Systems Practice Guide: Video Conference Camera Use

DRIVE
Diversity, Representation and Inclusion for Value in Education

www.umassmed.edu/DRIVE

Background/Rationale

- Camera use can encourage engagement, but also create learner discomfort.
- Discomfort can be related to technology, personal privacy, shared spaces, concerns regarding personal appearance and constant self-viewing.
- Reasons to avoid camera use may disproportionately influence underrepresented minorities. Who are twice as likely to be concerned about their homes or spaces being visible and were 12% more likely to cite a weak internet connection[1].

❌ Do not require cameras to be turned on. Consider an "optional but encouraged" policy.

✅ Create 'norms': set clear expectations in advance and explicitly encourage camera use on day one if that is the preference.

✅ Provide sufficient notice to identify and get settled in an appropriate space.

✅ Be flexible, when needed provide an option to private chat if learners state they cannot have their camera on

✅ Suggest incorporating a virtual background if technology and Wi-Fi support use, and share link to available backgrounds.

1. Castelli, FR, Sarvary, MA. Why students do not turn on their video cameras during online classes and an equitable and inclusive plan to encourage them to do so. Ecol Evol. 2021; 11: 3565– 3576.

Questions? Support? Suggestions for improvement?
Contact **drive@umassmed.edu** or use the QR code to share compliments and concerns

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