Joining Educational Research Departmental Seminars via videoconference

Doctoral students in the Department of Educational Research have the opportunity to participate in departmental research seminars from a distance through desktop videoconferencing software. Each seminar speaker will decide whether she or he wants to have their seminar made interactive through desktop videoconferencing therefore some seminars may not be available.

The length of these instructions might imply that joining via video conference is complicated but it isn’t if you follow the steps outlined here and remember to test the v-scene software in advance of the seminar.

What is Desktop videoconferencing?
Desktop videoconferencing allows users to participate in a booked videoconference from a PC or laptop. A seminar chairperson can chair a discussion from a regular videoconferencing venue (room) with several students who are using desktops and laptops at other sites or at home.

How will this work?

1. If you click on the link to the forthcoming events section on the Department of Educational Research website you will be able to see a list of seminars. This list is regularly updated as more seminar titles are added. The seminars available for doctoral student online videoconference participation are all part of the ‘Seminar Series’. Please note that all seminars are on Wednesdays and will run from 12:30 to 2:00 pm (Lancaster time) unless otherwise stated.

2. Please note that the seminar schedule may be revised through the year to accommodate changes to speakers’ schedules. You will receive updates on any changes.

3. You will need a webcam and microphone for your computer. It’s preferable if you use a headset for audio communication.

4. If you wish to attend a seminar via desktop videoconferencing:
   a. Send an email message to EdResSeminars@lancaster.ac.uk that states your name, your email address, and the list of seminars you wish to attend.
      i. If you later find that you cannot attend, please also let us know as soon as possible.
      ii. Requests to attend any given seminar normally must be received a week ahead of time.
   b. We will register participants on a first-come, first-serve basis. A waiting list will be kept for over-subscribed seminars just in case someone has to cancel.

5. Once we have registered you to participate in a seminar, the software will automatically generate an email message to you, telling you how to logon to the videoconference.

6. Remote participants will usually be using v-scene desktop videoconferencing software and you must run a self-test of v-scene desktop software. If this test is unsuccessful, please contact EdResSeminars@lancaster.ac.uk. Further instructions on how to use v-scene software are on pages 3-6 of this document.
Seminar Participation Protocol
Before participating in a seminar, please print this document and have it at-hand.

1. Logon to the conference between 12:00 and 12:15 (Lancaster time) on the day of the seminar. You will not be able to connect to the conference before 12.

2. There will be limited technical assistance available, between 12:00 and 12:25. After that, no technical assistance can be provided.

3. At the beginning of the seminar, on-site participants will be asked to introduce themselves. Following that, the chair will ask videoconference participants to introduce themselves. Please introduce yourself, giving your name, which doctoral programme you are in, your supervisor (if you have one) and your current location.

4. It is critical that you **mute your microphone at all times, except when you are speaking**. This is important to ensure that background sounds do not interfere with the speaker’s presentation. Unmuted microphones can cause an echo effect when other off-site participants are speaking.

5. Speakers typically talk for 35-55 minutes. There may be some interaction between the speaker and on-site attendees during this time, but participation from remote participants can only be managed afterwards – during the question and answer period.

6. There may be a brief refreshment break between the presentation and Q&A period. During this time, the seminar chair may ask you if you would like to ask a question or make a comment.

7. Once the Q&A period begins, the seminar chair will monitor additional remote requests for participation. Please indicate you have a question by raising your hand.

8. The seminar chair will keep a speakers’ list and will address remote participants when their turn to speak occurs.
V-Scene Desktop instructions
V-Scene desktop allows any PC or Mac computer to join a video conference call.

The software runs through a web browser such as Chrome, Firefox or Internet Explorer.
Compatible platforms/browsers include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compatible platforms:</th>
<th>Compatible browsers:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Windows XP SP3 32-bit and 64-bit</td>
<td>Chrome versions 33, 34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windows 7 32-bit and 64-bit</td>
<td>Firefox versions 28, 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windows 8 32-bit and 64-bit</td>
<td>Internet Explorer 8 (Windows XP SP3, Windows 7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Windows 8.1 32-bit and 64-bit</td>
<td>Internet Explorer 9 32-bit (Windows 7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mac OSX 10.6 and later</td>
<td>Internet Explorer 10 (Windows 7 and Windows 8)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internet Explorer 11 (Windows 7 and Windows 8.1)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Safari 5.1.10 (Mac OSX 10.6.8)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Safari 6.1 (Mac OSX 10.6.8, 10.7.5, 10.8.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Safari 7.0.3 (Mac OSX 10.9.3)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Connecting to a Video Conference
To connect to a call you will receive a link via email from ‘V-Scene@ja.net’ to use at the time of the call.

The link will be similar to – [https://v-scene.ja.net/jsp/vc/vc000.jsp?key=04a5334bb249148e222856da34e2c5b3a74ed2c0](https://v-scene.ja.net/jsp/vc/vc000.jsp?key=04a5334bb249148e222856da34e2c5b3a74ed2c0)

Connecting for the First time
The first time you try to connect to V-Scene Desktop you will be prompted to install a Browser plugin. Follow the instructions to download and install the plug in.

- Click Accept and Download Plugin
- The plugin will download – click the download to install
- Click the Proceed Button at the bottom of the page – [Click here to proceed](#)

You may need to allow the plug-in to run depending on your browser settings.

Connecting to the Test Room
If you click the link before the scheduled start of the conference you will be joined to a ‘Test Room’ which will allow you to check your webcam and microphone are working and that you are able to connect to conferences.

When joining the test room you will see the screen at the top of the next page:
Type in your name and ensure that the devices showing in the dropdown boxes are correct for your webcam, speakers and microphone.

You may find that your computer has more than one microphone or webcam so it is important to make sure the right one is selected or others in the call might not be able to see or hear you.

Click ‘Join the Test room’ and a progress bar will appear as you connect to the room, please wait for this bar to fill up, it may take 15-20 seconds.

You may be prompted by a Firewall setting to allow the program to connect, it is safe to allow this.

Once joined you will see the screen below:

You will see video of yourself which shows that your webcam is working.
There is an audio level meter in the middle of the screen which should show Green bars moving up and down. This proves that your microphone is working.

On the left side you should see text on a slide.

You can disconnect from the test room by clicking the red button with an X in it.

**Joining a scheduled Conference**

If you click the conference link once the call has started you will be taken to this page –

![Image of v-scene Desktop](image)

You will be prompted to enter your email address – this verifies that you have been scheduled into the conference call, so you should use the email address that you contact the Dept. with.

Enter your email and Click Verify and you will see this message -

![Email address verified successfully](image)

Once your email address is verified ensure that the correct webcam, speakers and microphone are selected from the drop down lists and click the ‘Join’ button.

A progress bar will appear, wait for this to fill up as you are joined to the conference.

Once joined you will see a screen similar to one at the top of the next page –
You may see other remote participants in the right hand video panes, and the left hand content screen may be showing PowerPoint slides.

**In Call Options**
There are several buttons on the left side of the screen to help you manage your video call

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Button</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Toggle Mute Video</td>
<td>Stop your web cam from showing an image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toggle Mute Speaker</td>
<td>Mute audio coming from the video call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toggle Mute Microphone</td>
<td>This button mutes your microphone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share</td>
<td>If presenting you can show your desktop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote Shares</td>
<td>Show or Hide other participants screen shares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toggle Fullscreen</td>
<td>Makes the call go full screen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Configuration</td>
<td>Allows you to change the webcam, speakers and mic options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change Preview</td>
<td>Change how your video is shown - this alters the way in which the various video panes are laid out on your screen. The “preview” relates to video of your webcam so you can see yourself, or not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disconnect</td>
<td>Leave the Video call</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
V-scene desktop conference software – connection tips

If you have followed the instructions on page 3 for downloading and running the v-scene plugin and are still unable to connect to a current conference please try these suggestions:

1. Have you been able to connect to the v-scene test room?

2. If you have downloaded the v-scene desktop software and are unable to connect to the test room can you try using a different web browser e.g. Google Chrome, Firefox or Internet Explorer?

3. If you are trying to connect to v-scene in your workplace then you may need to ask your IT department for help as your institution’s Firewall settings may be blocking v-scene.

4. If you are having problems with your webcam and/or microphone please check that no other program is using these. Software such as Skype can block other programs from accessing webcams etc. so please log out of these programs and close them.

5. VPN connections – if you are using a home computer connected to a VPN and are unable to connect to a v-scene conference, please disconnect the VPN and try to connect to the conference without using the VPN. Please note however that you should use a VPN if you are trying to connect to a v-scene conference whilst using a publicly accessible computer or a publicly open Wi-Fi connection.

6. If you continue to have connection problems please contact the v-scene helpdesk: vscene@jisc.ac.uk or +44(0) 131 650 4933. Opening times – Monday to Friday 08.00 to 21.00, Saturday 08.00 to 17.00.

N.B. If you lose the connection part way through a video conference please re-join using the link you were originally sent.