

The COVID-19 pandemic put the world in a state of disarray, leaving schools and various institutions scrambling to find an alternative. If there is one good thing, it is that it has opened doors and new opportunities to connect people from all over the world through the advancement of technology. At such times, having an expertise on virtual presence is more important than ever. Be prepared for your next virtual meeting by using the tips below.

1. Find a **quiet environment** where you will not disturb others or be disturbed during the meeting. Be prepared and aware of your surroundings; avoid distractions and be mindful of your appearance and environment. If you do not have access to a quiet environment, you can contact Calvin's Career Center to request a meeting room.
2. If you don't want people to see the environment from which you are meeting, platforms such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams often have virtual backgrounds you can use.
3. Make sure the room or space you are in is **brightly lit**.
4. Consider using **headphones or earbuds** with a mic if possible, to avoid background noise.
5. Remember to **turn off any distractions**. This includes setting your phone or any other electronic devices on "Do Not Disturb" mode.
6. Be **mindful of time zones**. You may be meeting with recruiters and professionals who live in Los Angeles, London, or Singapore. Make sure you are sensitive of time zone differences. Try to find a time that is mutually convenient for both parties.
7. Join your meeting **early** to avoid potential technical issues. Make sure to test your technology in advance. This includes camera/video, Wi-Fi, and screen sharing.
8. Familiarize yourself with the **main menu options** within the platform you are using, such as mute/unmute button, start/stop video, share screen, and other items.
9. Make sure that your laptop background or web browser bookmarks are **free of any distraction**.
10. Remember to **maintain eye contact**. Keep your eyes focused on the camera, not the screen image of the other person. Bonus tip: raise your webcam to eye level.