# Comparison of Accessibility Features of MS Teams and Zoom

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The accessibility criteria in the following table apply to all types of virtual gatherings in MS Teams (meeting, webinar, townhall) or Zooms (meeting, webinar, event) unless otherwise specified. Definitions of the term “meeting”, “webinar”, “townhall” and “event” and further resources are provided on page 2 along with additional resources.

| **Accessibility Criteria** | **MS Teams** | **Zoom** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Allows live events to be **recorded** and shared | P | P |
| **Live closed captions (through AI):** Users can turn on/off live closed captions | P | P |
| Option to assign **live closed-captioner** | X | P |
| **Closed captioning window:** can be enabled. In Zoom, the ASL window is a pop-out window (not embedded within the main Zoom screen). This allows you to move the ASL window to a position that works best for you (e.g., not blocking text on slide). | X | P |
| **Transcription** can be downloaded | P | P |
| Comments typed in the **chat can be downloaded** | X | P |
| Allows participants to attend via a **dial-in phone** | P | P |
| Enables participants who are experiencing difficulties during the event to **contact organizer through direct message** | P | P |
| Users can **magnify** the screen content | P | X |
| Users can **change the background** | P | P |
| Users can use **high contrast mode** | P | X |
| Includes **keyboard shortcuts** | P | P |
| Compatible with **screen readers** | P | P |
| **Dark mode** option | P | P |
| **Focus** mode (i.e., host and co-hosts can view all participants’ videos without other participants seeing each other) | P | P |
| **Spotlight** feature (i.e., puts a user as the primary active speaker for all participants in the meeting and recordings) | P | P |
| **Pin** feature (i.e., individual users can pin a specific video or screenshare for themselves only) | P | P |
| **Green room**: For MS Teams webinars to townhalls and Zoom webinars or events (i.e., not meetings): Participants can test the virtual event space prior to a webinar or event (i.e., green room) | P | P |

## Definitions

**Meeting** ([MS Teams](https://uwaterloo.ca/information-systems-technology-newsletter/winter-2019/feature/microsoft-teams) and [Zoom](https://uwaterloo.ca/educational-technology-hub/catalogs/centrally-supported-tools/zoom)): a communications platform that allows users to collaboratively connect with video, audio, phone, and chat

**Webinar** ([MS Teams](https://uwaterloo.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/ISTKB/pages/2689269765/Overview+of+Teams+Webinars) and [Zoom](https://uwaterloo.ca/educational-technology-hub/catalogs/centrally-supported-tools/zoom)): designed so that the host and any designated panelists can share their video, audio and screen. The host can unmute specific attendees.

**Townhall** ([MS Teams](https://uwaterloo.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/ISTSERV/pages/42583490872/Town+hall+in+Microsoft+Teams)): an extension of Teams meetings, enabling users to broadcast video and meeting content to a large online audience. Townhall are meant for one-to-many communications where the host of the event is leading the interactions and audience participation is primarily to view the content shared by host.

**Event** ([Zoom](https://www.zoom.com/en/products/event-platform/?creative=673196430222&keyword=zoom%20events&matchtype=e&network=g&device=c&zcid=13711&gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAjwoa2xBhACEiwA1sb1BBaXfsf1gu5Hj9naUGlPRDTjVlT3AhES_AfAtucRLkHcoYWTfRuaixoC1dQQAvD_BwE)): a virtual experience platform that allows hosts to create virtual and hybrid conference platforms with links to multiple concurrent sessions (meeting or webinar) and general conference chat outside of specific meetings

## Resources:

UWaterloo Educational Technologies Hum - [Zoom](https://uwaterloo.ca/educational-technology-hub/catalogs/centrally-supported-tools/zoom)

UWaterloo offers MS Teams meetings, webinars, and townhalls. All employees have access to [meetings and webinars](https://uwaterloo.ca/information-systems-technology/news/microsoft-teams-webinars-feature-now-available). Contact IST For [Townhalls](https://uwaterloo.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/ISTKB/pages/2411102247/Town+hall+overview+in+Microsoft+Teams).

[MS Teams Accessibility for Live Events](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/take-advantage-of-the-accessibility-features-in-microsoft-teams-for-a-better-meeting-or-live-event-experience-eec38ba3-689b-4ab4-8b6a-1c1c30259d86)

[Zoom Accessibility FAQs](https://www.zoom.com/en/accessibility/faq/)

[Zoom at Carleton](https://carleton.ca/zoom/zoom-accessibility/)

[MS Teams Overview of Meetings, Webinars, and Townhalls](https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoftteams/overview-meetings-webinars-town-halls)