

Supporting Excused Student Absences Due to COVID

Instructors are asked to facilitate continued course engagement for students who are absent because they have symptoms of COVID or are in quarantine or isolation. The following recommendations may be helpful as instructors develop their approach, taking into account their course structure and learning goals. Whatever approach(es) are selected, instructors should clearly indicate this on their syllabus, so the expectations are clear for students from the start of the course.

- Record class sessions. Class recordings have many pedagogical benefits and instructors may want to make such recordings available to all students in the class. Recordings provide students an opportunity to review material at their own pace and support the integration of new information into students' existing knowledge. Instructors can also limit access to recordings to specific students. See [Guidelines for Recording Classes](#) for more information.
- Share class materials. Many instructors regularly place slides and handouts on Canvas for students to access during or after class. Instructors may wish to provide additional notes or materials for students with excused absences.
- Provide remote office hours. Offer to schedule Zoom meetings with students during office hours or at an alternate time.
- Encourage student study groups. Invite students who are interested in forming study groups to sign up on Canvas, see [this guide on posting discussion questions on Canvas](#). Refer the students to the Zoom Learning Center for [information on setting up Zoom meetings](#). You may find it helpful to review the [Academic Learning and Student Assistance \(ASLA\) recommendations on helping students form study groups](#).
- Mention online writing consultations. For writing assignments, post a reminder on Canvas that [The Writing Place](#) holds online and in person peer consultations.
- Consider alternate assignments. Depending on course learning objectives and context, instructors may require students who miss an in-class discussion to submit a personalized summary or critical reflection of the readings, noting key ideas, questions or points of confusion, within one week of the missed class. Such critical reflections need not be graded but could count toward a participation grade.
- Consider options for late assignments. Instructors may find that allowing some flexibility around assignments deadlines benefits all students. Such flexibility can take various forms and could be offered only for students with excused absences.

- Offer a range of dates for when an assignment is due and/or consider an assignment to be “on time” if submitted within five days of stated due date
 - Allow for extensions and work with individual students to develop plan to complete assigned work.
 - Break down larger assignments into smaller tasks, allowing students to turn in one part at a time.
 - Allow all students to drop lowest grade among similar assignments or quizzes. For students who miss an assignment, this would be their “lowest grade.”
 - Keep in mind that students must complete at least 50% of course work and be passing the course to be eligible for a grade of Incomplete (Y) at the end of the quarter.
- Develop course policy on group work for students with excused absences. Policies might include:
 - Students must inform the rest of the group that they will be missing class (without needing to disclose specific health status) and/or completing work late or not at all. Groups may opt to meet online or work asynchronously.
 - If necessary, instructor might offer extension or reduce one aspect of the assignment if a group member is unable to complete work.
 - Suggest that groups work out their own rules or charter, identifying timelines and tasks, which can be revised if a student cannot complete work in a timely way.
 - [Resources for Creating Equitable and Inclusive Learning Environments](#) provides guidance on designing courses that prepare you to support the learning of all students. These approaches lay a foundation for appropriate flexibility and equitable educational experiences.
 - Teaching & Learning Technologies offers a range of live workshops covering many topics, as well as asynchronous, [on-demand training](#). You can register for a [15-minute consultation](#) or a [60-minute consultation](#) with one of the Teaching & Learning Technologies staff. Information on preparing for Fall Quarter 2021. If you need assistance outside of University business hours, Canvas Support through Instructure (the company behind Canvas) is available 24/7 via the [live chat](#) located in the Help section of the left-hand navigation bar in Canvas or through the toll-free help line at 1-833-879-0860.