



## University Center for **Teaching and Learning**

Summer classes will be held remotely in Summer 2020. For both you and your students, teaching in this format is likely unexpected. Running compressed (4wk, 6wk, 12wk) classes in a remote environment can represent challenges. We suggest opening lines of communication early—ideally at least one week before the term begins—to address potential difficulties and convey empathy, flexibility, and charity. You can send a message via email or announcement through your course’s Canvas or Blackboard site (you can access your students’ email through Canvas/Blackboard or by logging into Peoplesoft).

(If you’re teaching in the compressed 6-week format, you may wish to review the recorded webinar [“Teaching a 6-Week Class Remotely.”](#) Consider also watching [this student panel](#), held 3/20/20, during which undergraduate students shared some experiences with the shift to remote instruction.)

### **1. Acknowledge the exceptional nature of the circumstances.**

- a. Students are facing challenges: scheduling, access to technology, home and work environments, unexpected changes to employment, social and psychological stressors, etc.
- b. Keep in mind that these circumstances may exacerbate pre-existing inequalities and practice [compassionate and equitable leadership](#).
- c. Acknowledge that student anxieties are understandable.
- d. Convey concern for student health, both physical and mental.
- e. Point to Online resources for students (student health, etc.)

[COVID-19 Response: Prevention and Symptoms](#)

[For Undergraduate Students & Families](#)

[For Graduate, Professional Students and Postdocs](#)

[FAQs for Graduate Students & Postdocs](#)

### **2. Encourage students to keep lines of communication open.**

- a. Invite the students to communicate any challenges or concerns that they anticipate.
- b. Invite students to update you as the term progresses and communicate the need for flexibility/support.

**3. Convey that you are *invested in your students' success in the course.***

You're there to support them, and success will be possible if: you maintain open communication with each other, set realistic goals, and remain understanding and flexible given the challenges you're all encountering. Point them to this helpful resource: ["Student Strategies for Success in a Remote Environment."](#))

**4. Communicate the intensity of classes in the compressed format** (6-wk, 4-wk, 12-wk), *combined with* the characteristics of remote instruction

- a. Readings, lectures, and other coursework, normally spread across 14 weeks, may now be covered in less than half that time.
- b. **Both "in-class" and "homework" time are online**
  - If we factor 2-3 hours "out of class" homework per each "in-class" credit hour, then 1 credit = 3-4 online hours total hours
  - *In a 6-week, 3cr course, a 2x per week, 3-hour class = 6 "in-class hours" + 12-18 "out of class" homework hours, all online = **18-24 total online hours per week.***

**5. Manage expectations.**

- a. Provide the syllabus as early as possible, at least a week in advance, but certainly no later than the day before classes start.
- b. How often will students be expected to "check in" to the course?
- c. How often will you be checking and responding to emails? (Can students expect a response within 24 hours? 48 hours?)
- d. Will instruction be conducted asynchronously (e.g. recorded lectures and discussion boards), synchronously (e.g. Zoom sessions), or a combination?
- e. Communicate that any recorded student participation (e.g., a Zoom session) will only be available to students in this semester's class.
- f. Will you be holding office hours, e.g., via Zoom, phone? Regularly scheduled or by appointment?
- g. Note that students should anticipate that there may be unexpected challenges along the way but remaining flexible and in communication with one another will help address those challenges.

**6. Identify the educational technology tools you will expect students to use, and provide resources for problems students may encounter with technology**

- a. If you're adopting Canvas (recommended), acknowledge that Canvas may be new to students, but that the decision to shift to Canvas is based in part on student preferences for usability. Emphasize that, while you're also adjusting to the new platform, ultimately you should all be able to learn and adapt.
- b. Common technologies: Email, Canvas, Blackboard/CourseWeb, Zoom, Gradescope, Panopto
- c. Technology Services Support for Students: 412-624-HELP ()
  - a. [Canvas support](#)
  - b. [Blackboard/CourseWeb support](#)
  - c. [Zoom support](#)
  - d. [Panopto support](#)
- e. The Help Desk (412-624-HELP)

**7. Try to anticipate some common tech issues students may encounter and possible solutions:**

<b>Problem</b>	<b>Possible Solution</b>
Students can't access a synchronous Zoom session for scheduling/tech reasons	Record the session and permit them to access later
Students don't have a webcam to upload a student presentation	Allow them to skip the video and just record audio, or instruct them to present to someone in their house and write a reflective piece on the experience
Students missed a deadline due to lack of tech access	Consider granting an extension

Students weren't able to finish an online quiz due to loss of internet	Allow them to take a make-up
A student doesn't have the capability to use/access specific technology	Attempt to make alternative arrangements with them to complete the work. G grades should be used sparingly, only after other avenues have been exhausted.

**Share available resources for students:**

- [Pitt Counseling](#)
- [Disability Resources Services](#)
- [Pitt IT](#)
- [Student Affairs](#)
- [Writing Center Remote Tutoring](#)
- [Library Subject Specialist Remote Help](#)