

Meeting

The terms “[conference](#)” and “meeting” are often used interchangeably, but they can have different connotations depending on the context.

A **meeting** is a scheduled gathering of individuals — typically within an academic, clinical, or institutional setting — intended to share information, make [decisions](#), or coordinate actions.

While meetings are theoretically tools for collaboration and progress, they are often repurposed for signaling, hierarchy reinforcement, or procedural compliance.

□ Types of Meetings

- **Administrative** – To manage schedules, budgets, personnel.
- **Clinical** – Case reviews, treatment planning, morbidity & mortality.
- **Research** – Study design, data discussion, authorship decisions.
- **Academic** – Curriculum planning, journal clubs, grant reviews.
- **Symbolic** – Held primarily to show that meetings are being held.

□ In Practice

A 90-minute meeting with 12 participants that could have been a 3-line email — a classic case of performative coordination.

□ Common Pathologies

- **Meeting inflation** – Increasing number of meetings without increasing value.
- **Agenda drift** – Discussions veer into unrelated or unresolved topics.
- **Hierarchy signaling** – Meetings used to showcase power rather than solve problems.
- **Documentation theater** – Minutes are taken to prove something happened, not to enable follow-up.

□ Related Terms

- [Academic Theater](#)
- [Formalism](#)
- [Bureaucracy](#)
- [Careerism](#)
- [Pseudo-change](#)

Bottom line: *A meeting should be a tool — not a ritual. When it exists for its own sake, it becomes part of the problem.*

General distinctions

Scale and Formality:

Conference: Typically implies a larger event with a more formal structure. Conferences often involve multiple sessions, [workshops](#), and [presentations](#), and they may attract attendees from a broader geographic area.

Meeting: This generally refers to a smaller and more informal gathering. Meetings can be regular or ad hoc and may involve discussions, decision-making, or information sharing.

Purpose:

Conference: Often organized around a specific theme or industry. Conferences may include keynote speakers, panel discussions, and networking opportunities.

Meetings can have various purposes, including decision-making, problem-solving, project updates, or information sharing. They may be routine, such as team meetings, or specific, such as sales meetings.

Duration:

Conference: Typically spans multiple days and may involve various activities and sessions.

Meeting: Usually shorter, ranging from a brief discussion to a few hours.

Participants:

Conference: Involves a diverse group of participants, including experts, professionals, and stakeholders in a particular field.

Meeting: Often includes a more focused group of participants, such as team members, department heads, or project collaborators.

Format:

Conference: Structured with planned sessions, presentations, and sometimes exhibitions or vendor displays.

Meeting: Can be more flexible in format, with discussions, updates, and collaborative work. In practice, the terms are sometimes used interchangeably, and the distinction between a conference and a meeting can vary based on the specific context or industry norms.

see [Scientific meeting](#).

see [Video meeting](#).

Morbidity and mortality meeting

[Morbidity and mortality meeting](#)

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