused and in "work" mode, even if you're miles away at home. It's still a work meeting and you should treat it that way. You can put the pj's back on when the camera stops rolling.

Be aware of your surroundings

Your coworkers won't be able to hear your ideas or take you seriously when there is a pile of dirty clothes in the corner behind you. You also want to avoid looking like you work from the inside of a cave because of bad lighting. Adjust your work setup so that you face a window or are exposed to plenty of light. And make sure your background is professional and work appropriate! This means:

- No beds (unmade or made) in the background
- No messy rooms or open closets where everyone can see your clutter
- No NSFW artwork

You don't need to be at your office desk to look professional, but your co-workers don't need to see your messy bedroom or kid's toys everywhere. Whether you're in a comfortable chair in the lounge, or sitting at a kitchen worktop, pick a location with plenty of light and a neutral background.

Mute your microphone when you're not talking

Just like there wouldn't be dogs barking or kids crying in a regular conference room, you should do your best to keep background noise to a minimum during an online meeting. You don't want your co-workers–or worse, potential business partners–struggling to follow what you're saying because they can't hear you over background noise. Make sure others around you know that you're working so they respect your space.

There's nothing more frustrating than hearing that alien echo noise from conflicting microphones. Save everyone from the ear-splitting madness by joining the meeting while on mute! Unless you live alone, your house is probably pretty noisy these days. **Muting** your microphone when you're not speaking gives other participants the ability to chime in and share their thoughts without distraction or frustration.

Speak up

When you enter a small meeting (around two to five people) announce yourself when you join. It can be awkward to hear the "someone-just-joined" ding followed by silence. When you hop on the meeting, introduce yourself and say hi – just make sure not to interrupt someone mid-sentence. Don't be afraid to project your voice, too! Your team will appreciate being able to hear you without having to strain their ears or turn their volume all the way up.

No food allowed

Try to eat a snack before your virtual meeting. No one wants to see you stuff your face with chips while discussing important business matters. Not only is it distracting to others, you won't be able to focus on the task at hand because you'll be worrying about dropping crumbs all over your keyboard.

Stay seated and stay present

It may be tempting to check your inbox or carry on a side conversation during a dull moment in a meeting, but don't do it! You might miss out on key information or an opportunity to give input. If you're using your webcam, use attentive body language: sit up straight, don't make big extraneous movements, and don't let your eyes wander too much.

Speak clearly and use good manners
There's nothing worse than someone talking over you during a regular meeting, and it's the same in the virtual world. Extra patience and your best conversational tone and manners are a must! Announce yourself when you sign in to the meeting, but only during a pause when no one else is speaking.

When it's your turn to talk, speak clearly and slowly enough for everyone to follow what you're saying. Remember that sound quality is very important in this medium.

Be prepared for technical difficulties
It's impossible to prepare for every eventuality, but you should log on to the meeting in good time to make sure everything's working properly. Make sure the connection is stable and that you have a backup plan if necessary.

Just like in a regular meeting, ensure you have access to all of the resources you will need, such as financial data. If you're accessing documents on a Cloud platform, ensure everything is working beforehand.