Conference Now

Conference Now Overview

The Conference Now feature allows both external and internal callers to join a conference by dialing a Conference Now IVR Directory Number, which is a centralized conference assistant number. An IVR application guides the caller to join the conference by playing announcements.

A conference is established using a Meeting Number, which is the same as the Self-Service User ID. The meeting number is configured by the administrator in the end user's window. The Self-Service User ID is usually same as the user's primary extension number.

The host (End User) provides the Meeting Number, Time slot, and Attendees Access Code to all the participants. The host requires a PIN to join the conference, but the participants do not require it. If a participant dials into the meeting before the host, the participant hears Music on Hold (MOH).

After the host enters both Meeting Number and PIN correctly, a conference bridge is allocated based on the MRGL (Media Resource Group List) of the host. Participants who join before the start of the meeting are redirected to the same conference bridge.

The host can set the Attendees Access Code for a secure conference call. For more information, see topics related to Set the Access Code for Conference Now in the *Cisco Unified Communications Self Care Portal Guide*.

Conference Now Prerequisites

To use Conference Now you must make sure that the following media resources are configured, and are available to the devices that will be initiating conferences.

- Conference Bridge—For the best user experience, we recommend using a software-based Cisco IPVMS conference bridge. Using another conference bridge might not provide the conference party entry and exit tone.

- Interactive Voice Response (IVR)

After you configure these resources, you can make them available to devices by configuring a media resource group list that includes these resources and then associating that media resource group list to the device pools that will be used by your devices, or to individual devices. For details on configuring Conference Bridges, Interactive Voice Response, and Media Resource Groups, see the "Configure Media Resources" section of the *System Configuration Guide for Cisco Unfiied Communications Manager*.

Conference Now Task Flow

Before you begin

- Review Conference Now Prerequisites, on page 1.

Procedure

	Command or Action	Purpose
Step 1	Enable End User to Host Conference Now, on page 2	To host a conference, enable the option in the Feature Group Template.
Step 2	Add a Quick User/Phone, on page 3	(Optional) Use to add a new user.
Step 3	Configure End User to Host Conference Now, on page 3	The host can set up a Meeting Number and an Attendee Code.
Step 4	Configure Conference Now, on page 4	Use to configure Conference Now.

Enable End User to Host Conference Now

Procedure

Step 1 From Cisco Unified CM Administration, choose **User Management** > **User/Phone Add** > **Feature Group Template**.
The **Find and List Feature Group Templates** window appears.

Step 2 Enter the appropriate search criteria and click **Find**.
All matching records are displayed.

Step 3 In the list of records, click the link for the record that you want to view.
The **Feature Group Template Configuration** window appears.

Step 4 Check the **Enable End User to Host Conference Now** check box in the Features section to allow the user to host a conference.

Step 5 Click **Save**.

What to do next

Add a Quick User/Phone, on page 3

Add a Quick User/Phone

Before you begin

Procedure

Step 1	From Cisco Unified CM Administration, choose **User Management** > **User/Phone Add** > **Quick User/Phone Add** **Find and List Users** window is displayed.
Step 2	Click **Add New**.
Step 3	Configure the fields in the **Quick User/Phone Add** window. For more information about the fields and their configuration options, see the online help.
Step 4	Click **Save**.

What to do next

(Optional)

Configure End User to Host Conference Now

Procedure

Step 1	From Cisco Unified CM Administration, choose **User Management** > **End User**. The **Find and List Users** window is displayed.
Step 2	To select an existing user, specify the appropriate filters in the **Find User Where** field, click **Find** to retrieve a list of users, and then select the user from the list. The search result displays all the end users that are configured in Cisco Unified Communications Manager.
Step 3	Click on the username to display user information. The **End User Configuration** window is displayed.
Step 4	Locate the **Conference Now Information** section.
Step 5	Check the **Enable End User to Host Conference Now** check box. If Enable End User to Host Conference Now is enabled under the Feature Group Template, then the newly added user inherits the default settings.
Step 6	The **Meeting Number** is generated automatically when the **Self-Service User ID** field in the **End User Configuration** window is configured. This number is the default directory number of the user which is modified in the **Self-Service User ID** field .
Step 7	(Optional) Enter the **Attendees Access Code**. The host can set the Attendees Access Code for a secure conference call. Later, the user can modify the access code in the Self Care Portal. For more information about configuration fields, see the *Cisco Unified Communications Self Care Portal User Guide*.

Step 8   Click **Save**.

What to do next

Configure Conference Now

Before you begin

Procedure

Step 1   From Cisco Unified CM Administration, choose **Call Routing** > **Conference Now**.
The **Conference Now Configuration** window appears.

Step 2   Configure the fields in the **Conference Now Configuration** window. For more information about the fields
and their configuration options, see the Related Topics section.

Step 3   Click **Save**.

Related Topics

Conference Now Settings

Field	Description
Conference Now IVR Directory Number	Enter a DID (Direct Inward Dial) number for a Cisco Unified Communications Manager cluster so that external callers can access this number. The combined number and partition must be unique within a cluster.

Field	Description
Route Partition	To use a partition to restrict access to the Conference Now number or pattern, choose the desired partition from the drop-down list.
	If you do not want to restrict access to the Conference Now number or pattern, choose <None> for the partition.
	You can configure the number of partitions that are displayed in this drop-down list by using the Max List Box Items enterprise parameter. If more partitions exist than the Max List Box Items enterprise parameter specifies, the **Find** button is displayed next to the drop-down list box. Click the **Find** button to display the **Find and List Partitions** window.
	Note To set the maximum list box items, choose **System** > **Enterprise Parameters** and update the Max List Box Items field under CCMAdmin Parameters.
	Note Make sure that the combination of Conference Now number or pattern and partition is unique within the Cisco Unified Communications Manager cluster.
Description	The description can include up to 50 characters in any language, but it cannot include double quotation marks ("), percentage sign (%), ampersand (&), or angle brackets (<>).
Maximum Wait Time For Host Until Participant is Disconnected	Select an integer value to set the maximum wait time, in minutes, in a queue. The default value is 15 minutes. The field range is from 1 to 60 minutes
	This field specifies the maximum wait time for an attendee before a host joins the meeting.
	If the host has not yet joined the meeting after the timer expires, the attendee is disconnected automatically.
MOH Source While Participant is Waiting	Choose a Music On Hold (MOH) source from the drop-down list. The default value is NULL.
	If nothing is selected, the default Network Hold MOH/MOH Source configured on the service parameter is used.
	The MOH source is configured as unicast or multicast. The media resource group list (MRGL) configuration of the caller takes precedence for multicast or unicast.
	When any of the MOH settings are changed, the existing callers who are waiting in the queue are not affected.
	All future callers in the queue will listen to MOH as per the updated settings.

Conference Now Interactions and Restrictions

Conference Now Interactions

Feature	Interactions
Mobility EFA (Enterprise Feature Access)	A mobility user dials an Enterprise Feature Access DID number from a remote destination. After the call is connected, the remote destination phone is used to send DTMF digits to Unified Communications Manager via the PSTN gateway. The user PIN followed by the # key is first authenticated with Unified Communications Manager. After the user PIN authentication is successful, press 1 and the # key, to indicate a two-stage dialed call, followed by the desired phone number. If the dialed phone number is a Conference Now IVR Directory Number and the user is a meeting host, then the user must enter the PIN again.
Mobility MVA (Mobile Voice Access)	A call is directed to Unified Communications Manager through the enterprise PSTN H.323 or SIP gateway. The IVR prompts the user to enter the User ID, # key, PIN, # key, number 1 (to make a Mobile Voice Access call) and then the desired phone number. If the phone number is a Conference Now IVR Directory Number and the user is a meeting host, then the user must enter the PIN again. **Note** Users are not prompted for entering their PIN if they dial directly from their remote destination. However, if they dial from a different phone to Mobile Voice Access Directory Number, then they are prompted to enter PIN before they can make the call. If the users call Conference Now IVR Directory Number, they are prompted to enter the PIN again.

Conference Now Restrictions

The Conference Now feature has the following restrictions:

- The host cannot mute attendees.

- The attendee cannot mute the audio by entering DTMF digits.

- The list of Conference Now participants is not supported.

- Maximum number of participants in a conference is controlled by the existing CallManager service parameter "Maximum MeetMe Conference Unicast". It applies to both internal and external callers.

- Maximum number of simultaneous Conference Now and MeetMe conference instances combined together is 100 per Unified Communications Manager CallManager node.

- Video on hold is not supported.

- The IPVMS software conference bridge only supports codec G.711 (ALaw & ULaw) and Wide Band 256k. If there is a codec mismatch between the calling device and the software conference bridge, a transcoder will be allocated.

- Ensure that at least one of the following conditions are met to play the conference party entry and exit tone:

  - At least one conference participant is using the Cisco IP Phone.

  - IPVMS is the allocated software conference bridge.

- When the sets up a Conference Bridge, the conference will continue with the remaining attendees irrespective whether the host is present or not. If the host wants to rejoin the conference, an announcement to enter the Attendee Access Code is played if it is configured by host. The host cannot schedule or mute attendees; therefore, the host status is no longer valid.

- No audio announcement will play if the host is the first person to join the conference. However, when the host dials into Conference Now from an internal IP Phone, there is a visual display on the IP Phone showing "To Conference".

Note   If the host joins the Conference Now from any external phone, then there will be no visual display on the phone.