Checklist for Instructors

To be ready for the semester, there are several important decisions that you will need to make ahead of time. You likely had to choose the mode for your course(s), based on your own preferences and course pedagogy as well as classroom capacity limitations. Even if you have taught your course before, it is possible that you are teaching it in a new mode of delivery this semester. Thus, you'll need to think about how to adjust the course delivery depending on the class mode. There are many resources available to help you think this through, and they are outlined below. It's also essential that you become familiar with the health and safety considerations. In this section, we summarize the important points to consider.

Review health and safety information

Be aware of health and safety information and related procedures.

Review the latest COVID-19 information, health requirements information for faculty and staff, and cleaning procedures outlined in Section I.

Self-quarantine for at least seven days immediately before your arrival on campus as suggested on the Virus Information site.

If you receive notification that a pre-arrival test is required for you, submit your COVID-19 test as soon as possible to make sure the result is available before the first day of classes. See here for more information about faculty testing.

Pick up your PPE (masks and sanitizers) according to your unit's distribution plan. The University will be distributing masks to students, faculty, and staff.

Review masking and physical distancing policies and how to deal with policy violations

It will be important to communicate the enforcement of the health and safety guidelines to students in a strict but compassionate tone. You also serve as a role model for the students.

Review the [policy about the violation of health and safety guidelines](#).

Email students about the masking policy and your commitment to enforcing the rules. Remind them not to congregate in the hallway outside of the classroom.

With the exception of bottled water, all food and drink consumption is prohibited in classrooms. Those drinking water should be especially conscious of maintaining physical distancing and minimizing the time their mask is moved aside; water bottles with built-in straws are recommended for this purpose. Be careful not to touch the front of your mask.

Plans for how you will deliver your course

Prepare logistical details for your course depending on the mode of instruction.

By now, you should have decided on the appropriate instructional mode for your classes (in-person, mixed-mode, remote synchronous, remote asynchronous).

Make plans for how you will incorporate wellness days into your course. Instructors are expected to not hold class on these days, and the University will plan programming around wellness. Instructors are encouraged to participate in these wellness activities if they wish. In the rare cases when learning objectives cannot be met without meeting on these days, the University will have an exception process.

Notify administrators about specialized equipment and technology requests.

Review the [guidance on allowed web cam use requirements](#) for students during class and examinations.

Notify students about the mode of the class using this [communication recommendations template](#). Ideally, all students should receive this communication at least two weeks before the start of the semester. If your course is in-person or mixed-mode, find out if there are students in your class who do not plan to return to campus for face-to-face instruction.

If there are students who will not be returning to campus, decide if it is feasible to include them in the course remotely. Consider how you will communicate with them and engage them in the class. If it is reasonable to include remote students, consider working with your scheduler to set up a remote synchronous (CR) companion section for the remote students and then send the students instructions on how to be added to that section. If it is not possible to include remote students, refer them to their adviser to discuss options for remote courses.

For a mixed-mode course using a rotational model, determine which students will be present on the first day of classes. If possible, decide who will attend in-person each day class will meet. Canvas's COVID Schedule Tool is available to help you break your class into cohorts.

Consult with Student Disability Resources (SDR) to address inclusive teaching practices. These include, for example, using video and positioning camera to capture full-front face when speaking, using high quality audio, engaging universal design for learning practices for presentations.

For courses with experiential learning (e.g., studios, clinical experiences, experimental and computer laboratories, field work, field trips, and credit-bearing undergraduate research), consult this Experiential Course Guidelines document for guidance.

If planning to invite guests to an in-person meeting of your class, plan for you or another University employee to be there during their class visit in order to enforce the health and safety protocols if needed. Also be sure they have the proper unit-level approvals to be on campus.

Attend (or view recordings of) some of the excellent training offered to help you develop your course and think about how to engage students.

If you would like support in the classroom for distance learners using Zoom, you can request Tech TA support by visiting the Tech Tutors website and clicking the "Request Tech TA" button.

Develop your syllabus

In addition to the usually required components of the syllabus, there are new considerations for teaching during COVID-19 that you are strongly encouraged (but not required) to incorporate into your syllabus if you have face-to-face components in your course. Address behavioral expectations and the shared responsibility to protect the safety and health of everyone. Set up the expectation for regular attendance and explain how you will keep track of who has been in the classroom each day but avoid using physical presence as part of course assessment. Consider whether you want to assign seats to make attendance-taking easier.

Add statements about mask wearing, physical distancing, and personal hygiene to your syllabus. Masks need to cover both nose and mouth and must stay in place at all times. Describe consequences for refusing to wear a mask in the classroom. See this [example of Language for Enforcement of Mask Wearing](#).

Consider relaxing in-person attendance policy and avoid a grading scheme that rewards attendance to remove incentives for sick students to attend class in person. See an example of the [Modified Attendance Policy](#).

Develop video-conferencing etiquette guidelines and include your [webcam policy](#) for class meetings and exams.

Include a statement regarding wellness days.

The Faculty Senate has provided [specific language on academic integrity](#) that can be used in your syllabus. See other [language that can be used in the syllabus or on assignments](#).

Plan for academic integrity in your course

Academic integrity is a basic guiding principle for all academic activity. Instructors have a critical responsibility to teach students about academic integrity. When planning for academic integrity in your course, consult the Keep Teaching site's [Academic Integrity page](#) and consider the following:

Create pedagogical strategies that enhance academic integrity and plan assessment that enhance its role in students' work.

Provide secure environment for exams and assessments by learning about exam proctoring options, using Canvas guide to maximize security, and following University policy when using webcams.

Communicate with your students about academic integrity and mention available training for students about academic integrity and academic integrity quick guide for students.

Familiarize yourself with the Penn State academic integrity process and learn how to proceed when you identify an academic integrity violation.

Resources for Academic Integrity

Overview of Academic Integrity

- [Academic Integrity page on Keep Teaching site](#)
- Academic Integrity: [Student Success with Integrity webinar and resources](#)
- [Instructional Strategies for Promoting Honest Efforts webinar and slides](#)

Integrity and Assessments

- [Remote Exam Proctoring Options page](#) on Keep Teaching site
- [Adapting Assessments page](#) on Keep Teaching site
- [Quick Guide for Transitioning to Remote Instruction](#) Student Assessments
- Countdown to Classes [webinar](#) and [slides](#) (Click on the hamburger menu in the upper left corner to see individual topics by video chapters -- see chapter 17)
- [Assess Learning page](#) on *Commonwealth Campus Faculty Development site*

Prepare for a backup plan for remote instruction

All classes that have in-person components must have contingency plans for reverting to remote delivery if health circumstances require ending in-person instruction. Every instructor needs to prepare for this possibility, along with the potential that they might become sick or need to be quarantined.

Create assignments and examinations that can be delivered remotely.

Review course materials and familiarize yourself with online course delivery tools.

In consultation with your department head, consider whether creating a discipline-specific instructor support group makes sense in order to help cover if one of the instructors becomes ill.

Follow up-to-date information available on keepteaching.psu.edu and virusinfo.psu.edu/back-to-state.

Familiarize yourself with your classroom

Before the first class, you need to understand the new layout of your classroom and confirm that it is suitable for the mode of instruction you have selected.

> Confirm the assigned classroom and the meeting times on LionPATH and on 25 Live.
>
> Check the layout of your classroom(s) and the new room capacity limit on the Facility Information System website and make sure that the room size supports your class mode of delivery.
>
> Be sure to map out exactly where your classroom is on campus, visit it if you can, and know precisely how long it will take to get there. At University Park, you can email *TechClass@psu.edu* for a quick orientation or practice in a General Purpose Classroom. Please include the building name, GPC room number, and your hours of availability.

Verify equipment and supplies

Make sure that your classroom has all the technology and software that you require.

> Verify that your classrooms have all equipment you require for your courses (e.g., technology to enable remote and in-person learning). All classrooms should be Zoom-ready.
>
> Laptops are available for loan from TLT via this equipment request form.
>
> If you are teaching in a general purpose classroom at University Park, review instructions on how to use Zoom in the classroom. Issues with Zoom can be reported here. For other locations, contact your local IT support.

Review student resources

Be empathetic to students, and learn about resources available to them. Be sensitive to students' concerns and anxieties, regardless of whether they are related to the class. Be aware of the resources available to students.

> Review resources available to students. Visit this summary of resources of all types; become familiar with it so you can point students in the right direction if they need help during the semester.

Familiarize yourself with [The Red Folder Initiative](#), an excellent guide to help you determine the best course of action when dealing with a student in distress.

Instructors should use [Starfish](#) to identify students who are struggling with engagement in learning. In addition to scheduled Starfish reports that you will be asked to submit, you can raise a flag at any time for a student when you have concerns. This will alert their adviser to follow up with the student.

For general wellness, refer students to the [you.psu.edu site](#), which will provide them with tailored content based on their personal profile.

The Center for Disease and Control Prevention provides [resources for coping with stress related to COVID-19](#).

Facilitate students' academic success

To facilitate students' academic success, you will need to adapt the way you teach, given the challenging circumstances of the COVID-19 teaching and learning experience. If the class is meeting remotely or in a different room than usual, students might not have the resources (hardware and software) they were expecting.

Decide how to adjust your course delivery to meet students' needs.

Decide if you need a [different way to assess the learning outcomes](#) and administer written examinations.

Let students know the technology they need for your course. [If a student needs a laptop or mobile hotspot](#), they can fill out a [Student Technology Loaner Program form](#).

Many [free resources such as textbooks and videos](#) are available to students through the Penn State Library System. Consider using these resources in your classroom.

If you have students studying from abroad, please consider delivery speeds and costs for materials using these [Guidelines for Instructional Materials for International Students Studying Abroad](#).

Decide how you will [schedule](#) and [promote office hours](#) to support student learning.

Consider whether to support [virtual study groups](#) for your course.