

# Virtual Office Hours Complete Guide

## In This Document

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
What are virtual office hours? .....	1
What do I need to conduct virtual office hours? .....	2
How do I invite students? .....	2
What do I do before my meeting? .....	2
What do I do after my meeting? .....	2
Additional Tips .....	3
<b>Creating Virtual Office Hours in Teams .....</b>	<b>4</b>
Why should I use Teams for my virtual office hours? .....	4
Scheduling Virtual Office Hours in Teams .....	4
Invite Students to Your Virtual Office Hours .....	8
<b>Creating Virtual Office Hours in Zoom .....</b>	<b>9</b>
Why should I use Zoom for my virtual office hours? .....	9
Option 1: Schedule Zoom Meeting with Waiting Room Feature .....	9
Option 2: Schedule Zoom Meeting and Require Registration .....	14
Registering for an Office Hours Appointment .....	18

## Introduction

### What are virtual office hours?

Virtual office hours are just like on-campus office hours. They are scheduled blocks of time throughout the week for students to visit faculty members to discuss their course, assignments, and progress. When in-person interactions are difficult, virtual office hours are a great solution for having face-to-face interactions in a socially-distanced way.

Winthrop recommends two main tools for hosting virtual office hours: **Microsoft Teams** and **Zoom**. Instructions for both platforms can be found below. Please use the table of contents to navigate this document or visit the [Video Conferencing](#) page of the Winthrop website.

## What do I need to conduct virtual office hours?

- **Computer** with reliable internet connection
- **Sound output device**  
Headphones/earbuds are recommended but computer speakers are also acceptable
- **Microphone**  
Can be built into your computer or you can use headphones/earbuds with a microphone
- **Webcam**  
Optional, but preferred for face-to-face interaction
- **A quiet space** to conduct your meetings

## How do I invite students?

This varies a bit depending on the platform and features you use to create your virtual office hours, but for the most part, each platform will generate an invitation link that students can use. You can then send this link to students in an email or include it in your syllabus of your Blackboard course.

## What do I do before my meeting?

1. **Schedule specific and consistent virtual office hours** at the beginning of the course and communicate them to your students. If you like, you can use a calendar or scheduling system like Doodle to allow students to sign up for specific time slots.
2. **Let students know your expectations.** For many students, virtual office hours are a new concept, too. Consider discussing the process of using virtual office hours and your expectations for office hours in your first class session. Some things to consider:
  - a. Can students come and go during your office hours or should they sign up for a specific time slot?
  - b. Can students share their screens during the meeting?
  - c. What is the purpose of your office hours?
  - d. Are you recording the meetings?
3. **Sign into the meeting a little early** and be ready before the scheduled time.
4. **Test your camera and sound settings** before the meeting to make sure everything is working.

## What do I do after my meeting?

Other than ending the session, you don't need to do anything after your virtual office hours. However, if you would like to continually improve your sessions, consider these tips:

- Poll your students on the effectiveness of your virtual office hour sessions.

- Invite specific students to future follow-up sessions if needed.
- Explore support resources to learn more about getting the most out of your virtual office hours.

### Additional Tips

- Set up your camera in a place that has a background free of distractions.
- Consider using a virtual background to clean up your video or add some fun to your meetings.
- Have adequate lighting in front of your face so students can more easily see you.
- Turn off distractions like cell phone rings and email notifications, especially if they create noise.
- When no one is in the call, turn your mic and/or your video off. Turn them back on when a student is about to enter the meeting.
- Be patient with yourself and your students.

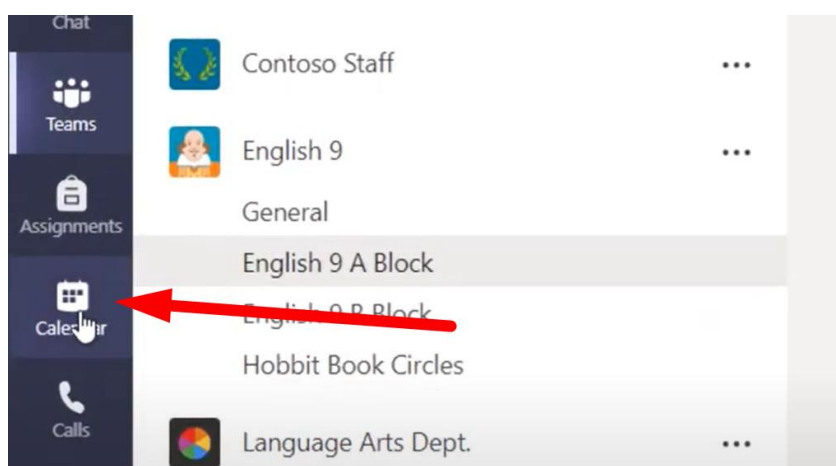
# Creating Virtual Office Hours in Teams

## Why should I use Teams for my virtual office hours?

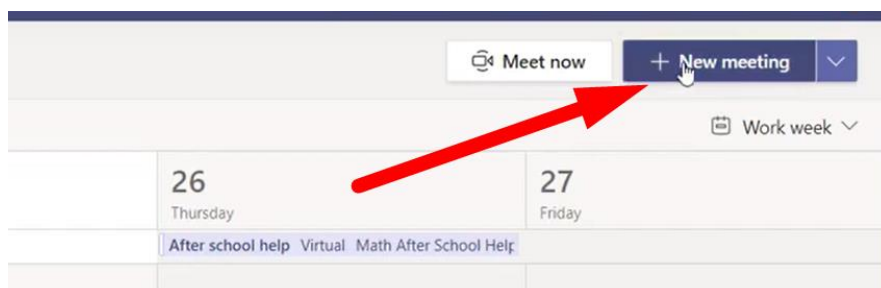
- Teams syncs seamlessly with your Outlook calendar and automatically sends calendar invites to any participants you invite.
- You can set Teams meetings to recur throughout the week like in-person office hours would.
- With Optional Attendees, students can join if they want to but are not required.
- In your call, you can see your students who join and interact with them live.
- When a student joins your office hours, they can share their screen with you if they need to show you a problem they are having.
- Students can join a Teams call even if they do not have Teams installed on their computer.
- Students can join a Teams call from a mobile app if they do not have access to a computer.

## Scheduling Virtual Office Hours in Teams

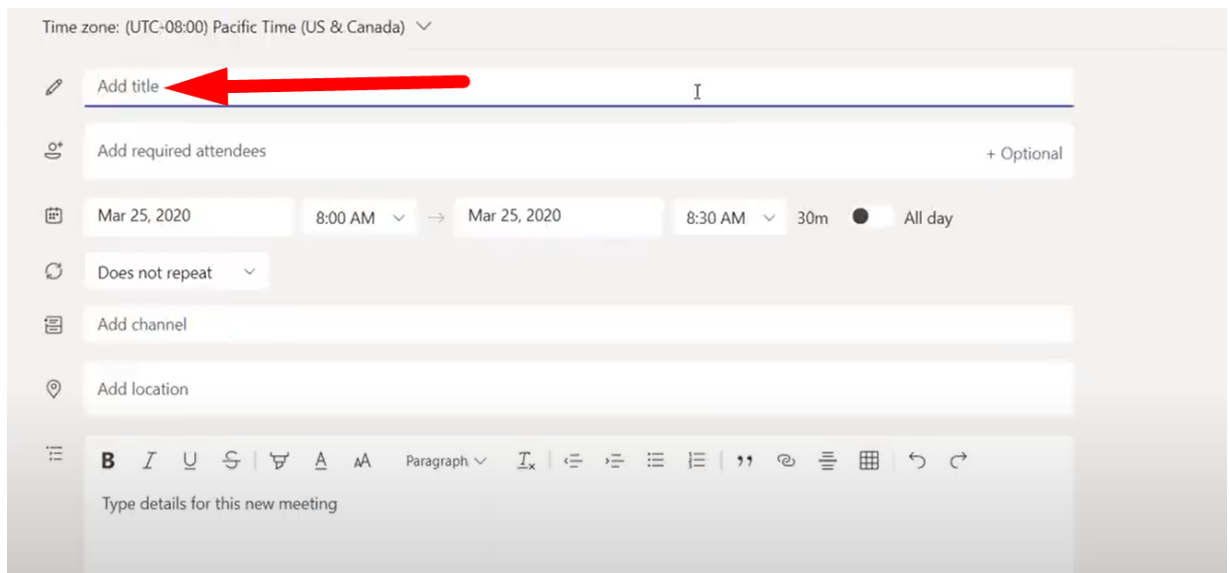
1. Open **Teams** and click on the **Calendar** menu. This is located on the left side of your screen.



2. In the upper right hand corner of your calendar, click on the **New Meeting** button.

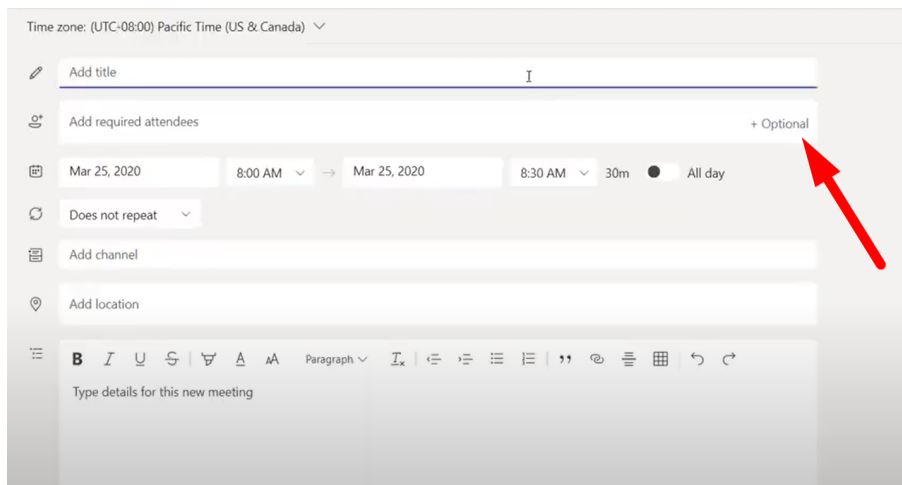


3. A new meeting window will pop up. Here, you can add a **title** for your meeting.



The screenshot shows the Microsoft Teams meeting creation interface. At the top, the time zone is set to '(UTC-08:00) Pacific Time (US & Canada)'. Below this, there is a text field labeled 'Add title' with a red arrow pointing to it. Underneath the title field is a section for 'Add required attendees' with a '+ Optional' link to the right. The next row contains date and time pickers: 'Mar 25, 2020', '8:00 AM', a right arrow, 'Mar 25, 2020', '8:30 AM', '30m', and a radio button for 'All day'. Below this is a 'Does not repeat' dropdown menu. Further down are fields for 'Add channel' and 'Add location'. At the bottom, there is a rich text editor with various formatting options (bold, italic, underline, link, unlink, text color, background color, paragraph, bulleted list, numbered list, indent, outdent, quote, link, unlink, insert meeting, undo, redo) and a placeholder text 'Type details for this new meeting'.

4. For office hours, you can add students as **Optional Attendees** here. You need to have at least one attendee (either optional or required) in order for Teams to generate a **Join Meeting** link. If you would like, you can add all of your students as optional attendees.



This screenshot is similar to the one above, showing the Microsoft Teams meeting creation interface. A red arrow points to the '+ Optional' link located to the right of the 'Add required attendees' text field. The rest of the interface, including the title field, date/time pickers, repeat settings, channel/location fields, and the rich text editor, is identical to the previous screenshot.

5. Choose the start date and time for your office hours as well as your end date and time.

Time zone: (UTC+08:00) Pacific Time (US & Canada) ▼

Add title

Add required attendees + Optional

Mar 25, 2020 8:00 AM → Mar 25, 2020 8:30 AM 30m All day

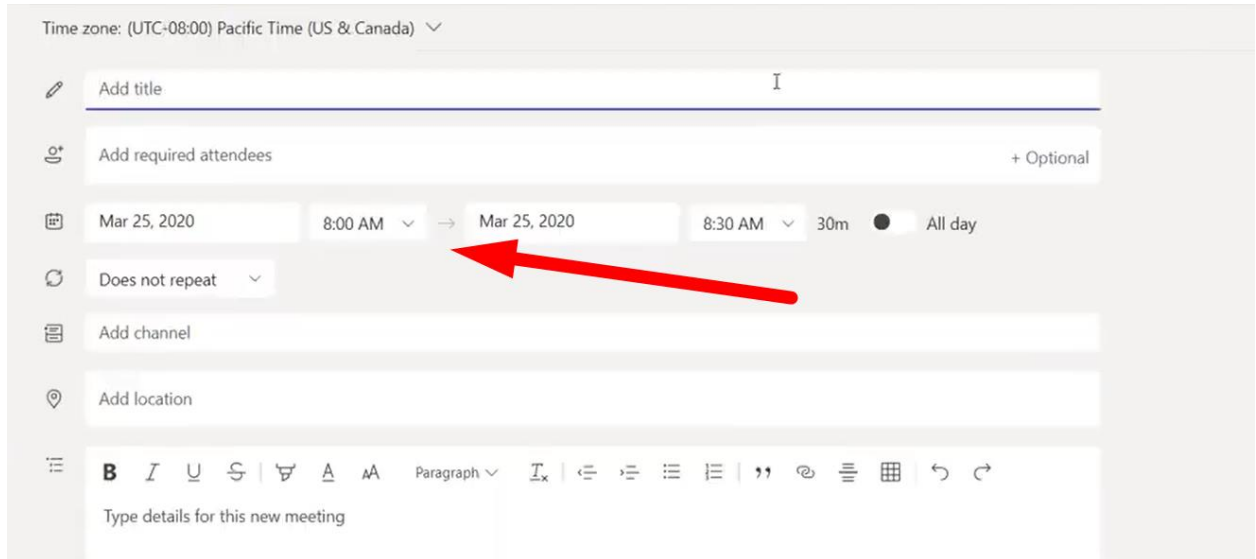
Does not repeat ▼

Add channel

Add location

**B** *I* U Paragraph ▼

Type details for this new meeting



6. To set office hours that repeat throughout the week, click on the down arrow to the right of **Does not repeat** and choose **Custom**.

Does not repeat ▼

Does not repeat

Every weekday (Mon - Fri)

Daily

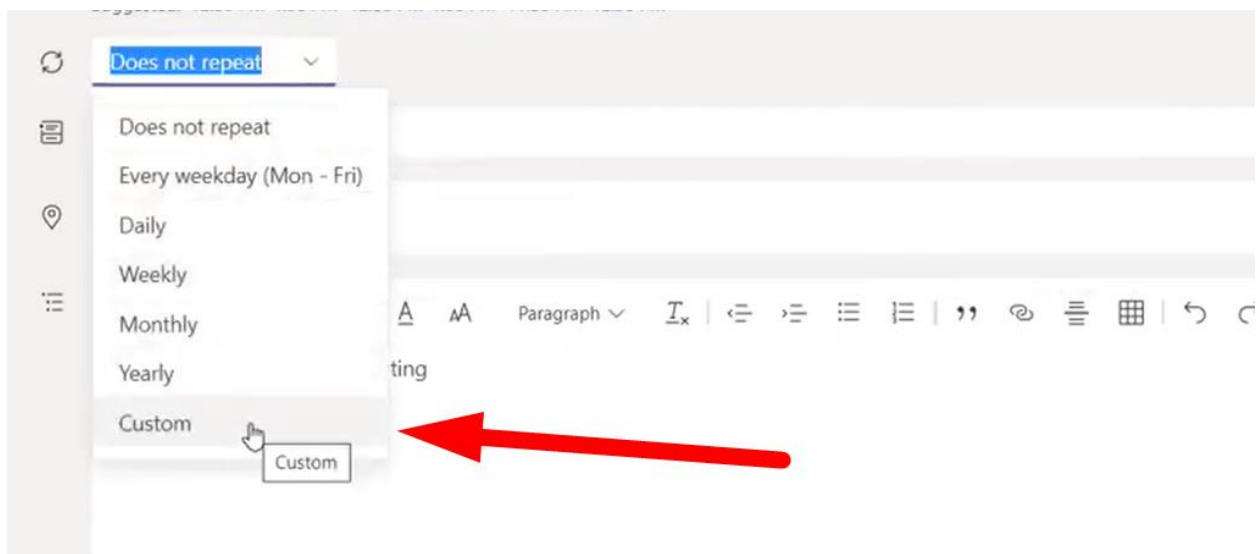
Weekly

Monthly

Yearly

Custom

Custom



7. Select the day you would like your office hours to begin, how often you would like them to repeat, the days you would like to have office hours, and the day you would like your office hours to end. When you are done, click **Save**.

**Custom recurrence**

Start

Repeat every

S M T W T F S

End

Occurs every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday starting 3/30

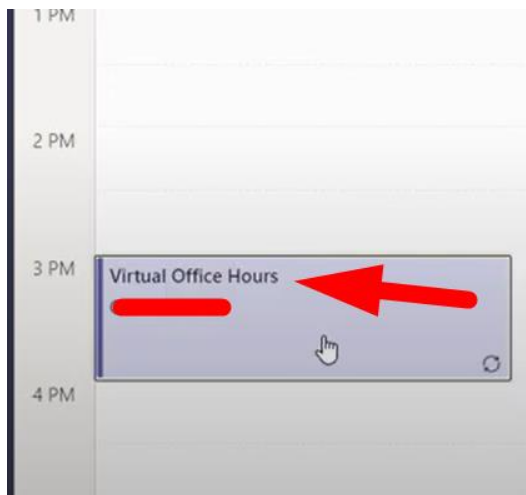
8. Back in the new meeting window, click **Send**. This will add the office hours to your **Calendar** and send a calendar invite to any **Optional Attendees** you listed.

+ Optional

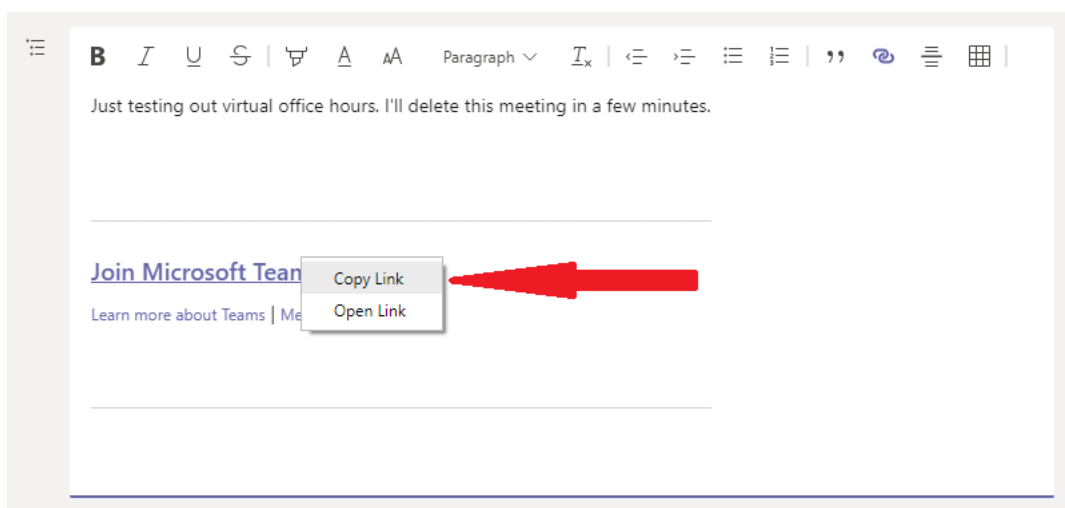
## Invite Students to Your Virtual Office Hours

If you did not include all of your students as **Optional Attendees** when you created your office hours, you can share your invite with a link.

1. In your Teams **Calendar**, click on the office hours meeting.



2. In the body of the meeting description, right click on the large Join Microsoft Teams Meeting and click **Copy Link**.



3. Paste this link in an email to students or on Blackboard for your students to access. When students click on this link, Teams will open in a browser, but they can choose to join the meeting using the desktop app if they have it.



# Creating Virtual Office Hours in Zoom

## Why should I use Zoom for my virtual office hours?

- Zoom offers a Waiting Room feature which allows you to use the same meeting link for all students, but only admit one student at a time for privacy.
- Connect with your students from the office or at home.
- In your call, you can see your students who join and interact with them live.
- When a student joins your office hours, they can share their screen with you if they need to show you a problem they are having.
- Students can join a Zoom call even if they do not have Zoom installed on their computer.

## Option 1: Schedule Zoom Meeting with Waiting Room Feature

This option uses a waiting room feature where students can join the meeting at any time, but you can admit them one at a time.

1. Visit **Winthrop-edu.zoom.us** sign in using your Winthrop credentials



2. You will be directed to your **Meetings** page. Select **Schedule a Meeting**

- Enter your **Meeting Details**. Be sure to leave **Require Registration** unchecked and to check **Enable Waiting Room**. If you would like your office hours to repeat weekly, check **Recurring Meeting** and fill out the recurrence information.

zoom 1.888.799.9666 SALES PLANS

Profile

**Meetings**

Webinars

Recordings

Settings

Account Profile

Reports

Attend Live Training

Video Tutorials

Knowledge Base

My Meetings > Schedule a Meeting

Schedule a Meeting

Topic: ACAD 101 Office Hours - Fall 2020

Description (Optional): Visit my office hours on TR from 10am - 11am

When: 08/25/2020 10:00 AM

Duration: 1 hr 0 min

Time Zone: (GMT-4:00) Eastern Time (US and Canada)

☒ Recurring meeting: Every week on Tue, Thu, until Dec 2, 2020, 29 occurrence(s)

Recurrence: Weekly

Repeat every: 1 week

Occurs on: ☐ Sun ☐ Mon ☒ Tue ☐ Wed ☒ Thu ☐ Fri ☐ Sat

End date: ☒ By 12/02/2020 ☐ After 7 occurrences

Registration: ☐ Required

Security: ☒ Passcode 744332 ☒ Waiting Room

- Click **Save**.
- From the Summary/Invite screen, copy the **Invite Attendees** link. Send this link to students via email or make it available on your syllabus or Blackboard course.

My Meetings > Manage "Virtual Office Hours"

Topic: Virtual Office Hours

Description: Test

Time: Jul 28, 2020 12:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Add to: Google Calendar Outlook Calendar (.ics) Yahoo Calendar

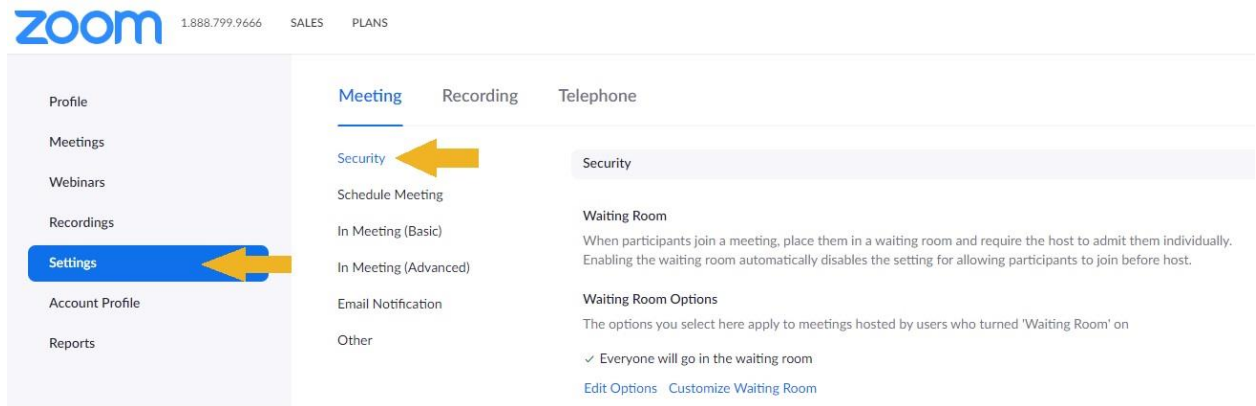
Meeting ID: 958 3238 3235

Security: ☒ Passcode \*\*\*\*\* [Show](#) ☒ Waiting Room

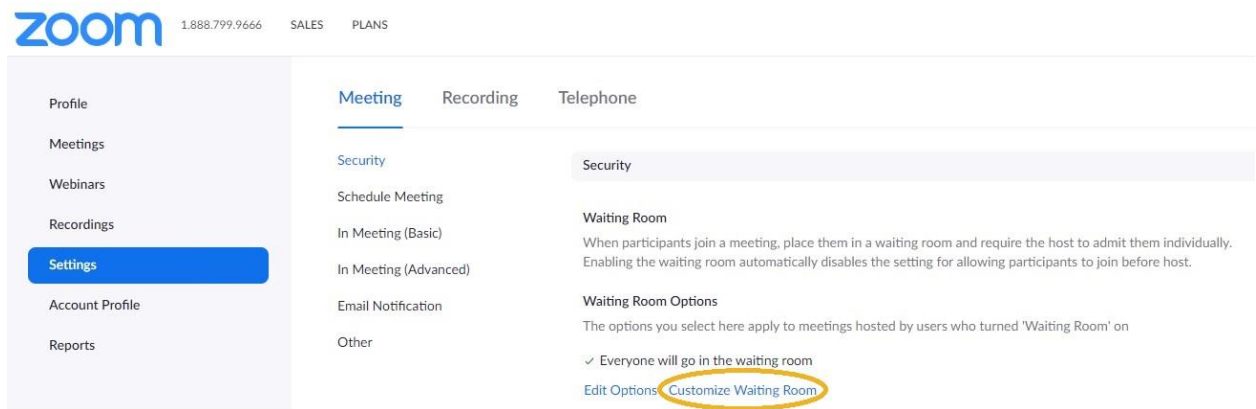
Invite Link: <https://winthrop-edu.zoom.us/j/95832383235?pwd=Ni9FcWY1MTQxTy82WDFyYWx3MEEx0dz09>

Video: Host Off, Participant Off

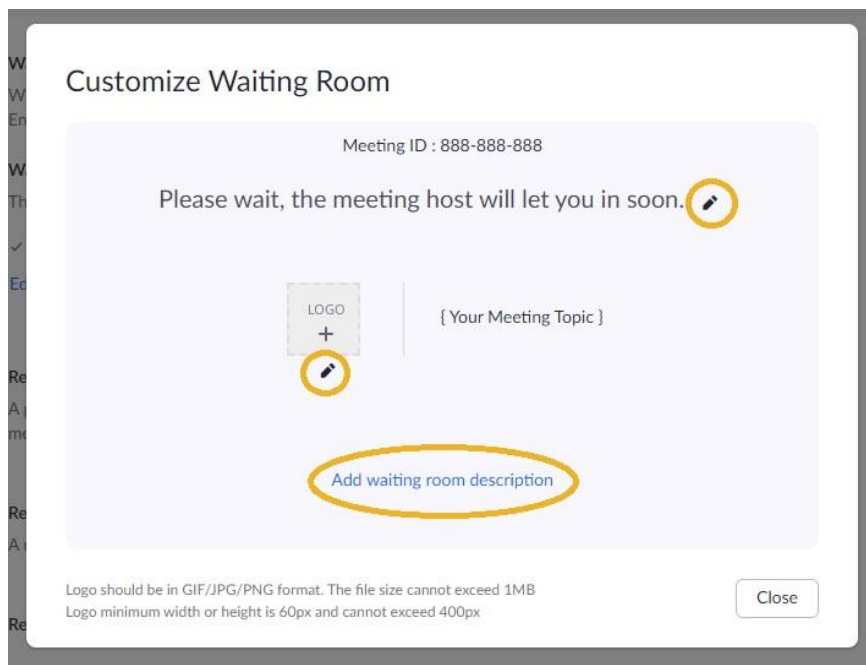
6. Customize your Waiting Room experience. On the left side of the screen, click **Settings**. You should default to the Security section, but if not, click on **Security**.



7. In the Security section, click **Customize Waiting Room**.



8. A new dialog box titled **Customize Waiting Room** will appear. Here, you can adjust your Waiting Room settings to customize what your students will see when they join your meeting. You can change the **waiting room message**, upload a default **thumbnail photo**, and edit the **description** of the waiting room by clicking the pencil icons and blue text shown by the circles.
- Winthrop recommends that you edit the title and description to give students more information about what they are waiting for and why. This information will display to students as a pop-up window when they join your meeting. You can ask students to please wait to be admitted to the meeting or to email you directly to schedule an appointment.
  - If you would like to upload a logo or image to appear in the Waiting Room, please note the file restrictions listed at the bottom of the window.



9. When you have changed the **waiting room message** and/or **description**, click the **check marks** shown by the arrows to save your changes. Then click **Close** to close the window.

## Customize Waiting Room

Meeting ID : 888-888-888

I'm currently working with another student. Please wait.

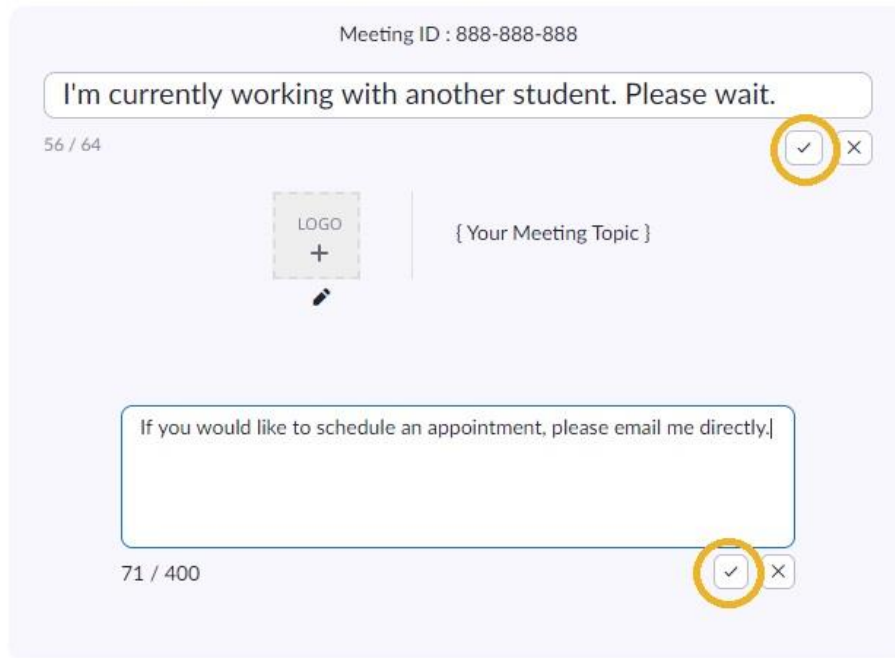
56 / 64

LOGO  
+

{ Your Meeting Topic }

If you would like to schedule an appointment, please email me directly,

71 / 400



Logo should be in GIF/JPG/PNG format. The file size cannot exceed 1MB  
Logo minimum width or height is 60px and cannot exceed 400px

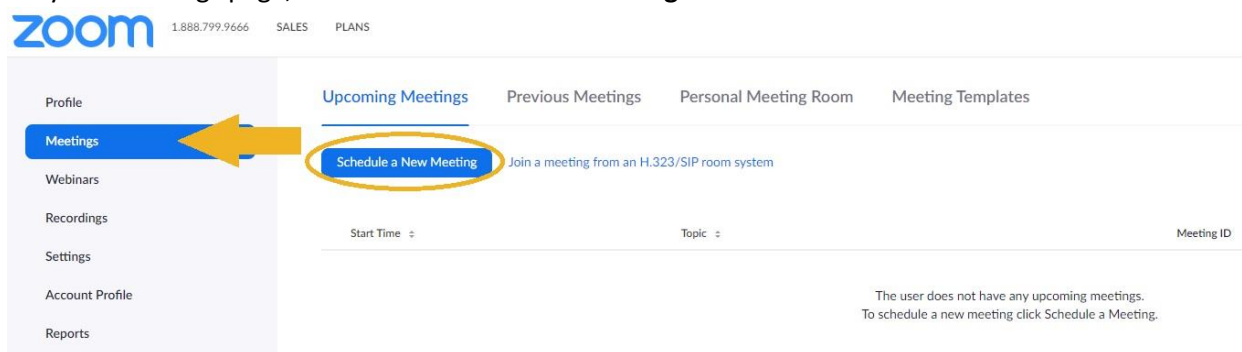


Close

## Option 2: Schedule Zoom Meeting and Require Registration

This option is ideal for by-appointment-style office hours. Pair this with a scheduling tool like Doodle or a simple sign-up document and you can let students sign up and register for specific time slots.

1. Log into Winthrop-edu.zoom.us
2. On your Meetings page, select **Schedule a New Meeting**




3. Enter your meeting details. Be sure to check the **Registration Required** checkbox and select **Attendees need to register for each occurrence to attend**. If you would like your office hours to repeat weekly, check **Recurring Meeting** and fill out the recurrence information. You may also want to enable the **Waiting Room**. This ensures that students who may join your office hours before their appointment time do not immediately join your conversation with another student.

 This screenshot shows the 'Schedule a Meeting' form in the Zoom web interface. The left sidebar is the same as in the previous image. The main content area is titled 'Schedule a Meeting' and contains several sections:
 


- Topic:** A text field containing 'ACAD 101 Office Hours - Fall 2020'.
- Description (Optional):** A text field containing 'Visit my office hours on TR from 10am - 11am.'
- When:** A date field set to '08/25/2020', a time field set to '10:00', and an AM/PM dropdown set to 'AM'.
- Duration:** A field set to '1' hour and '0' minutes.
- Time Zone:** A dropdown menu set to '(GMT-4:00) Eastern Time (US and Canada)'.
- Recurring meeting:** A checkbox is checked, with the text 'Every week on Tue, Thu, until Dec 2, 2020, 29 occurrence(s)'. Below this is a box containing:
  - Recurrence:** A dropdown menu set to 'Weekly'.
  - Repeat every:** A field set to '1' week.
  - Occurs on:** Radio buttons for days of the week, with 'Tue' and 'Thu' selected.
  - End date:** Radio buttons for 'By' and 'After'. 'By' is selected, with a date field set to '12/02/2020' and a dropdown for '7' occurrences.
- Registration:** A checkbox is checked, with the text 'Required'. Below it are three radio button options:
  - Attendees register once and can attend any of the occurrences** (unselected).
  - Attendees need to register for each occurrence to attend** (selected).
  - Attendees register once and can choose one or more occurrences to attend** (unselected).
- Security:** A checkbox for 'Passcode' is checked, with a text field containing '744332'. A checkbox for 'Waiting Room' is also checked.

4. Click **Save** to save the meeting.

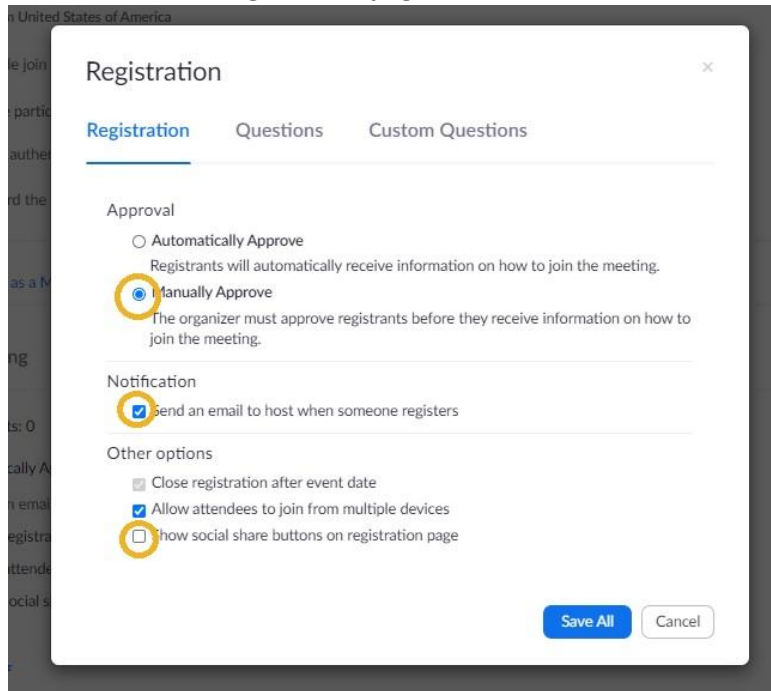
5. The **Meeting Summary** page should open for you. Here, copy the **Registration URL** shown by the arrow and share this link with your students via email or make it available in your syllabus or on your Blackboard course.

Topic	ACAD 101 Office Hours - Fall 2020	
Description	Visit my office hours on TR from 10am - 11am.	
Time	Aug 25, 2020 10:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada) Every week on Tue, Thu, until Dec 1, 2020, 29 occurrence(s) <a href="#">Show all occurrences</a> Add to <a href="#">Google Calendar</a> <a href="#">Outlook Calendar (.ics)</a> <a href="#">Yahoo Calendar</a>	
Meeting ID	915 9894 3509	
Security	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Passcode ***** <a href="#">Show</a> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Waiting Room	
Registration Link	 <a href="https://winthrop-edu.zoom.us/join/91598943509">https://winthrop-edu.zoom.us/join/91598943509</a>	
Video	Host	Off
	Participant	Off

6. At the bottom of the summary page, go to the **Registration** tab and select **Edit**.

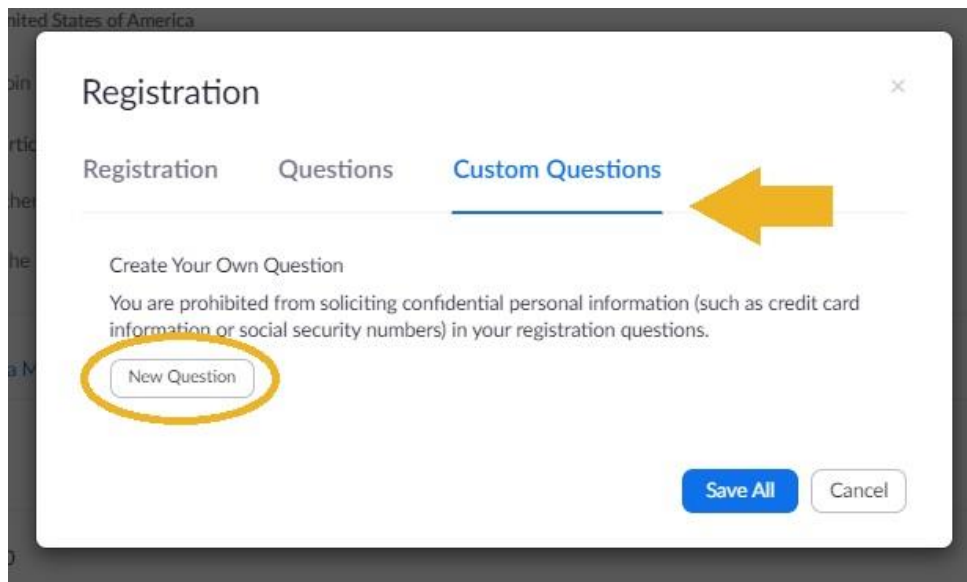
<b>Registration</b>	Email Settings	Branding
Manage Attendees	Registrants: 0	
Registration Options	Automatically Approved <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Send an email to host <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Close registration after meeting date <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Allow attendees to join from multiple devices <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Show social share buttons on registration page	<a href="#">View</a>  <a href="#">Edit</a>

7. A Registration pop-up window will appear. On the **Registration** tab, select **Manually Approve**, check the **Send an email to host when someone registers** option, and **uncheck Show social share buttons on registration page**.



The screenshot shows a 'Registration' pop-up window with three tabs: 'Registration', 'Questions', and 'Custom Questions'. The 'Registration' tab is active. Under the 'Approval' section, the 'Manually Approve' radio button is selected. Under the 'Notification' section, the 'Send an email to host when someone registers' checkbox is checked. Under the 'Other options' section, the 'Show social share buttons on registration page' checkbox is unchecked. The 'Save All' button is highlighted in blue, and the 'Cancel' button is in grey.

8. Before clicking **Save All**, go to the **Custom Questions** tab. There, click **New Question**.



The screenshot shows the 'Registration' pop-up window with the 'Custom Questions' tab selected. A yellow arrow points to the 'Custom Questions' tab. Below the tabs, the text 'Create Your Own Question' is followed by a warning: 'You are prohibited from soliciting confidential personal information (such as credit card information or social security numbers) in your registration questions.' A 'New Question' button is highlighted with a yellow circle. The 'Save All' button is highlighted in blue, and the 'Cancel' button is in grey.



9. Use the options presented to ask a question about what the student would like to discuss with you during your meeting. You can make this an open-ended **short answer** question or you can use **single answer** to provide options for your students to choose from such as “assignment review,” “test prep,” grade inquiry,” etc. When you have completed the fields, click **Create**.

Registration

Registration Questions Custom Questions

Create Your Own Question

You are prohibited from soliciting confidential personal information (such as credit card information or social security numbers) in your registration questions.

Type ☒ Short Answer ☐ Single answer

Required ☒

Question

Create Cancel

Save All Cancel

10. When you click **Create**, you will be given the option to add additional questions. If you wish, you can add a single answer question as in the example below. To add more answer choices, you can click **Add another answer**. Click **Create** to add the question to your meeting registration. When you are finished with your changes, click **Save All**.

Registration

Registration Questions Custom Questions

Create Your Own Question

You are prohibited from soliciting confidential personal information (such as credit card information or social security numbers) in your registration questions.

Order	Your Questions	Required	
1	What time would you like to meet?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Delete

Type ☐ Short Answer ☒ Single answer

Required ☒

Question

Answer

Add another answer

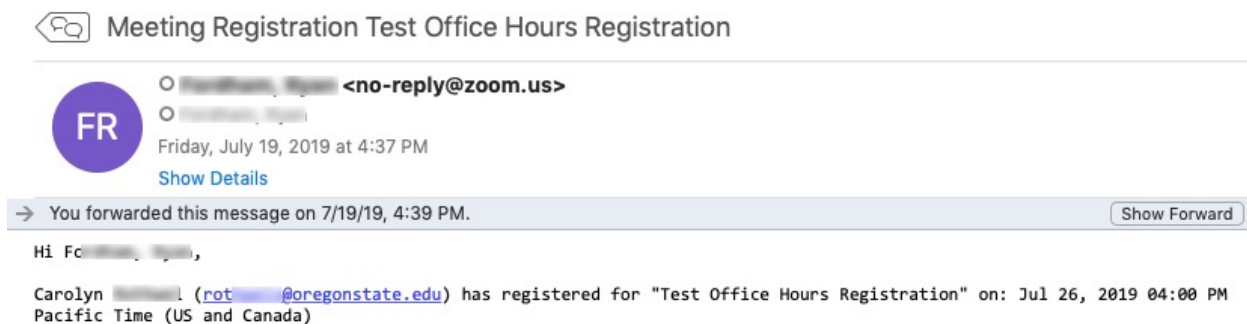
Create Cancel

Save All Cancel

11. After clicking **Save All**, you will be taken back to the meeting summary page. From here, you can share your registration link with students if you have not already. You can also choose to make the link available on your Blackboard course or in your syllabus.

## Registering for an Office Hours Appointment

1. When students visit the link you send them to register for an appointment, they will be asked the questions you configured earlier when you set up the meeting.
2. Because you checked **Manually Approve** and **Email host when someone registers**, you will receive an email like the one below when a student registers. This way, you know if a student plans to attend your office hours on a particular day.



3. If someone registers and you get a confirmation email like the one above, you must log into Winthrop Zoom, view upcoming meetings, and then click the title of the meeting.