

Planning Guide for Virtual Events

Need help? Email events@ucdenver.edu

If you intend to plan an In-Person Event please fill out the [Application to Host an In-Person Activity](#)

STEP 1: Design Your Event

It can be helpful to approach the design of a virtual event in the same way you would a live event. Ask yourself questions such as:

- What is the purpose or goal of this event? And how does it align with the CU Denver mission?
- Who is the target audience?
- How many attendees do you expect?
- What will be the format and length of the event?
- On what platforms do you want your virtual event to be broadcasted?
- What content do you want to be broadcasted to your audience? (visuals, videos, photos, etc.)

Best practice alert: Keep virtual events to no more than 2 hours and consider spreading longer events over multiple days.

To help format the event, ask questions such as:

- Will there be a 30-minute presentation from a single speaker, followed by a 30-minute Q&A?
- Could it be an hour-long panel discussion based on pre-submitted questions?
- Would breakout sessions be helpful for further discussion?
- What is on your event's agenda?
- How will you engage your attendees?
- How will you promote your events? What incentive can you offer? (information, free swag, raffle entry, etc.)
- Will you encourage audience participation through a hand raise, chat, poll, or Q&A feature or shared screen features?

Best practice alert: You might consider a few different options to keep your audience engaged.

These decisions will inform your next steps!

STEP 2: Choose Your Date(s) and Time Carefully

Ensure that your date/s do not conflict with a major University event or announcement. (Check CU Denver Facebook calendar)

For best participation numbers, ensure that the time is meeting the needs of your audience and has allowed for enough time to get the word out.

STEP 3: Build Your Team

Who are the key players producing your virtual event?

- **The Host** - This person will be responsible for technical aspects of your event.
- **The Co-Host(s)** - A backup to the host with access to similar technical controls as the host, but with attention to attendees during the event.
- **Breakout Room Moderators** - If including Breakout Rooms in your event (only available on the Zoom meeting platform), these moderators will facilitate a productive discussion. This may or may not be your event speakers/panelists.
- **Panelists and Speakers** - By building a skilled event production team, speakers & panelists will be empowered to give their full attention to engaging attendees with content.
- **Production support** - Make sure to have someone monitoring the overall production quality. If your event requires tech support, be sure to contact those individuals plenty of time in advance.

Best practice alert: In addition to the speaker or panelists, it is advisable to have a “supporting cast” of one or more assistants for any virtual event.

Those involved with the execution of the virtual event will be helping to assist:

- Welcoming attendees, curating an intimate atmosphere in a not-so-intimate virtual platform
- Moderating chat, polls, Q&A
- Removing disruptive attendees, if needed

STEP 4: Determine Technology Needs

The type of event you would like to host will be the determining factor in which platform best suits your needs. Further down in this document we have provided a guide to the many software resources at your disposal.

Consider the following:

- Does the event need to be Live or can it be prerecorded? (prerecorded content may still be broadcast live)
- How much audience participation is needed? (if none—consider prerecording the event)

- Will you want to post a recording of the event later on? (permanently on which platforms?)
- Which virtual space makes the most sense for your audience? (Facebook, Zoom, YouTube, etc.)
- How many virtual platforms does the video need to be broadcast on simultaneously?
- How many speakers/ panelists will need to be featured on the screen at one time?

Best practice alert: You may start by reaching for the stars, in hopes to accommodate many of these questions. Make sure that your technology endeavors align with the skill set of those who will be conducting the event.

STEP 5: Adjust Video Settings & Controls to Protect Your Event

Careful consideration of video settings is critical to a successful event where audience members are active on the platform.

Best practice alert: Understanding Zoom settings helps to assure a smooth-operating virtual event. Without the proper settings, your event could be compromised by a virtual protest or the sharing of inappropriate content by a rogue attendee.

For help navigating Zoom settings and controls for your event, consult this [webpage](#). CU Denver OIT also provides Zoom support and is continually updating their resource page and Zoom security recommendations. We encourage you to continue to check back frequently.

Note: not all settings can be adjusted through the Zoom Chrome extension. To review and change your account's settings, access Zoom through the ucdenver.zoom.us portal.

STEP 6: Choose a Registration Platform

(This applies to events that are not being Live Streamed on an open platform)

To further enhance the security of your event and reduce the risk of Zoom “bombing”, only provide Zoom access links to registered or invited participants. Many tools exist for doing so, including University approved vendors like Cvent, OneDrive Forms and Formstack.

If your event is being recorded, it is important to include University approved language on your invitation and registration forms. This will notify participants that their images and/or names will be recorded and potentially broadcast, and provide them with opt-out instructions if they do not want their identities captured.

Zoom also offers a free registration feature with options to manually approve registrants and pre-assign attendees to Breakout Rooms (in Zoom meetings only). However, opportunities to brand your registration page and communications are limited.

Best practice alert: Consider scheduling reminder emails as your event approaches. If you are using visual components like slides and polls, or facilitating Q&A, make sure to encourage attendees to join by computer and not by telephone in your pre-event communication. Otherwise attendees may be disappointed by missing out on key content.

STEP 7: Advertise & Promote Your Event

How are you going to promote this event to the community to yield engagement?

(Before reaching out to University Communications for the support or promotion of an event, make sure to have considered all the following questions.)

- Who is your audience? (everyone, prospective students, current students, faculty & staff, the city of Denver, etc.)
- How many live attendees do you anticipate will watch? This is important when telling TSS your needs.
- How far in advance should the event be advertised to the audience?
- Think about how you are going to incentivize your audience to tune in. Do you have information they want to know? Is there a prize they can win?
- Are there any graphics, images, or videos that can be used to promote the event?
- Are there any additional resources, links, or webpages you can offer your audience while promoting the event?
- What are 3 key points to why your audience should tune into this event? (use these as the language around promoting the event)
- What is the official title of the event? Short description?
- On what channels should the event be advertised? (@CUDenver, @CUDenverAdmissions, @CUDenverInternational, etc.)
- On what platforms should the event be advertised? (Facebook event, Twitter, Instagram stories, Instagram, etc.)
 - If you create a Facebook Event, ALWAYS add @CUDenver as a co-host so the event gets added to the main CU Denver Facebook Calendar.

(Note that you can have some "ghost" panelists that can help on the backend fielding/answering questions and not be seen).

UCOMM can help promote events that are broad to large audiences, such as prospective students, current students, parents, staff, or faculty. If the audience base is niche or limited, reach out to the CU Denver offices and accounts that make sense, and are relevant to your event.

STEP 8: Prepare Your Speakers

When inviting panelists and speakers to participate, obtain permission to use images -- this will help you promote the event to attendees and use photos and videos to share event content when the event is over.

If applicable, gather and organize content for a presentation, creating slides with the University or department logo when appropriate (consult the University's branding policies on CU Denver name and logo use).

Best practice alert: Create a script for each portion of the event. If using a panel format, develop questions ahead of time and provide these to the speakers to allow for adequate preparation.

Schedule a practice session or schedule them onto the call-in advance for speakers and panelists to test software, applications, and your video settings and controls.

STEP 9: Produce Your Event

Just as any in-person event, a little preparation goes a long way. Key players should receive a briefing and agenda at least 24 hours in advance. On the day of your event, consider having the host (the person responsible for the technical components of your event) sign in 60 minutes in advance to confirm settings*, controls, and the video/audio connection. Speakers, panelists, and co-hosts should connect at least 20 minutes prior to test their connection, find the best lighting, make sure the correct permissions are in place, and review the agenda.

- Consider muting email/Teams audio or any other notification systems
- Make sure all participants visible names are correct.

Best practice alert: Consider including a welcome slide that will be posted for attendees that join before the event begins. Additionally, include a contact page or closing slide at the end of the event for attendees who have additional questions or want to get involved.

*If your Zoom settings have been set to mute participants upon entry, disable screen sharing or video - don't forget to give your presenters back their permissions. You can do this in the Manage Participants window.

STEP 10: Follow-up with Attendees

After the event, you may want to follow up to share recordings or resources that were discussed, conduct a survey to collect feedback from attendees that may help you plan future virtual events, and/or market future events. Consider this option before selecting the type of virtual event you will conduct. Some platforms (with prior sign-ups) allows for easier participant collection to provide this evaluation piece.

Software Systems

There are several free and paid software providers that create a platform for conducting a virtual event.

CU Denver Affiliated Software (Free)



Zoom is the perfect software to host an event for a specific audience. It provides many options from having multiple speakers, controlled audience, and breakout sessions. This platform is great to engage with a live audience and person to person interaction. The Zoom platform can be connected with Facebook Live for addition live stream options.

For a [Guide to Zoom Conferencing](#)

Camtasia

Camtasia allows you to create video tutorials and presentations like a pro! This software will help in assisting to create a prerecorded video to host an event or post an announcement not in real time.

To be [granted access contact OIT](#)



Cvent can assist in the registration and promotion for both in-person and virtual events. They have additionally developed a thorough [guide](#) of suggestions on planning a virtual event.

Public Free Software



Open Broadcast Software is a free domain that allows you to Live stream your event to **1** platform. It is configured with Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and more. You can bring in a number of screens from different platforms to broadcast or record. A note that engagement (through comments) is conducted on the streamed site and not OBS.



Facebook Live allows you to broadcast up to two speakers on the platform within a Facebook page. A plus to this option is that it will automatically notify any followers that you have gone live. Other pages may

also share your video onto their page for a wider audience reach. Audience members can comment within the video and those remarks pop up within the video feed.

Paid Software

The following are a selection of platforms that offer live streaming at a high-quality level. Note that there are many more companies that provide a similar experience. Find the right platform to meet your individual needs!



Be.Live is a monthly subscription software that connects to Facebook LIVE. It allows you to join up to 4 speakers at a time within the video, while allowing for other speakers to be held in a waiting room. It's connection to Facebook allows you to directly answer comments from the portal or control presenting them on the screen. With lots of graphic options you can customize screen background, add logos, and adjust fonts to names of speakers.



Restream.io is a platform that funnels a video out to multiple streaming platforms. Using this software, a prerecorded video or a screen showcasing your live feed can be transmitted out onto multiple platforms at one time.



Wirecast Telestream is a comprehensive platform to develop and stream complex video content. The platform will allow you to create transitions among streams and display several images onto the screen at once. It also allows for simulcasting or streaming to multiple platforms at one time. This software takes a significant amount of knowledge to run and create a perfectly seamless viewer experience.

How to Connect Zoom to FB Live

STEP 1: Enable Facebook Live streaming for webinars on Zoom

Enable Facebook Live streaming for webinars in your ZoomAccount

1. As an owner or account admin, sign in to the Zoom web portal.
2. Click Account Management, then Webinar Settings.
3. Click Edit to the right of In Webinar Settings.
4. Enable Allow hosts to live stream to webinars, and then enable Facebook.

Allow live streaming meetings

- Facebook
- Workplace by Facebook
- YouTube

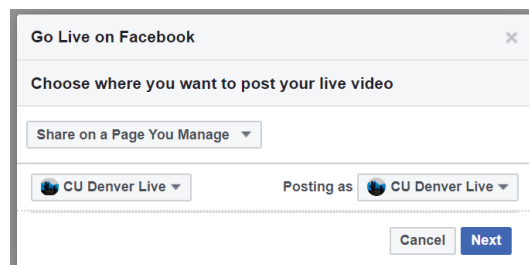
5. Click Save Changes.

STEP 2: Launch Zoom Meeting

1. Start your webinar or meeting.
2. In the meeting/webinar controls, click More.
3. Click Live on Facebook.

Your default browser will open and you will be prompted to log into Facebook if you aren't already logged in.

4. Sign in to Facebook.
5. Choose where on Facebook you would like to Go Live.



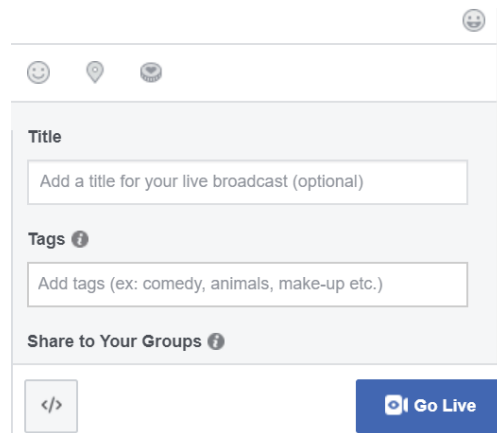
6. Click Next.

Note: If you are not able to start the live stream, clear your browser's cache and cookies, then try again.

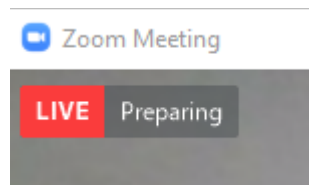
Zoom does not support the new Facebook Live Producer. If you see a notification to try to the new Live Producer, click Dismiss.

STEP 3: Go Live

1. When you are ready to start the broadcast on Facebook, click Go Live. (Adding Title and Tags make your video easier to find for the audience)



2. Wait for the notification from the Zoom client that your Webinar is Live on Facebook, then begin your Webinar.



3. Streaming stops when you end the webinar or meeting or click the Stop Streaming icon on the Zoom client.

How to Connect OBS to FB Live/ YouTube/ Etc.

It's not simple, but you can do a lot more with Facebook Live if you stream through Open Broadcaster Software (OBS) which is free. Streaming Facebook Live via OBS only works for pages from your desktop.

STEP 1: Download OBS

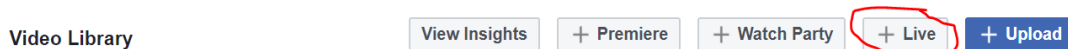
1. Download [OBS](#)
2. After learning the intricacy of OBS, prepare the video content that you would like to stream. This can be premade videos, slideshows, screen grab of Zoom, and more.



STEP 2: Connect to your platform (Example using Facebook)

In each scenario you will need to find your platform's **Stream Key** to connect OBS to the desired output platform. This example will take you through Facebook but can be replicated with some variation for other platforms.

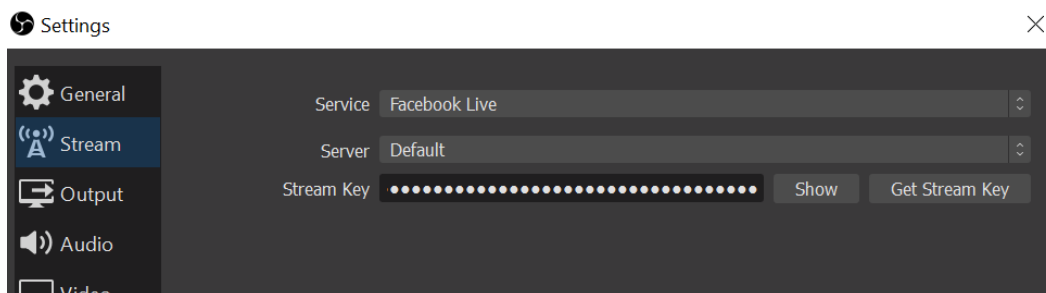
1. Open the desired Facebook Page – Select More - Click Publishing Tools at the top of your page
2. Click Video Library on the left side of your screen under Videos
3. Click +Live on the top right beside +Upload



4. Scroll down the pop-up window until you see Live Stream Setup. Copy the Stream Key.

Stream Key

5. Now open up OBS and click Settings
6. Select Stream, then in Service select Facebook Live
7. Paste your Stream Key from the Facebook pop-up window into the Stream Key box in OBS



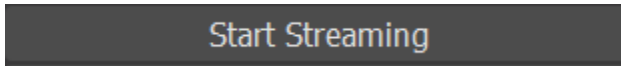
8. Click Okay.

STEP 3: Start Your Stream

1. Ensure you have your clips and video ready to go!

Note: If you want just the video or desktop audio from Zoom to go through. MAKE SURE to mute the mic/aux that will come from your compute microphone.

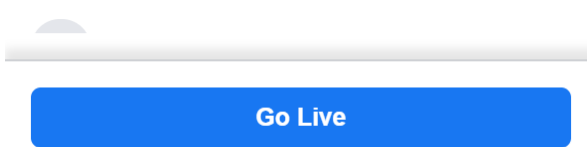
2. Select the Start Streaming button on OBS.



3. Return to your Facebook Live window and you should see and hear a preview of what your OBS is broadcasting. Don't worry, you can still fix your hair – you're not live yet!



4. Once you are satisfied with everything, click Go Live



5. When your ready to stop the video select Stop Streaming in OBS. It will automatically end the Facebook Live video.

