

UoM and Zoom Meetings

Use and availability for 20/21 academic year

University of Manchester already had an existing relationship with online meetings provider Zoom prior to the UK's lockdown in March. Since then, that relationship has developed considerably and Zoom has been successfully deployed across the University and become the tool of choice for both colleagues and students.

Whilst this adoption for most people has been a relatively smooth learning curve, we understand a number of colleagues have raised concerns around the availability and use of Zoom in China for teaching. In addition, the availability of Zoom going forwards for UoM has been raised, so we are keen to clarify the situation as we now know it.

China is the second highest user base for the UoM Zoom license and there are sometimes hundreds of meetings per day involving hosts and participants in mainland China without connection issues. To help illustrate this, from our dashboard in the past 30 days there have been unique connections based in the UK numbering 438,925. That number for China is 133,806 with the third highest user connection location being the US with 53,097. This highlights the extremely high number of connections in China and reports of issues have been minimal.

The Media Services team, as service owners, have been liaising with Zoom about these reports and a new feature has been enabled as a result. Going forward, users in China who are experiencing any connection issues will be able to choose to allow traffic to be routed through local Chinese data centres which should improve stability. Details can be [found here](#). China and Singapore may not be selected by default, but can now be manually selected.

We also asked for clarification regarding the vendor model that was being adopted for Zoom in China in that it may affect, restrict or even disable connectivity to China. We contacted our Zoom Customer Success Manager for a statement about this and were provided with these details:

The connectivity in China isn't changing, just the model that users in China can purchase Zoom. Users with billing addresses in Mainland China cannot directly purchase services from Zoom and they must switch to a white label Zoom partner in order to continue to use our video conferencing services.

Unfortunately a lot of our users suffer from poor Wi-Fi connections wherever they are. We believe that some of the connectivity issues that have been experienced, along with some of the misunderstandings of the changing vendor model has led some colleagues to believe that Zoom would no longer be available for students and colleagues based in China. We'd like to assure you that this absolutely is not the case.

We'd also like to confirm that the University has committed to Zoom's availability going forwards as a business-critical tool.

If you become aware of issues with connections in China (or elsewhere), please provide the Media Services Team, via mediaservices@manchester.ac.uk with details such as the affected host/participant's email address or preferably the meeting ID, and they will endeavour to help. They can also set up test meetings to assist with any issues you may be experiencing.

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