

## How to use breakout rooms (BOR) in Zoom meetings

Guidance for the person fulfilling the “host” role in a Zoom meeting, for example an online training course.

By [Dr Ingo Schüder](#), Business Development Manager (Training), [UKCEH](#)

(version 2: 2 July 2020)

Make sure **breakout room is enabled** in your **Zoom settings** before you start the meeting.

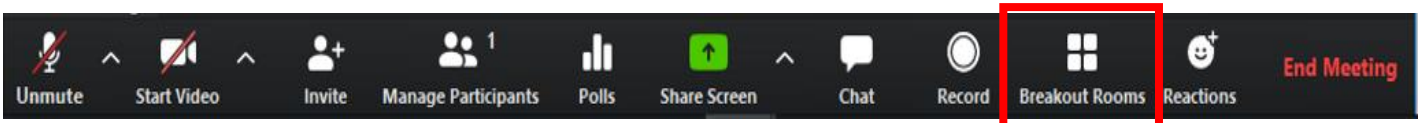
(see separate guidance: [Hosting a Zoom online meeting for online training courses](#))

Short Zoom tutorial video: Host and Co-host in-meeting controls: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362603-What-Are-the-Host-Controls-> (covers general aspects of hosting, but not breakout rooms)

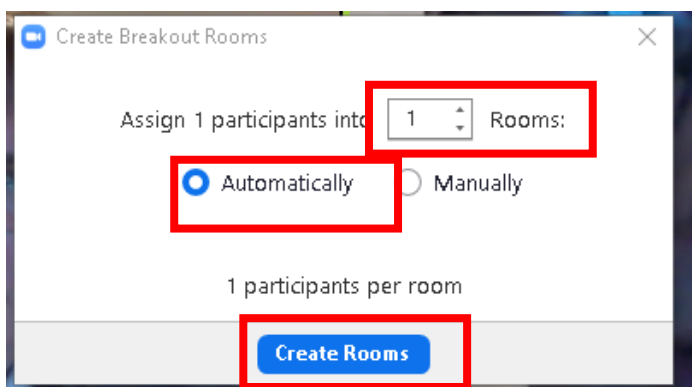
### Step by step instructions

(you need to take these steps when the meeting is live)

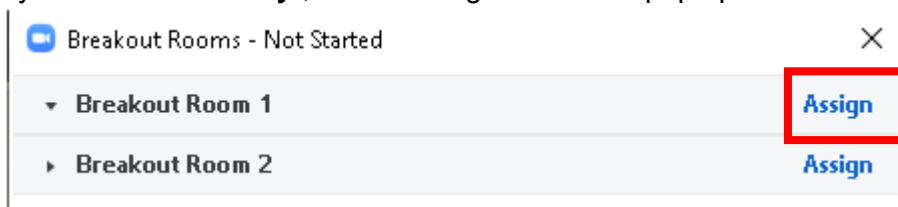
- 1.) You must be the Zoom host, not the co-host, to be able to start a breakout room session. Only the Zoom host can manage the breakout rooms. The Zoom host may have to hand over the host role to you, so you can do the breakout room actions. **Skip to 3. If you scheduled the meeting (i.e. are the Zoom host) and will manage the BOR sessions yourself.**
- 2.) Do this at the very start of the Zoom meeting: The current Zoom host (scheduler of the meeting) needs to hover over the top right hand corner of the video screen of the person they want to make the host. A blue box with three white dots will appear. Click on that box. A drop-down menu will appear. Select option: ‘**make host**’ (I will provide a screenshot later)
- 3.) You may also wish to allocate co-hosts in a similar fashion, e.g. you want trainers, breakout room facilitators etc to be co-hosts, so they have more functions available.
- 4.) Hover over the Zoom Menu bar before you want to start a breakout session.



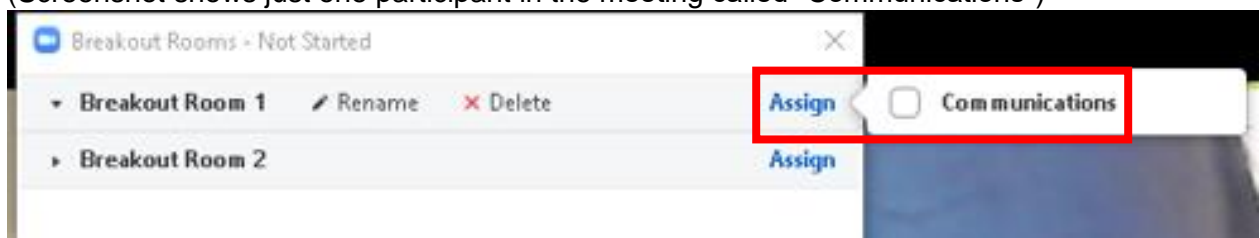
- 5.) This window will pop up.



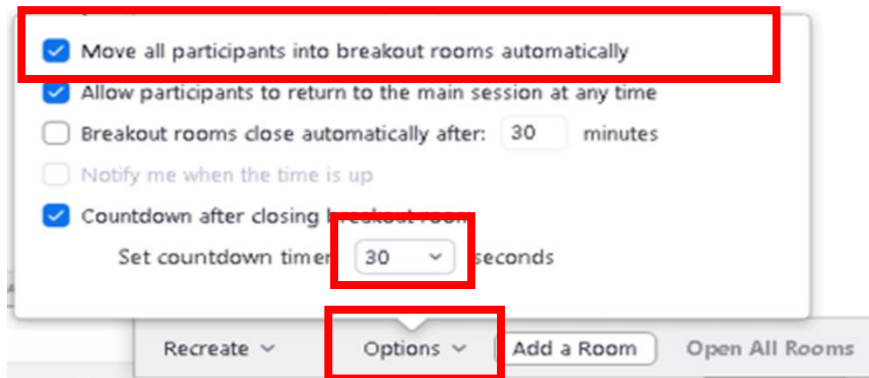
- 6.) Example: There are 15 participants. Select 5 rooms. There will be 3 participants per breakout room. (please note: co-hosts also count as participants)
- 7.) Note: you can prepare breakout room names and the number of rooms a manual allocation at any time during the meeting. (i.e. there is no need to do this seconds before you want to open the BOR). You can also rename the BOR from their default to something else like “workshop 1”.
- 8.) If you select ‘**Automatically**’ (recommended), Zoom will allocate participants automatically in (roughly even number).
- 9.) If you select “**Manually**”, the following window will pop up:



- 10.) Click on **Assign** to allocate people manually. Do this by ticking a name from the names listed (Screenshot shows just one participant in the meeting called “Communications”)

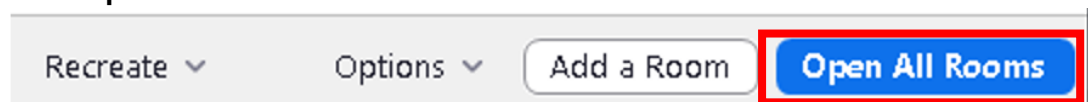


- 11.) Before you invite people into breakout rooms, you should explain to them what is about to happen: tell them how they can follow the invite and what you want them to do once they are in the break out room. Tell them you (the host) is able to join their breakout room and to jump from breakout room to breakout room.
- 12.) You may wish to change some of the breakout room default settings. Do this during the meeting: In main Zoom Menu click on ‘**Breakout rooms**’. The select ‘**Options**’. You can **move all participants into breakout rooms automatically** (i.e. they do not need to accept an invitation), or you can make the **countdown timer** for closing the breakout rooms longer or shorter

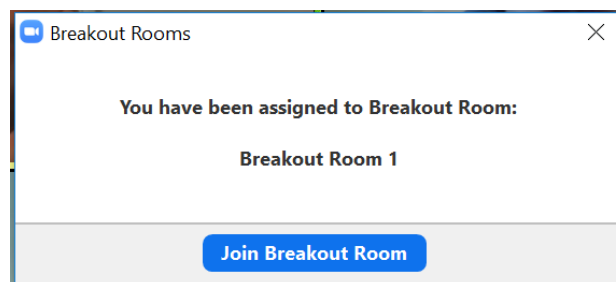


13.) You may wish to teach people the functions available in the Zoom BOR by **screen sharing** the PowerPoint '[Zoom help slides for hosts to explain Zoom functions.pptx](#)'

14.) When all participants are allocated and you are ready to send people into breakout rooms, click "**Open All Rooms**"



15.) Note: By default you cannot force people to go into a BOR. They have to follow the pop-up window invitation (unless you chose: move automatically above) :



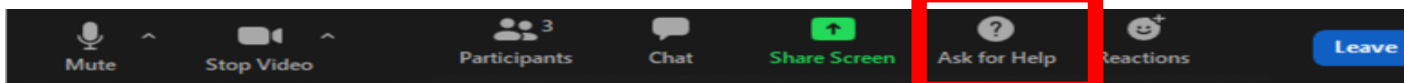
16.) Note: co-hosts will be allocated randomly if you choose automatic allocation. Co-hosts should accept the initial invite. They should then be able to move from one BOR to the other, by selecting Breakout room/ (Select a room) Join. Sometimes this does not work.

17.) If hosts cannot move themselves into a BOR, they need to come back to the main meeting and ask the host to re-allocate them manually

18.) Once somebody has joined a BOR, you can make them join another BOR (for whatever reason; i.e. a manual allocation). Do this by hovering over the end of the field after a participant's name. A "**Move to**" field will pop up. Click on "Move to" and the available BOR will appear.



- 19.) Normal chat does only work within a BOR. Participants cannot chat to the host (or anyone else) while you are in another BOR or in the main meeting room. BUT participants can select an option to “**Ask for help**”. This is what participants can see in their BOR:



You, the host, will then have a notification window popping up, saying something like “**breakout room 1 is asking for help**” (no screenshot, yet).

- 20.) You have then two options (no screenshot, yet)
- Click ‘**Join Breakout room now**’ or
  - Click “**Join later/ Answer later**” (→ a message will pop up in the BOR that asked for help, saying something like “the host knows you asked for help and will join you later”)
- 21.) As the host, you can join any BOR you like



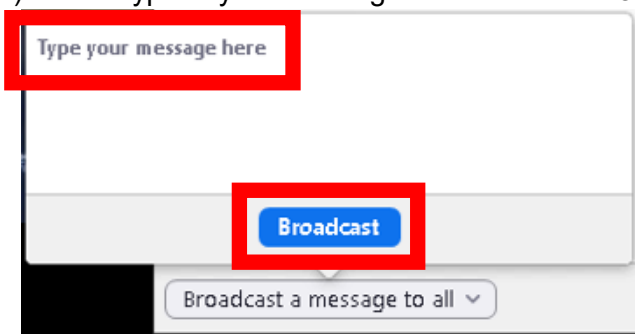
- 22.) You can leave a BOR in a similar fashion:

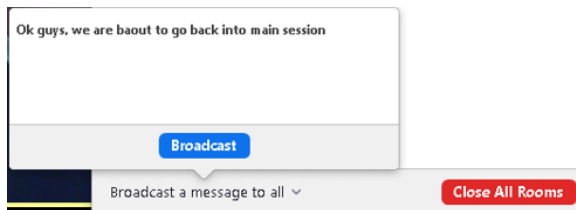


- 23.) When you want to end the BOR session and bring everybody together in the main meeting room, it is good practice to give people a (5) min warning. Use “**Broadcast message to all**” (A bit like chat, but it reaches every BOR)



- 24.) Type in your message and click on “**Broadcast**” button





25.) To end a BOR session, click '**Close All Rooms**'



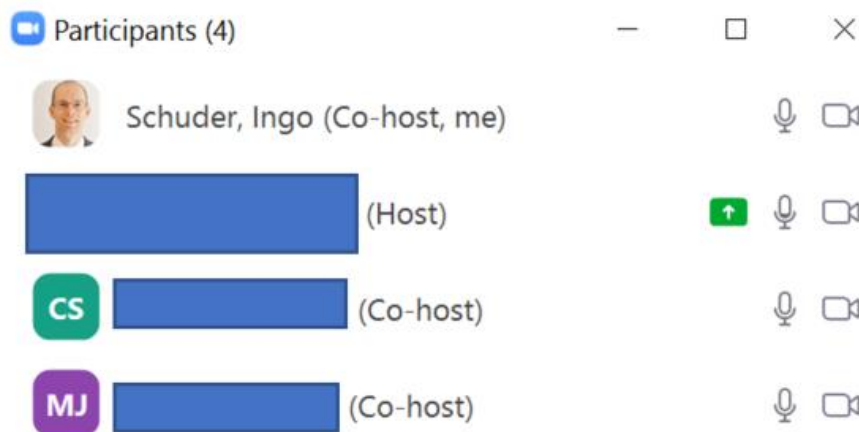
26.) A prompt will pop up in every BOR (no screenshot). People can chose to follow the prompt immediately. Or Zoom will send them back into the main meeting room 1 min (or other time you chose above) after you pressed the '**Close All Rooms**' Button.

27.) You can have as many BOR sessions in one Zoom meeting as you like. Call up **the Breakout room** menu again and click on '**Open all rooms**' again.

Note: this will invite participants to go to the same BOR they have been in before

28.) If you want people to mix in another way, you will have to allocate people manually. This could take quite a bit of time, if you have lots of participants.

29.) Sometimes co-hosts lose their co-host role (e.g. on return from the first breakout room session). You can check who is a co-host by selecting "Participants" from the Zoom Menu. This will open this window (some names covered by blue box for data protection reasons): hosts and co-hosts are listeded at the top of the Participants. If anyone is missing, re-allocate the c-host role.



Please send any suggestions how to make this guidance clearer to [UKCEHtraining@ceh.ac.uk](mailto:UKCEHtraining@ceh.ac.uk).

Have a great breakout room session!

*Ingo Schüder*

**Disclaimer:**

UKCEH is putting this information in the public domain for the benefit of partners, customers and the UKRI family of organisations. UKCEH does not have any affiliation with Zoom. UKCEH is merely using the Zoom service as a customer. Dr Ingo Schüder of UKCEH, has collated this guidance to the best of his knowledge and abilities. All customers and partners use Zoom and this guidance at their own risk.