

Recommendations for remote delivery of courses

These are intended as suggestions that may smooth the transition to remote delivery for both faculty and students. This is not an exhaustive list, nor is it intended to be prescriptive. Rather these are some things that may be helpful to think about as faculty begin work on next steps.

1. Let your **course learning outcomes** guide your transition to remote delivery. What do you want students to know and be able to do as a result of this course? Are there alternate ways to get them there now that you won't be meeting face-to-face? If you decide to revamp or replace certain assignments, **be sure that your students know** how these changes will help them continue to meet the course's learning outcomes.
2. **Clear and timely communication is critical.** If you make adjustments to your syllabus or assignments, make sure your students understand your new plan. Here are some suggestions:
 - *Make your changes on the assumption that remote instruction will continue through the end of the semester.* We don't know that it will, but we don't know that it won't.
 - *Decide how students' work completed to date will be factored in your final assessment of their final grades,* and be sure to clearly communicate your decisions to your students.
 - Remember that remote learning activities will be new for many of your students, even if they're not new for you. *Your students will need clear guidelines on how their remote activities will be evaluated or graded.* For example, if you assign a grade for class participation, and that participation will now take place in new ways — through online forums, for example, rather than face-to-face discussion — you should clearly explain how these new forms of participation will be evaluated.
 - *Consider “contract grading”* for some types of work. In this approach to grading, students receive full credit for some assignments based on a good faith effort at completion. Not only for your students' sake, but for your own, this approach may make the best sense for certain types of assignments. Do you really want to grade every discussion-forum post on a scale from A to E? Again, if you move some of your evaluation to this mode, make sure your students understand the change.
 - *Establish a regular cycle of communication with students.* Regardless of how you plan to work with students remotely, **transparency and regular communication** are crucial. Establish a cycle of communicating with students that is regular and predictable. (E.g. “I'm going to message you in Canvas every Monday morning with a weekly to-do list.”)

3. Plan your remote-delivery strategy with **equity and access** in mind:

- *Consider ways to design your whole course around your students' known accommodation needs* so that you don't have to create individualized plans for different students. The Office of Disability Services will be providing additional guidance on provision of accommodations, but letters of accommodations will continue to govern accessibility issues regardless of teaching modality. For example:
 - Students with timed assessments will still need to receive extended time. An accessible solution would be to move to untimed assessments for all students.
 - Students with needs that involve alternate-format course content (including videos) will need captioning or other accessibility support. An accessible solution would be to use online tools such as Google Hangouts, Blackboard Collaborate, and YouTube that have built-in closed captioning features.
 - Students with note-taking needs will need access to a note-taker for synchronous lectures or access to recorded lectures. An accessible solution would be to record all lectures so that students can access materials at their own pace.
 - Students with accommodations providing flexible deadlines will need to work with faculty as needed. A period of up to one additional week past the scheduled due date is recommended. Should a student require additional time, they may contact the Office of Disability Services directly.
- *Bring an equity mindset to the work of course redesign by considering the needs of students who may not have access to core resources. **Remember:***
 - Some students depend on the library for textbooks (or may not have access to their textbooks). It may be appropriate to store scanned texts for your course on Canvas or make use of Open Educational Resources.
 - Some students may not have personal computers or access to WiFi at home. Consider ways to make your course accessible to students with limited technology resources. For example, we know that 99% of our students self-report that they own a smartphone. Building your remote delivery plan around tools that are accessible through a personal device will reach more students than assuming that they have access to a personal computer or wifi.
 - Some students (e.g. international students who return home) will not be present in the same time zone as our campus. Synchronous meetings will not be appropriate in all cases.
 - Students returning home may experience various challenges including personal health issues or responsibilities for supporting family members. Under these circumstances, highly-structured course activities including synchronous instruction may be difficult.

4. Use Canvas

- *We strongly encourage you to administer your courses through Canvas.* Using Canvas as your students' "first stop" will increase the likelihood that they receive your messages, understand your expectations, and can find readings and other assignments. We hope that all faculty remain healthy for the rest of the semester, but even under ordinary circumstances the reality is that some of us fall ill. You'll want someone to be able to pick up your course if it's necessary for you to be "absent" — even if temporarily — and having all your materials in Canvas will make this simpler.
- *Leveraging Canvas' built-in communication tools* will enable you to stay in regular and predictable communication with your students.
- *Minimizing email communication outside Canvas* will help reduce inbox clutter that could prevent them — or you — from noticing essential messages.
- *"Use Canvas" does not mean "Use only Canvas."* Again, think of Canvas as a "first stop" for your students — the place where they can reliably find your communications and content **as well as** links to tools you may want them to use outside Canvas, such as Slack, the Google suite of apps (Docs, Sheets, Forms, Slides, Maps, Hangouts Meet, etc.), group blogs, GitHub, Jupyter Notebook, R Studio, ArcGIS StoryMaps, TimelineJS, Zotero, Twitter, or Geneseo Wiki spaces. If you use any of these Canvas-external tools for important communications, be sure to send the same communications through Canvas as well.

5. Model Flexibility, Patience, and Compassion

- Members of the college community will be understandably anxious about the uncertainties surrounding this situation. For many students, these anxieties may be compounded by challenges associated with financial, food or housing insecurity, troubled home lives, or caring for family members who are in at-risk categories. These challenges are often invisible under the best of circumstances. If we assume good intentions and recognize that many different stressors are affecting everyone, we can help support our community's mental health and well-being.
- Above all, it's *vital* important that we approach this work flexibly and with compassion. Both students and faculty may struggle to adapt to new modalities of teaching, and we would appreciate anything that can be done to mitigate stress by modifying deadlines, responding flexibly to challenges, and modeling empathy.