



**Virtual Visit  
Supplement to the  
2019 *Procedures for  
NAAB International  
Certification***

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**March 30, 2021**

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**National Architectural Accrediting Board, Inc.**  
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# Contents

- Introduction ..... 3
- Virtual Site Visits ..... 3
  - Purpose of This Guide ..... 3
  - Participation Requirements ..... 3
  - Fees..... 3
  - Establishing the Dates and Team for the VSV..... 4
- Technology for the VSV ..... 5
  - Zoom Requirements..... 5
    - Backup/Contingency Plan ..... 5
  - File Sharing..... 6
- Planning For and Conducting the VSV ..... 7
  - Before the Visit..... 7
  - During the Visit..... 8
  - After the Visit..... 8
- Virtual Meetings ..... 9
  - Meeting Access/Log-In..... 9
- Pre-Visit Planning for Virtual Site Visits ..... 10
- Appendix 1: VSV Agenda Template ..... 11
- Appendix 2: Virtual Site Visit Policy and Disclosure Agreement ..... 14
- Appendix 3: Required Zoom Settings ..... 17
  - Audio Settings ..... 17
    - Mute/Unmute:..... 17
    - Connecting Computer Audio: ..... 17
  - Visual Settings ..... 18
    - Name Display (Rename): ..... 18
    - Gallery View ..... 18
  - “Raise Hand” Feature..... 18
  - Joining Meeting Audio by Phone (only if experiencing technical difficulties) ..... 18
- Appendix 4: Working with Google Docs and Microsoft Word ..... 20

## Introduction

In response to the covid-19 pandemic, the NAAB Board of Directors has committed to streamlining and innovating the quality-assurance process for International Certification (ICert) while also upholding the assessment standards for architecture education. In an effort to support programs, the NAAB board has approved virtual visits for programs with International Certification visits through 2023.

We encourage program directors preparing for a virtual visit to send questions/concerns to [international@naab.org](mailto:international@naab.org).

## Virtual Site Visits

### Purpose of This Guide

This guide is a supplement to the *2019 Procedures for NAAB International Certification*. It highlights those areas of the site visit process that are unique to virtual site visits.

The purpose of a VSV is the same as that of an in-person visit. The VSV will be conducted in lieu of an in-person site visit and will replicate, to the extent possible, the standard format and activities of an in-person site visit. Where appropriate, the NAAB will make modifications to the virtual site visit process to ensure a consistent framework for reviewing programs.

### Participation Requirements

Programs with site visits scheduled for 2020–2023 are required to have their site visits conducted virtually.

To participate in a VSV, programs, at a minimum, must be able to demonstrate the following:

- The ability to allow the site visit team to securely view confidential documents (preferably via a VPN connection) while maintaining control of the documents.
- The ability to facilitate the site visit team's interaction with an acceptable number of representatives of the institution and the standard constituent groups who typically participate in site visits, including faculty members and students.
- The program director or other authorized program representative must sign and submit an electronic copy of the Virtual Site Visit Agreement (**Appendix 2**).

By signing the VSV agreement, the program verifies that it meets the minimum **participation requirements** and the additional scheduling and conduct parameters for a VSV. In addition, the program agrees to accept the report of the VSV team and acknowledges that it cannot, at a later date, request a new site visit with a different format, or appeal the resulting accreditation decision solely on the basis of the virtual format of the site visit as long as the virtual site visit is conducted in reasonable conformity with the "Virtual Visit Supplement to the 2019 Procedures for International Certification" and other applicable NAAB standards, policies, procedures, and guidelines.

### Fees

Fees for a VSV are the same as those for an in-person site visit. See the ICert fee schedule on the NAAB [website](#).

### **Establishing the Dates and Team for the VSV**

The site visit team will be established consistent with the 2019 ICert *Procedures*.

The virtual site visit dates will be established by the team chair and the program director. Because the majority of evidence, including student work, will be reviewed 45 days before the visit, VSVs will be shorter in duration than visits that occur on-site. A virtual visit for eligibility (visit one) will generally begin on a Monday and end midday on Tuesday. Visits two and three will generally begin on a Monday and end midday on Wednesday.

## Technology for the VSV

The VSV will use various technology platforms to replicate the steps of an in-person visit:

- Zoom videoconferencing software, hosted by NAAB, will be used to provide a virtual team room and to facilitate all meetings (see 2019 *Procedures*, Sections 4.3 and 4.4 for visit two).
- File sharing hosted by the program will be used to “store” the materials typically held in the team room and make them available for “viewing” by the team.
- File sharing hosted by NAAB, using its own platform, will be used to facilitate the team’s work. The NAAB will create a folder in Box for the Program Self-Evaluation Report, the VTR template and other team documents.
- PDF Reader software (e.g., Adobe Reader; Adobe Acrobat; Bluebeam), owned by team members, will be used by the visiting team to review evidence.
- Word processing software, owned by team members, will be used to draft the VTR. The team chair will be responsible for collecting individual team member contributions and inserting into the NAAB-provided VTR template in Microsoft Word. See Appendix 4.

### Zoom Requirements

- All participants must have their own meeting space and the ability to log in separately to the meetings. Multiple participants are not permitted to share a single screen.
- Participants should join the meeting in a quiet space without distractions.
- NAAB will use a Zoom waiting room for approved access to all meetings with individuals outside of the team.
- All participants must have their video on and be visible on screen throughout the meeting. NAAB will not accept picture placeholders or blank screens with names for participation in the meeting. Anyone using picture placeholders or blank screens with names will not be permitted to participate in the meeting.
- NAAB will not record any of the meetings. NAAB prohibits the recording of the meetings by the program, institution, and/or any of the meeting participants.
- Each participant should have earphones/buds available during the meeting to ensure proper audio quality, if needed.
- Before the VSV, all meeting participants must download the Zoom Client for Meetings app, available at the [Zoom Download Center](#), and use Zoom to access meetings.
- All participants must use a laptop, PC, or tablet with dedicated keyboard to access Zoom.
- The Zoom chat function should only be used to communicate problems related to audio or video.

### Backup/Contingency Plan

If a meeting participant has trouble accessing the videoconferencing for a meeting via a PC, laptop, or tablet, he/she should notify the team chair and NAAB staff at [international@naab.org](mailto:international@naab.org) as soon as possible. If the situation cannot be resolved quickly, the participant should use his/her cell phone to dial in to the meeting and may participate by audio only. Cell phones should only be used in situations where efforts to resolve access to the videoconference are unsuccessful.

Should technical difficulties such as power failure, Internet problems, or an act of nature interfere with the visit, the use of cell phones will be the immediate backup plan. All participants should be advised to have hard copies of the Zoom dial-in phone numbers available for cell phone access.

In the event the visiting team is not able to complete its review, including the review of documents or to conduct meetings with required participants due to problems with technology or for any other reason, the NAAB, in its sole discretion, may schedule another VSV.

## File Sharing

NAAB will use [Box, Inc.](#) as the file-sharing platform for the VSV, and the NAAB will provide the visiting team with login credentials. Box will be used to host and share:

- the Program Self-Evaluation Report (or, in the case of visit one, the Institutional Overview).
- the VTR template and final VTR document, with the team's confidential recommendation.
- materials related to logistics (e.g., VSV agenda, Zoom attendee lists, Zoom links, etc.).

The program will choose a method by which it will host and permit the viewing of the team room contents by the visiting team. Forty-five (45) days before the visit, the program will securely host and provide access to the visiting team:

- All student studio work and course notebooks. (The program should adhere to the latest edition of the [NAAB Digital Guidelines](#) when preparing these materials.)
- SPC matrices.
- The virtual video tour of the facilities (see "Before the Visit," below).
- During the visit, the program will securely permit the visiting team to view student admissions and advising files while maintaining control of the records at all times (*n.b.: this review does not apply to visit one*). The team chair and program director will identify the time in the agenda schedule for team review. These documents should not be transferred to the team in any way. The preferred mechanism for sharing these documents is via a Virtual Private Network (VPN) connection in view-only. Access to these documents should be provided in accordance with institutional protocols, to include non-disclosure agreements, if required.
- If the visiting team requests additional evidence during the visit, the program will securely grant access to such evidence by uploading it to a folder marked "Additional Evidence," using the same file-sharing method as that of the original evidence.

## Planning For and Conducting the VSV

The following roles and responsibilities for a VSV for the NAAB staff, the visiting team chair, and the program director are in addition to or in lieu of the standard roles and responsibilities delineated for an in-person visit.

### Before the Visit

NAAB staff will:

- Schedule a Zoom meeting with the program director and the team chair after the date of the visit has been set to confirm the program's readiness for a site visit, provide an overview of the VSV planning process, and address logistical questions.
- Schedule Zoom meetings with the team members and with the program director to provide training on the technology that will be used during the visit, ensure that NAAB team members have the requisite audio/video capabilities, and ensure that participants understand and agree that no part of the VSV may be audio and/or video recorded.
- Schedule Zoom meetings for the team to review materials and prepare for the VSV.
- Schedule all meetings on the VSV agenda after the meeting times have been confirmed by the program director. Staff will provide the Zoom login details to the program director.
- Invite the visiting team to each Zoom meeting scheduled for the visit.
- Upload the necessary documents to the visiting team's Box folder.
- Attend all pre-site visit planning meetings.

The program director will:

- Participate in pre-visit meetings and test runs with NAAB staff, the team chair, and team members to ensure that any problems with the technology for the site visit are identified and corrected. The goal of the pre-visit planning is to confirm the program's readiness for a virtual site visit and identify major aspects of the site visit, including connecting with some test constituents to ensure access to Zoom and materials through screen sharing or via secure VPN.
- Ensure that all potential participants have the requisite audio/video capabilities and review the Zoom guidelines with them.
- Develop with the team chair the VSV agenda, including times for all meetings, and send final agenda to NAAB staff, no later than one (1) week before VSV. The optional meeting with graduates and local practitioners and optional faculty exhibit will not be conducted as part of the VSV.
- Develop a virtual/video tour of the program's facilities for the team that includes a typical classroom, studio, critique space, office, and the shops, labs, and libraries and make available to the team 45 days before the visit. If it is not feasible for a virtual tour to be developed because the campus is closed, the program director will need to discuss/coordinate with the team chair; the visiting team will note in its report that at the time of the visit the team was only able to review written and graphic support in relation to the facilities.
- Establish a secure method to share team room contents and grant the visiting team credentials for access and review 45 days before the visit.

- Prepare a secure method (e.g., VPN) for permitting the team to view confidential student records for use during the visit (*n.b.: review of confidential student records does not apply to visit one*).
- Forward Zoom access/login information received from NAAB staff to relevant meeting participants.
- Ensure the confidentiality of all meetings.
- Provide final lists of attendees for all meetings to the team chair and NAAB staff a minimum of one (1) week before the start of the visit. Any modifications following the provision of the final list should be discussed with the team chair.
- Ensure that all meeting participants understand the guidelines for participating in the videoconference meetings.

The team will:

- Engage in pre-visit planning by attending the required meetings and working with NAAB staff and the program director to conduct a review of materials and prepare for the visit.
- Review all program material, including student work, and begin writing the VTR in the 45 days before the visit.
- Document time spent (number of hours) beginning with Pre-Visit Meeting 2 through completion of the VTR in preparation for a post-visit survey and to help prepare future team members for the time commitment necessary for a VSV.

## **During the Visit**

NAAB staff will:

- Open the Zoom meeting room approximately 10 minutes before the start of the meeting.
- Act in a support capacity for the visiting team and institution regarding the use of technology and logistical considerations.
- Allow entry into the meeting room from the Zoom waiting room, working from the approved attendee list provided by the program director.
- Be assigned to attend meetings for logistical purposes
- Not participate in virtual team room discussions.

The program director will:

- Ensure that all participants understand and agree that no part of the site visit may be audio and/or video recorded.
- Facilitate the secure viewing of confidential student records at the designated time (*n.b.: not applicable to visit one*).

## **After the Visit**

NAAB staff will:

- Remove access to and content from the designated Box folder for the visit.

The program director will:

- Remove access to the university-hosted file-sharing platform(s).

The team will:

- Participate in a post-VSV survey.



## Virtual Meetings

### Meeting Access/Log-In

To avoid confusion about who is logging in to which meeting, NAAB staff will create each Zoom meeting and will provide the Zoom login details to the program director, using the format below. The program director will forward login details to the participants in each meeting.

MEETING	ZOOM LINK	[Enter program time zone]
Faculty Meeting	[Insert Zoom Link, Meeting ID, and Passcode Specific to Meeting here]	9:45 am-10:45 am
Student Reps. Meeting	<a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/12345678901?pwd=aSAzdMPLcElxLI52N1K1bGNJaVB3dz09">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/12345678901?pwd=aSAzdMPLcElxLI52N1K1bGNJaVB3dz09</a>  Meeting ID: 111 2222 3333 Passcode: 123456	11:00 am-11:45 am

Once the agenda is confirmed for each meeting, the program director will send a list of participant names and emails, organized by meeting, to the team chair and NAAB staff.

Excluding the visiting team members, Zoom meetings should have a maximum attendee count of 20 people, with the exception of program-wide meetings with faculty or students, which should have a maximum attendee count of 44. These numbers are intended to improve the effectiveness of virtual meetings and ensure that all program participants and visiting team members are visible on screen.

Large programs may need to schedule several meetings in order to remain under the maximum attendee count, or the program may consult with the team chair about increasing the maximum attendee count. Programs that offer additional degrees beyond the degree(s) under ICert review should give priority to students enrolled in the ICert degree program for the all-student meeting.

## **Pre-Visit Planning for Virtual Site Visits**

*NAAB will assign a staff member to attend all pre-visit meetings, to be held during weekdays. The team chair has discretion to schedule additional meetings with the team, as needed.*

*Materials due to NAAB 45 days before the virtual site visit:*

- Video tour of facilities.
- Link to and credentials for accessing student work must be provided 45 days in advance.

### **Meeting 1 (approximately 6 weeks before the visit)**

*Participants:* team chair, program director, NAAB staff

*Readiness for Visit*

- Team chair and program director meet to determine whether the program is ready for the virtual visit.
- Program director performs walk-through of the student work compilation for team chair.

### **Meeting 2 (5 weeks before the visit)**

*Participants:* visiting team, program director, NAAB staff

*Process and technology overview: visiting team and program director*

- NAAB staff conducts overview of the VSV process and technology.
- Program director reviews access to student work.

*Assignments and review expectations for team: visiting team only*

- Team chair provides expectations for how the team will work.
- Team chair makes review assignments.

### **Meeting 3 (30 days before the visit)**

*Participants:* visiting team, NAAB staff

- Team members review the PSER (or visit one Institutional Overview) and the ICert *Conditions and Procedures*, discuss visit protocols, identify missing materials or documents.
- Team members discuss their initial reactions to the PSER (or visit one Institutional Overview) and student work; raise any initial concerns; and identify and prioritize the questions to be addressed during the documentary review.
- Team develops an initial draft of the VTR.

### **Meeting 4 (14 days before the visit)**

*Participants:* visiting team, NAAB staff

- Team members review the results of the documentary review (see below), prepare questions to be addressed during the visit, and identify any other areas of inquiry.
- Team chair may revise details of the agenda.
- Team continues development of the VTR.

## Appendix 1: VSV Agenda Template

University Name \_\_\_\_\_

Department/School Name \_\_\_\_\_

### NAAB Virtual Site Visit

Monday, Month/date – Wednesday, Month/date, Year

#### Program Considerations in Planning:

- Meeting start times should be adjusted in consideration of the location of team members and the institution.
- Before the VSV, the program director should send meeting invitations to all constituent groups with the links, provided by the NAAB staff, to access the video conference for their specific meeting.
- The program director should help ensure everyone is prepared to use the meeting technology. NAAB will test the technology with the program ahead of the visit.
- Given the limits on the number of participants in all-student and all-faculty meetings, the program director, in collaboration with the team chair, should decide whether more than one meeting with these groups is necessary.

Note: additional team planning-meetings may be scheduled at the discretion of the team chair.

#### DAY ONE

Monday, month/date/year

MEETING	ZOOM LINK	Program time	Team chair time	Team member time
Meet with program director	<a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/12345678901?pwd=aSAzdMPLcElxLI52N1K1bGNJaVB3dz09">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/12345678901?pwd=aSAzdMPLcElxLI52N1K1bGNJaVB3dz09</a> Meeting ID: 111 2222 3333 Passcode: 123456			
Meet with dean				
Meet with chief academic officer/provost				
Break				

Team Meeting				
Meet with faculty				
Observe classes/work time (optional)				
Meet with students (for visit one, no meeting if there are no students)				
Team Meeting				

**DAY TWO**

Tuesday, month/date/year

<b>MEETING</b>	<b>ROOM LINK</b>	<u>Program time</u>	<u>Team chair time</u>	<u>Team member time</u>
Meeting with program director				
Meeting with student reps				
Break				

Visit classes/work time				
Meeting with staff				
Break				
Team debrief/write VTR				

**DAY THREE**

Wednesday, month/date/year

<b>MEETING</b>	<b>ROOM LINK</b>	<u>Program time</u>	<u>Team chair time</u>	<u>Team member time</u>
Exit interview with program director				
Exit interview with dean (may be combined with provost meeting)				
Exit Interview with chief academic officer/provost				
Exit Report with program faculty, staff, and students				

## Appendix 2: Virtual Site Visit Policy and Disclosure Agreement

### Overview/Purpose

The National Architectural Accrediting Board's (NAAB) develops and maintains quality assurance standards in professional degree education that enhance the value, relevance, and effectiveness of the profession of architecture. These standards and processes anticipate the needs of academic programs, the profession, and society to promote a better built environment.

Given the uncertainty surrounding conditions that may prevent the NAAB from safely conducting in-person site visits as normal because of the impact of COVID-19, and the need to continue quality assurance activities, the NAAB Board of Directors has approved conducting all visits for International Certification in 2020 virtually. Through virtual site visits, the NAAB can better manage the risks to volunteers and to programs.

### Site Visit Purpose

One of the ways the NAAB encourages program quality and improvement is by providing feedback to programs through on-site reviews conducted by subject-matter experts with experience in architecture education. The purposes of the virtual site visit are the same as those for an in-person visit:

- to validate the Program Self-Evaluation Report (PSER).
- to clarify aspects of the program that cannot be evaluated fully through the initial review of the PSER and the materials provided before the visit.

### Virtual Site Visits Participation Requirements

#### *Before the Visit*

- The program will submit its PSER to the NAAB, as scheduled. The program will provide all supporting evidence, including student work and exhibits, 45 days before the visit.
- The program will provide any additional requested materials before the site visit.
- The program director should ensure that the technology needed to support meetings with faculty, directors, students, and staff is set up and in good working order before the visit. The program must have the capability to use the Zoom videoconferencing platform and file-sharing software.
- The program must develop and disseminate contingency plans to all participants in the event of unforeseen acts of nature or technological difficulties, such as power loss, bandwidth issues that prevent videoconferencing or file sharing.
- The program director will work with the NAAB staff to develop a virtual visit agenda and schedule meetings as necessary to complete the work of the visit.
- The program will provide a recorded video tour of program facilities, as required by the NAAB *Conditions and Procedures*.
- The program will participate in the pre-visit planning and scheduled test run to ensure any problems are identified and corrected. The test run will focus on major aspects of the site visit.

### *During the Visit*

- The program director will ensure that the visiting team has adequate opportunity to engage in all required meetings with strict adherence to the virtual site visit agenda.
- All individuals participating in Zoom meetings must preregister and be sure the name entered into their individual Zoom profile matches the name listed on the site visit schedule.
- If for any reason the visiting team is not able to hold required meetings for technological or other reasons, the NAAB will reschedule the site visit.
- The program director will ensure the confidentiality of all meetings.
- No one other than individual(s) listed in the virtual site visit agenda may be present in the meeting room during interviews with visiting team members.
- Legal counsel shall not be present at any stage of the virtual site visit.
- No part of the site visit may be audio recorded. Video cameras other than the computer camera for Zoom meetings may not be used.

### **Virtual Site Visit Process**

- The virtual visit will replicate, to the extent possible, the standard format and activities of an in-person site visit. Actual dates for meetings will be determined by the visiting team chair and the program director before the visit.
- The NAAB staff will provide Zoom meeting rooms for each session on the schedule and will coordinate the technical aspects necessary to establish each meeting.
- The program is responsible for working with all attendees other than site visitors to ensure that participants have the appropriate equipment to participate in the sessions with video. The NAAB requires all attendees to participate with audio and video.
- The NAAB uses Zoom products that fall under the Zoom Privacy Policy. The institution and the program acknowledge that they are informed of and agree to the Zoom Privacy Policy.
- The NAAB requires passwords for participation in all site visit meetings and will use the Zoom Waiting Room feature. Any Zoom URLs or passwords provided by the NAAB will be confidential and will be given out by the institution and program only to the extent necessary to complete the site visit.

*continues on next page*

## Acknowledgment

I have read and agreed to the foregoing requirements for the program to participate in a virtual site visit by the NAAB. I understand that unless the NAAB requires otherwise, the virtual site visit will be the only visit conducted by the NAAB as part of the International Certification process and that the results will become part of the record to be reviewed by the NAAB in making its decision on International Certification of the program.

As the authorized representative of the program, I agree that the program will not challenge the results of the visit or the NAAB's decision relative to the International Certification of the program for reasons related solely to the visit being conducted virtually (with the use of digital media) as long as the virtual site visit is conducted in material conformity with the "Virtual Visit Supplement to the *2019 Procedures for NAAB International Certification*" and other applicable NAAB standards, policies, procedures and guidelines.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Program Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Institution Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Program Director Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Program Director Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dean Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title (include college name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dean Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## Appendix 3: Required Zoom Settings

Here is a helpful video on logging into Zoom:

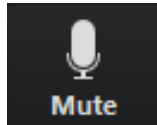
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hIkCmbvAHQQ>

### Audio Settings

#### Mute/Unmute:

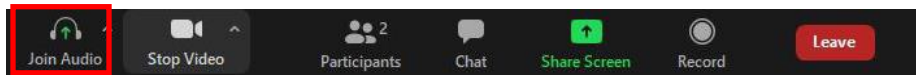
To avoid audio echo, you must mute yourself upon entry and when you are not speaking by:

1. Clicking the Mute/Microphone icon:

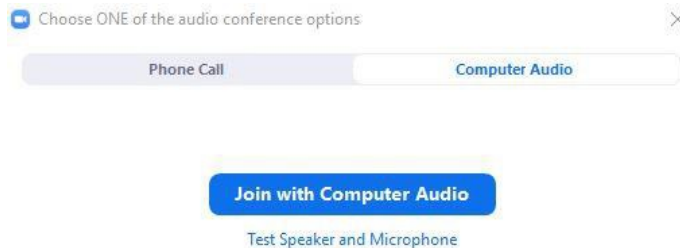


#### Connecting Computer Audio:

- Join the Zoom meeting.
- You will be prompted to join the audio automatically
- If this prompt does not appear or you close out of it, click Join Audio in the meeting controls.



- Under the "Computer Audio" tab, click "Join with Computer Audio."



Automatically join audio by computer when joining a meeting

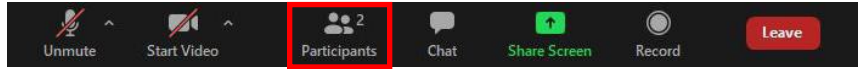
Here is a helpful video on how to test your computer audio: <https://youtu.be/-s76QHshQnY>

## Visual Settings

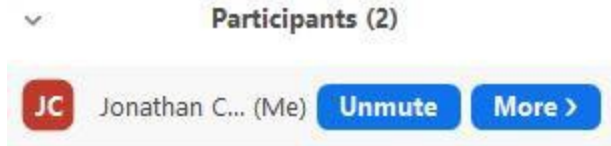
### Name Display (Rename):

Please display your first and last name on your screen by doing the following:

1. Click on the “Participant” icon



Hover over your name, click “More,” and then click “Rename.” The team chair should add “(VTC)” after their name, and team members should add “(VTM)” after their name to ensure they can be easily identified.



### Gallery View

All users must choose Gallery view to view all participants on a single screen by clicking “Gallery View” in the top-right corner.

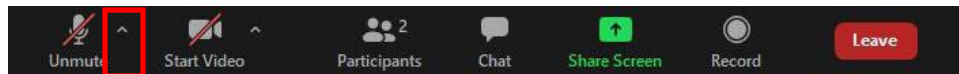
### **“Raise Hand” Feature**

When instructed by the team chair, participants will be asked to toggle the “raise hand” feature on-and-off. This can be accomplished by clicking “Participants” and then clicking “raise hand” or “lower hand.” The meeting host will be notified.

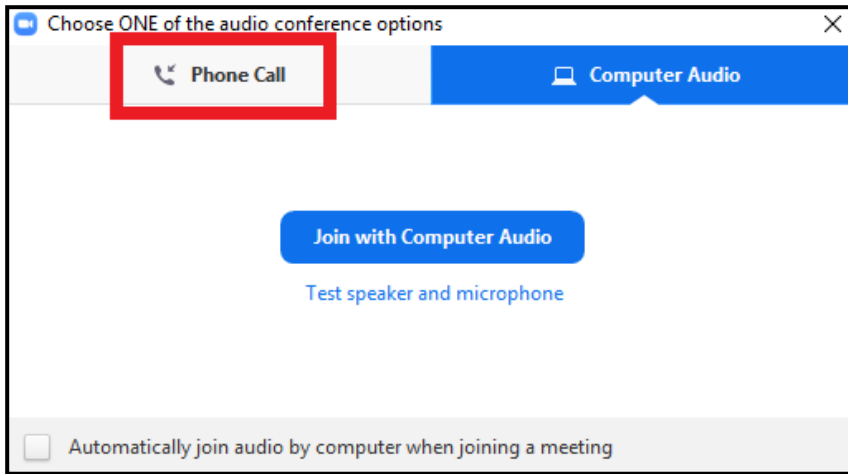
### **Joining Meeting Audio by Phone (only if experiencing technical difficulties)**

If you are experiencing technical difficulties with your computer audio, you may use your phone audio by doing the following:

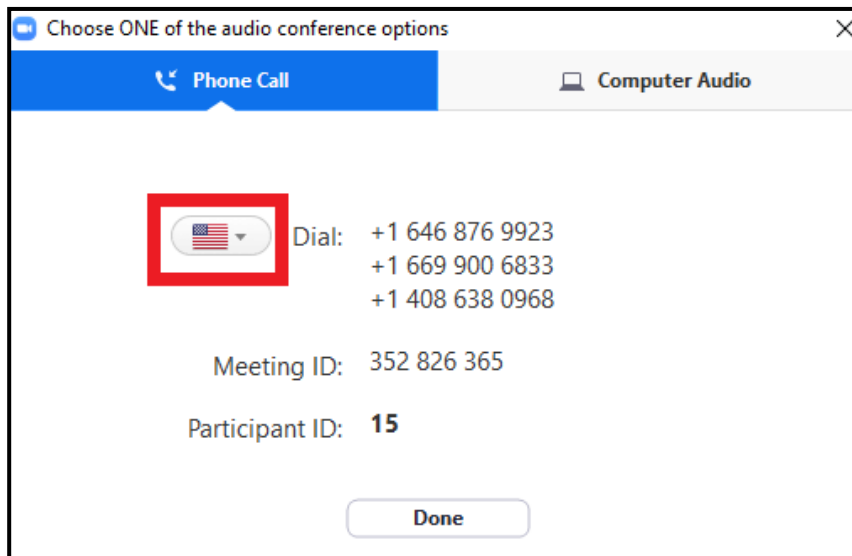
1. Join the Zoom meeting.
2. You will be prompted to join the audio automatically.
  - a. If this prompt does not appear or you close out of it, click “Join Audio” in the meeting controls.



3. Click the “Phone Call” tab



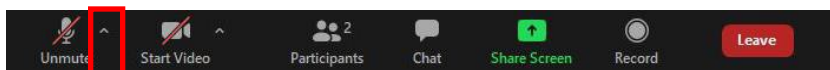
4. Select the country you are calling from in the flag drop-down menu.



5. Call one of the numbers provided.
6. Enter your meeting ID followed by #.
7. Enter your participant ID followed by #.

If you joined computer audio automatically, you may leave it and join by phone.

1. Click the arrow next to “Mute/Unmute.”



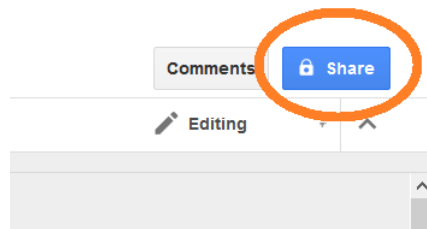
2. Click “Leave Computer Audio.”
3. Click “Join Audio.”



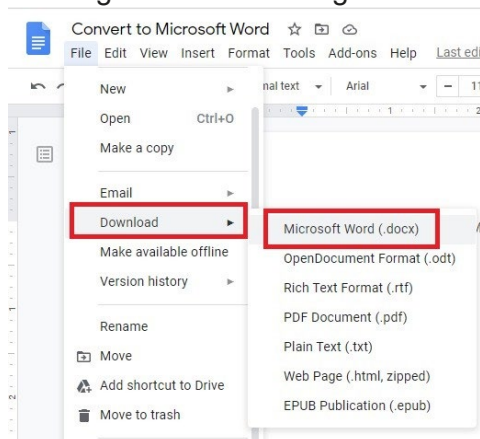
## Appendix 4: Working with Google Docs and Microsoft Word

The use of Google Docs is permitted to facilitate collaborative VTR writing. However, because formatting is modified when converting documents between Microsoft Word and Google Docs, the team will need to adhere to the following instructions.

1. Upload the VTR Word template provided by NAAB staff:
  - a. Open Google Docs.
  - b. Select File Open.
  - c. Select Upload.
  - d. Select the Word Doc.
2. Share the document with the team.
  - a. Click Share



- b. Enter team member email addresses.
3. Work collaboratively in the document, but do not adjust the formatting of the document.
4. When the document is complete, download the document as a Microsoft Word document. NOTE: the formatting will not be correct. The Team chair is responsible for ensuring correct formatting.



5. Copy over individual team responses (written in blue) from the Google Doc Version into NAAB-provided Word document. Do not copy the entire document.