

Faculty questions regarding Fall 2020 Teaching from Academic Affairs Committee

Safety protocols, wellness attestation, and related enforcement

- **What are the guidelines/protocol when students do not wear masks? What to do if classroom students do not socially distance, or generally do not follow other guidelines set forth by TAMU?**

The University policy states that students are required to wear a face covering inside buildings, including in a face to face class. Students who arrive without a face covering should be reminded of this SAP, asked to put on a face covering or to leave the classroom and participate in class remotely.

If a student refuses to leave or comply with safety policies, the faculty member should identify the student and [notify the Student Conduct Office](#) who will treat noncompliance as a conduct violation ([Face Covering Violations](#)). Additionally, the faculty member may choose to teach that day's class remotely for all students.

Students with an approved exemption to wear a face shield instead of a face covering should have a letter documenting this and will be permitted to remain. Students with exemptions from all face coverings and face shields should attend classes remotely.

- **I assume that students with slight fever should be encouraged to stay home instead of going to the student health center. If true, then we cannot require written statements from a health professional for medically related excused absences. Is there a suggested statement for excused absences that would be appropriate for a class syllabus reflecting this fact?**

Since all classes will also be offered remotely in addition to face to face, there should be minimal need for excused absences. However, some students may be too ill to participate in class activities - even remotely. In those cases, following Faculty Senate guidance, faculty should accept the self-reported [Explanatory Statement for Absence from Class](#) form from the student. We do not wish to further exacerbate an already overtaxed health care system by requiring students to bring notes from medical professionals. The Provost Office and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee have developed syllabus language addressing illness and self-quarantine.

- **What measures should faculty implement and enforce with respect to a student's regular personal health assessment and attestation of meeting minimal health criteria in order to attend face-to-face class sessions?**

There will be communications from the university to students regarding basic health assessments. Faculty are encouraged to remind students that if they are displaying any symptoms that could possibly be COVID or other communicable diseases, they should self-isolate at home and participate in class remotely.

- **Can a faculty member mandate that students attending class sign a declaration attesting that they conducted a personal health and wellness exam for each in-class session?**

It would be permissible to remind students at the start of any class that if they have any symptoms they should leave the classroom and participate remotely.

- **Will students/faculty/staff be required to wear face coverings while inside campus buildings? Will there be face coverings available in classrooms for students/faculty/staff who might forget to bring one or otherwise not have one?**

Per the university's [face covering policy](#), students, faculty, and staff will be required to wear face coverings inside campus buildings (except when working in a private office) unless they have a documented exemption and approval from the university. Individuals will be instructed and expected to have their own face coverings. The university will not be providing face coverings for distribution unless a specific mask is required for certain tasks such as grant-funded research.

- **Are any accommodations being made in classrooms to enhance social distancing (example: plexiglass dividers)?**

Yes, movable plexiglass shields are being installed in all registrar-managed classrooms. Seating instructions will be provided by the university in many classrooms to enhance physical distancing.

- **How firm or lax will the policy about face coverings be?**

The university's [face covering policy](#) will be enforced for all faculty, staff, students, and visitors except those with a documented exemption.

- **Should students have their temperature checked before class?**

The university will not establish temperature monitoring stations. Students can be reminded to check their temperatures daily.

- **If a student is obviously ill, can they be asked to leave? What to do if a student refuses to leave and that the instructor is wrong in assessment?**

Faculty should not presume they can diagnose symptoms or an illness. But students who are obviously showing signs of illness can be asked to leave the classroom and join the class remotely.

- **Will additional air purification be added to current HVAC?**

In most locations, fresh air circulation will be increased in buildings and classrooms as appropriate, but in areas where that cannot be done then additional air filters may be used. Each building and campus is unique, so adjustments will vary by building. However, in most cases, there is no plan to add additional air filters.

- **Will plastic shields be added between advisors and their advisees?**

Departments should identify spaces where students and faculty or staff can safely have discussions and obtain plexiglass barriers as a safety precaution. However, we anticipate that most advising will be done online.

- **Will faculty be tested periodically for covid and is that legal?**

At this time, the university is developing a plan to randomly test faculty, staff, and students to ascertain the levels of asymptomatic COVID-19 on campus. Anyone who has a positive test for COVID-19 or close contact with someone is expected to report this information to the [contact tracing portal](#). The contact tracers will provide additional information to individuals about close contacts and will communicate with individuals who have had significant exposure contact. Per [CDC guidelines](#), anyone with a known significant exposure is expected to self-isolate.

Cleaning

- **What are the planned protocols for cleaning between classes? I presume each classroom entrances have hand sanitizers adjacent them.**

Classrooms will be cleaned before classes begin each evening or morning and again at mid-day during the 45 min passing period. Hand sanitizers will be provided near the entrances and the elevators in every building.

- **Will the university provide cleaning supplies to all buildings or will that be a requirement at the department level?**

Cleaning done by SSC will use university-provided supplies. Departments can purchase any additional supplies or PPE as needed.

Proctoring

- **What is the status of the university's effort in securing enough remote exam proctoring capacity for Fall 2020 so that the faculty members and their TA do not have to watch the whole class via Zoom? Will online proctoring be provided that do not cost me or students money to take?**

We are still working to determine the best options for online proctoring. Regardless of the final solution there will be no additional cost to the students.

- **If the class we are scheduled to teach is one of the in-person classes, how should we handle weekly in-class (proctored) quizzes/short assessments (as opposed to exams)? Can we require remote students to set up for Zoom proctoring in the same manner as the proctored MPE and Math 151/152 common exams synchronously, or should we handle their quizzes at a different time? If a different time is necessary (since it may take a few extra minutes to get the Zoom proctoring set up in place), must we designate that time in Howdy (much like such designation is required for evening exams)?**

The instructor decides how to handle quizzes, assignments, and in-term exams. You can use synchronous remote exams for all students at your normally scheduled class time. Since class periods will now run until about 8pm, there is not an option for evening exams. With the

exception of some professional school programs, students cannot be required to come to campus, so remote options for assignments and quizzes are necessary.

- **If students are being encouraged to leave at Thanksgiving and not come back, is it on the shoulder of the of the instructor to accommodate those students who do not have the internet connectivity required for online proctoring (i.e., can we make internet connectivity for the purposes of Zoom proctoring mandatory for all exams, including the final)?**

It will be reasonable to expect that students have internet access once classes are completed in November. While students are not required to return after Thanksgiving, those with unreliable internet connection should consider returning to campus. While one can require internet connectivity, there is no way for anyone to guarantee the reliability of any connection in any location. Best practice is to remain very flexible as connectivity problems are often beyond the control of the user.

Logistics and expectations for F2F and remote delivery

- **What is the basis of deciding who can attend class in person? Would this be random?**

Some courses will be assigned classrooms that can accommodate all registered students for the course while maintaining proper physical distancing. For those courses assigned a classroom that cannot accommodate all registered students, the instructor should establish an equitable method that allows students to participate in person at least once per week. This rotation can be done alphabetically or by any other mechanism the instructor chooses. These cohort assignments will not be done centrally by the university. Please recall that there must always be a remote option for students wishing to participate and do coursework but choose not to attend in person.

- **Can I require attendance to Zoom lectures or in-person lectures?**

You can require attendance but must permit students to attend in either format as they choose. Keep in mind that, in some cases, internet connectivity will affect one's ability to attend remotely.

Keep Teaching Resource: [How to Take Attendance in Zoom](#)

- **If I start a course in-person format, can I change it to online at any time, without any reason?**

No. If a course is designated as an in-person format course it should remain that way unless otherwise instructed by your department or the university.

- **Do I have to provide an in person and a remote version of my class lectures?**

Yes. There will be students who for health reasons should not or cannot attend face to face classes and there are likely to be students who contract COVID during the semester. Every course must have a remote version so these students can self-isolate or quarantine and still

complete their course work. You can choose to live stream your lectures and/or record them for students to access them later.

Keep Teaching Resource: [Guide to Teaching with Zoom](#)

- **If I teach my classes online, do I have to agree to meet students in my office?**

You will need to have office hours for all classes you teach, but you may hold them remotely using appropriate technology such as Zoom. In many cases, students need additional time to engage during office hours, so please allow this flexibility.

Keep Teaching Resource: [Holding Office Hours via Zoom](#)

- **When will we know how (and where) we are teaching our courses? We need time to prepare, especially for courses with labs.**

Schedules including online vs face to face classes released on July 6, but actual teaching assignments are made by your department head. Course assignments will be finalized on July 24 and students will be able to adjust their schedules after that.

Keep Teaching Resource: [Designing your Online Course with Time-Savers and Resources](#)

- **Will students have to provide a rationale or documentation if they opt out of an in-person class (in other words, if a class is meeting in-person but a student opts to participate in the class remotely), or will this be a strictly voluntary process? Will the university provide guidance on how this may affect student rules governing attendance policies, alternate assessments for in-person and remote participants, and other discrepancies that may arise between students in the classroom and students participating remotely?**

All classes must have a remote option for students that wish to participate remotely. Students will not be required to provide a rationale or any documentation for participating remotely. You should plan your required coursework with the required remote option in mind.

- **Will the university provide guidance for attendance with face-to-face classes, especially lab type classes, where hands-on and application are critical to learning? We do not want sick students attending class, but we also can see how students might take advantage and use this as an excuse to not attend.**

Students can choose to attend remotely without any justification. You can still require attendance but must permit participation by either face to face or remote modalities.

Keep Teaching Resource: [How to Take Attendance in Zoom](#)

- **If you have a face-to-face class with an attendance policy, how do you enforce it? Will the Explanatory Excuse that was temporarily authorized for Spring 2020 and Summer 2020 still be in effect as an acceptable excused absence, or will Student Rule 7 be followed as currently listed (where faculty can require written verification of an excused absence)?**

While Student Rule 7 remains in effect for attendance, the Faculty Senate has approved the use of the [Explanatory Statement for Absence from Class](#) form in lieu of a note from a medical professional.

- **For lab type courses, will there need to be access for students to attend remotely or can we provide make up assignments for those that can't attend due to an excused absence?**

Lab courses should have a remote option for any students wishing to attend remotely.

- **Are instructors allowed to go around the town and find large spaces where 100 % of the students can attend the class as large classrooms may meet the social distancing criteria, example, a 200 seat room for a course that has only 50 students?**

No. For safety and legal reasons, instructors must use the assigned classroom space.

- **If a classroom can seat 400 students, and there are only 100 students registered, hope all students can attend the class as it meets the 25% criteria. This will be in the best interest of the class and the students.**

Classroom reallocation was a difficult and complex process. Remember, regardless of student number and classroom size, you must always provide a remote option for students.

- **If the class we are scheduled to teach is one of the in-person classes, what is the expectation for the online version of the class (since we have been told that all classes will have a remote option for students who choose to not come back to campus this fall)? Is synchronous delivery of lecture via Zoom sufficient, or are faculty expected to create fully online asynchronous options for their classes (and therefore have an expectation of nearly double the normal workload)?**

Synchronous delivery of the lecture via Zoom is sufficient but it is important that remote learning students should be given the ability to participate in any classwork and to do all projects, assignments, and other graded work remotely as well.

Keep Teaching Resource: [Facilitate an Online/Remote Course](#)

- **If a 200+ person class is designated as 100% online, will the faculty member have flexibility in how the course material is delivered (synchronously vs. asynchronously), or will the faculty member have to follow the requirements or decisions of the upper administration (whether be their department head, dean, or Provost)?**

If the course is fully online, then the faculty member will have the flexibility to decide whether the course is delivered synchronously or asynchronously. However any synchronous coursework must be done at the assigned class time so as not to interfere with other classes the students may be taking.

Keep Teaching Resource: [Facilitate an Online/Remote Course](#) and [Guide to Communication in your Online/Remote Course](#)

- **For those courses that have been designated as in-person classes, when does a student have to decide the modality in which they will participate in the course (remotely vs. in**

person)? Will students have flexibility to go back and forth between modalities, or will their decision be locked in at the start of the semester (assuming no illness)?

Students will have the flexibility to go back and forth between modalities. Some students may become ill or need to self-isolate and will need to attend remotely for one or more weeks before returning to face to face instruction. It would be permissible to ask if there are students who plan to be 100% remote.

- **If the faculty member is allowed to decide how to deliver course material (synchronous vs. asynchronous), will he or she be able to designate that in Howdy before the start of the fall semester so that students can make an informed decision about taking that particular section of the class?**

Courses offered either remotely or online without a face to face component can be offered synchronously or asynchronously. The instructor will be able to decide. The course syllabus can be made available in advance on Howdy for students to review.

- **If I am teaching some in person and use an in-room recording system to ensure that students self-quarantining can also engage with classroom teaching, do I have to secure the written permission of the students in the classroom to record them?**

You can record students without written permission (although we advise you to be sure they are aware), however these recordings MUST be kept on a secure server and only available to students enrolled in that section. Such recordings are protected by FERPA just as grades would be. They should not be used in any subsequent semester.

Keep Teaching Resource: [Zoom in eCampus](#) and [Zoom in Canvas](#)

- **Can faculty with compromised health issues i.e. multiple heart attacks, copd, etc. should teach online if they feel that the safety measures are insufficient?**

All faculty may ask for an ADA or FMLA accommodation related to their teaching. Please fill out the form and submit to HR ([DOF Teaching Accommodation](#)). HR will provide information back to department heads about accommodations.

- **Will faculty be allowed to lecture wearing mask? How will this impact students requiring an accommodation?**

Yes, faculty must wear a face covering or face shield. A clear face shield may be more appropriate if there are enrolled students who require an accommodation. The face covering should be worn entering and exiting the classroom, but the face shield can be used while teaching the class.

- **When will the schedule be finalized?**

The finalized schedule will post July 24.

- **When the fall semester officially end? Will finals be moved up the same amount as the class start or has the faculty's semester been extended? If so, are we being compensated?**

The number of class days remains the same as before. The calendar is available on the registrar's web page. Professional programs may have a different calendar.

- **If I decide that the risk of infection is greater than I'm willing to accept, what measures has the Dean of Faculties put in place to protect the faculty? We are already being compelled to work days for which we are not compensated, what is there to protect me if my department head or Dean decide to compel me to meet my class face-to-face?**

We are taking all reasonable precautions to protect faculty and staff (face coverings, plexiglass, increased fresh air flow, and physical distancing) but if the university is open, then faculty are expected to teach. There may be situations where an ADA or FMLA accommodation is appropriate. Fill out the form to request an accommodation and consult with your department head ([DOF Teaching Accommodation](#)).

- **When making decisions for the fall, are the sizes of the classes and the disciplines being taught being taken into consideration when deciding how to deliver the material?**

Yes. Departments and Colleges were asked to provide lists of courses they thought were most critical for face to face instruction and which were the best suited for online delivery.

Handling symptomatic students/instructors, positive tests, and quarantine

- **Will the entire class be quarantined if a student tests positive for COVID-19 because of contact with other students?**

No. We are requiring face masks and appropriate physical distancing in the classroom to avoid that step. Anyone with a positive test result should self-report on the [COVID reporting portal](#). The contact tracing group will provide information to individuals who should get tested or self-isolate.

- **What happens if a student in my in-person labs tests positive for COVID? Are my classes moved to online for the entire remainder of the semester?**

No, but the positive test result should be reported in the COVID reporting portal so that contact tracing can occur. You will be notified by a contact tracer if additional action is necessary. It is possible that the lab will move online for a short period of time and this information will be conveyed to the faculty member and the students. Students do not need to disclose a COVID diagnosis to the faculty member. If the student does, the faculty member should tell the student to report it through the portal and report it themselves so that contact tracing can occur.

- **What will the protocol be to assure sick students are not attending face-to-face classes? Students don't always have access to a thermometer to take their temperature and know they are running a fever, etc.**

We are instructing students to bring a thermometer and we will continue messaging that if they feel ill they should stay home and take classes remotely. The COVID-19 Guide for Students Returning To Campus is available [here](#).

- **Math Department is running about 20 sections of 300+ students and countless sections of 100+ students. Some faculty will teach two sections of 300+ students, while others will teach 4 sections of 100+ students. What is the process for dealing with a student who contracts COVID-19? For faculty who will be teaching 400+ to 600+ students, if a small percent (say 5-10%) get it (or are exposed to it and must self-quarantine), then these faculty may have to manage 20-60 students at any given time during the semester who may have excused absences. Is it the faculty member's responsibility to accommodate each individual student according to the student's availability?**

Each department will need to decide how best to handle such situations. But all course work must be made available in remote learning format.

- **Students are going to be highly discouraged from leaving town once they arrive in College Station for the fall semester. However, if someone does leave for a weekend and comes back, do these students need to self-report? What is the process in place for that? If we are encouraging students to stay in town for safety reasons, what are the mechanisms for follow-up? Is this, too, going to become the responsibility of the instructors?**

There is no legal mechanism to require students to stay in town and no plans to require or enforce self-isolation after domestic travel.

- **What if an instructor gets sick? What if a lot of instructors get sick?**

Departments will need to plan for backup instructors where possible. We plan to carefully track illness in faculty and staff among other metrics. If a lot of instructors get sick, this is one of the possible signals that we should alter university plans. Faculty should report illness in Workday so that the university knows when faculty are out for illnesses.

- **What do we do with students who say they think they were exposed and need to not come to class for two weeks? What if that student thinks that he or she may have exposed other students in his or her classes? Do we all need to self-quarantine? Will the Explanatory Excuse still be in effect?**

All face to face classes will have a remote learning option. So if students for any reason believe they should not come to the classroom they can still be expected to continue their studies via the remote option. Some students may be too ill to continue their studies by remote learning option. All students who have tested positive will need to report this in the COVID reporting [portal](#) and the contact tracers will provide information to others who may have exposed. The use of face coverings and physical distancing in the classroom obviates the need for the entire class to self-quarantine. The [Explanatory Form for Absence from Class](#) is allowed and should be accepted by instructors for students unable to participate remotely and complete required assignments or exams.

- **What are the procedures going to be when a student in class tests positive, specifically what will we (the instructors) need to do?**

If the instructor learns about a student who has tested positive, they should encourage the student to report this in the COVID reporting [portal](#) so appropriate follow up with the student can occur. The faculty member should also report this information in the portal using the supervisor section.

Pedagogical Strategies

- **What are some alternatives to assessment (how to measure success without an exam), and best practices and tools for offering exams online (and what tools are available to whom- i.e., who is paying for what)?**

CTE will be providing additional information sessions for faculty interested in developing alternatives to traditional assessment.

- **What training is being offered for those faculty who are still not up to speed for teaching online or who are wanting to build and improve upon the skills they learned so hastily in the spring?**

The [Keep Teaching website](#) has been re-designed to be a step-by-step guide to assist faculty in designing and facilitating an online/remote course. Many of the recommendations can also be applicable to a blended environment where a course instructor is teaching synchronously to students face-to-face and via Zoom. The Office for Academic Innovation is holding [daily training sessions](#) mostly focused on Canvas and have curated resources on a [YouTube channel](#) for tips and tricks with an [eCampus playlist](#), [Canvas playlist](#), and [Zoom playlist which will include new content regularly](#). Where possible the Office of Academic Innovation is working to create parity in resources for both eCampus and Canvas. They will also hold daily office hours from 2:00 - 4:00 pm via Zoom (click [here](#) to join).

Misc.

- **Who will coordinate the remote delivery part of the class when an instructor is providing class in the lecture room?**

Normally it is not anticipated that any significant extra coordination will be required if the lectures are delivered synchronously by Zoom.

- **With all the unknowns and unpredictable course of the virus, why don't we just go 100% online for the Fall?**

We firmly believe that some face to face instruction has significant positive benefits to the students and therefore we are committed to offering as much as is possible given the present circumstances. Furthermore, there are numerous surveys indicating that students will not choose to return in the fall if classes are all online.

- **How will transportation services handle social distancing guidelines and still manage to get all students to class on time, even if time between classes increases to 30 minutes?**

They are actively planning to handle the demand in a safe manner as outlined [here](#).

- **Will any consideration be given to those faculty who are having to manage 300+ students, vis-a-vis the extra workload that comes with teaching online with limited training and resources? Managing 300 students is a huge, time-consuming task during**

the best of times, but doing so while also still trying to learn how to teach effectively online (and trying to keep up with the deluge of emails that comes with online instruction) can be almost unmanageable for a single instructor who may not have any TA support.

TA and teaching support will be assigned by Department Heads as they always have.

- **Will all faculty have the option to use Canvas in Fall 2020? When will they be given access to start preparing their classes?**

Yes. All Fall 2020 course instructors were provided a practice course shell in Canvas. Go to lms.tamu.edu and login to find your practice course shell. When the schedule is finalized by the Registrar's Office later in July, all courses for Fall will have a course in both Canvas and eCampus. Faculty will need to determine which LMS will be used and post this on the syllabus. It will be the responsibility of the course instructor to build out content and then **publish** (Canvas) or **activate** (eCampus) so that students can access the course in the respective system.

- **If we are scheduled for hybrid (meaning some in person), but our personal circumstances change, do we have the right to switch to all online half-way through the term? By personal circumstances, I don't just mean if we get sick. I mean, if the schools close or switch schedules and childcare demands change. Or if we have new or different elder care responsibilities.**

Generally we do not want classes to switch from hybrid to entirely online unless circumstances on campus dictate such. If individual circumstances change, faculty may ask for FMLA or ADA accommodations during the semester ([DOF Teaching Accommodation](#)).

- **Also, given the rules that are/will be in place at daycare facilities (and probably schools) re: children with any symptoms must be at home 2 weeks before returning, are there flexible policies re: leave time?**

Faculty generally have flexibility in their schedules other than their assigned teaching times and office hours. But any such accommodation would need to be coordinated through your department head.

- **How is requiring me to teach a week and a half when I'm not being paid being justified? Isn't this a violation of Federal Labor laws?**

No it is not a violation. You are being paid to teach for the fall semester and the total number of teaching days in the fall has not changed.

- **What will happen in the spring? Will spring break be cancelled and the semester shortened?**

Decisions about spring semester will be made later.

- **Current wait times for test results in the area is 3-5 days if you are not symptomatic. Unless this improves, that would seem to be a problem. Although I guess the university could run their own testing program.**

The University is planning to run a testing program that can be accessed by students, faculty and staff who have a UIN. The Student Health Service will oversee sampling for COVID-19 testing at SHS facilities and likely drive-through testing. We expect that we will have testing for individuals with symptoms and close contact as well as random sampling. We are also working on developing wastewater sampling to measure COVID-19 viral loads on campus.