



University Center for Teaching and Learning

Remote Learning – Communicating with Students

We're a week and a half into the University of Pittsburgh having moved all of its classes to remote instruction. First, congratulations and thank you for all you have done thus far to make this adjustment under these unprecedented circumstances. You had an [initial communication with your students](#), and now that classes have resumed, you may be more aware of your students' expectations and needs. (Consider also watching [this student panel](#), held 3/20/20, during which students shared some experiences with the shift to remote instruction.) It's important to keep channels of communication open: now is a great time to reach out to your students to check in on their well-being and preparedness. Convey your continued investment in your students' success in the course, and ensure they're prepared for upcoming assignments and assessments. (In addition to the suggestions below, you may wish to direct them to "[Student Strategies for Success in a Remote Environment](#).")

Encourage students to....

- Take care of their health.
- Continue to maintain open communication with you.
- Reach out for help when they need it.
- Remain engaged in the course
 - **Important:** If you have students who have been disengaged since resuming classes remotely (not submitting online work, not logging into the course site, etc.) *you should attempt to reach out directly to them immediately* to engage them. If they are unresponsive, consider notifying your department.
- Update you on their progress and communicate the need for support and/or flexibility with course deadlines.
- Communicate with [Disability Resources Services](#) as appropriate.
- Remember that success in the course is still possible.

Ask your students...

- How they are doing, and indicate your concern for their health, both physical and mental.
- What else you can do to support their learning during this time. As an instructor, you should keep in mind that this situation may exacerbate pre-existing inequalities and [practice compassionate and equitable leadership](#).

- Whether or not they have the technology, time, and space necessary to complete assessments as (re)designed? (For example, if students need to record their presentations, do they have access to a webcam?)
- Are they spending a comparable and manageable amount of time on course work? Students can feel like written “participation” in an online discussion board takes more time and effort than spoken contributions in a face-to-face format. You might discuss how, in remote instruction, both “in-class” time and “homework” time are spent online, while at the same time adjusting/adapting workload to address the significant, unexpected pressures students are facing.
- Are they aware of the [University’s policy](#) allowing them to convert any of their courses during the Spring term from a letter grade basis to a satisfactory (S) or no credit (NC) basis. All courses awarded S grades will count toward graduation/degree requirements and satisfy future course prerequisites, while courses awarded NC grades will not negatively impact a student’s GPA.

Share available resources:

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