

Creating a COVID-19 Contingency Plan for Potential In-Person Course Interruption

In planning for Fall 2021 in-person courses, we are called to consider the ways in which the fall will serve as a “transitional” term for the institution and how we can be ready to deal with the challenges the term might bring. Our expectation is that a significant portion of the university community will be vaccinated. In addition, we will need to be vigilant in following steps to ensure the safety of those on campus. In order to reduce uncertainties, we want you to feel ready to respond if cases of COVID arise in your class(es). As part of on-going safety practices, the university has a process for [self-reporting confirmed or suspected cases](#) if a positive case is reported in your class.

This document is designed to support you in planning in manageable ways to pivot your teaching and support for students’ learning in the event of various kinds of in-person course interruptions. We recognize there are concerns regarding any assumption that instructors will teach a class in two modes concurrently (remote and in-person). While some colleagues may pursue teaching in this way (a blended or hybrid approach throughout a term), this document focuses on being prepared for short term changes to an in-person class and describes options for the most straightforward approaches that use familiar tools and draw on your remote teaching experiences.

When might there be a need to pivot?

<p>1 Some students are unable to attend in person¹</p>	<p>2 The instructor is unable to teach in person</p>	<p>3 The whole class is unable to meet in person</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some members of the class will participate as planned (e.g., attend in person) Others can’t attend and need remote access to the learning for a defined period of time (e.g., because they need to self-isolate) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The instructor is sick OR The instructor can teach, but cannot be in the class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The class has a declared outbreak, and everyone must self-isolate for a defined period of time A building/classroom must be shut down for a short period

In all of these cases, designing your class to allow for easier pivoting will help. Page two of this document includes three key areas where action in design of your course will enable easier pivoting. The table on page three provides an overview of strategies you can draw from to suit your course and circumstance should you need to pivot within the term.

¹ This scenario is intended to speak to unpredicted or unplanned absences and is not meant as advice on the provision of accommodations where students are registered with AES. Please consult the [AES website](#) or call 306-966-7273 for information regarding documented accommodations.



How do I plan for a pivot?



Have an online presence for your course(s)

- The most proactive step you can take is to build your course shell in Canvas or [reuse your 2020/21 Canvas course through a course copy](#). Use the Canvas course in your in-person or blended course by:
 - Posting class resources, [the syllabus](#), and handouts in organized modules (weekly or by unit) so students can find things easily. Aim to create a structure that allows a student to understand the flow of the course (expectations by week/unit) without guidance from you
 - Including, where possible, more detailed descriptions of things usually said verbally
 - Updating students and [making announcements](#) via Canvas
 - [Setting up a discussion](#) for FAQs and/or for some asynchronous class discussions, if needed
 - [Setting up assignments for students to electronically submit](#)
 - Sharing a simple [“how to use Canvas”](#) blog with your students
- Although your course delivery is in person, a well-designed Canvas course site can easily serve as your virtual classroom, housing both your course materials and important class communications. This allows for an easy transition to teaching and learning in an online environment, if needed.



Communicate expectations proactively

- Set norms in advance for what students should do if they are required to self-isolate and post the plan in Canvas where students can easily find it. The plan should include:
 - How students will be notified if the course pivots online
 - How students should notify instructor(s) if they must self-isolate
 - What to do if self-isolation or the pivot overlaps with a major assessment
 - How to get notes and course materials if students cannot attend
- A Fall 2021 in-person syllabus template inclusive of language and links to COVID-19 related guidance for students is available on the [teaching.usask.ca website](#).



Build in some flexible activities

- Consider building some aspects of your course (e.g., content and activities from one module) that are independent of previous aspects and may not require in-person interaction. This content could be taught remotely near the end of the course or moved earlier in the schedule if the whole class must self-isolate.
- For labs, having some weeks planned for students to work independently and flexibly has been successful in situations where there has been a need to move to remote without notice.

What strategies can I use if I need to pivot?

	1 Some students are unable to attend in person	2 The instructor is unable to teach in person	3 The whole class is unable to meet in person
Share plans with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email impacted students directly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update students by making announcements in Canvas Refer students to the guidelines in your syllabus you discussed with them in advance 	
Move office hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule office time using Zoom/WebEx and direct students to explanations of how to use it (e.g., Canvas Tips for Students) 		
Choose to hold interactive elements in Canvas and Zoom/WebEx	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host a Zoom/WebEx meeting during your in-person class. Students unable to attend can join in a breakout room² 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up a discussion in Canvas for asynchronous discussion (written) Use Zoom/WebEx with breakout rooms for synchronous small group discussions (verbal) 	
Move assessment into the best technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have students submit electronically via Canvas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider assessment technologies available and choose the one right for your type of assessment 	
Choose to capture and share video of your course content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule and record the in-person session using Zoom. Students who are unable to attend can watch 'live' or view later² OR Reuse content previously created or use Panopto lecture capture, if available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reuse content created for remote teaching, where possible, OR record before class, and then post in Canvas for everyone to view. 	

Where can I get support in planning or during the term?

Gwenna Moss Centre for Teaching and Learning: gmctl@usask.ca

ICT support: If USask technology is not working you can create a support request in the [IT Support Portal](#) or see the [Information Technology - Service Catalogue](#).

² This option is available where an instructor/faculty member deems it tenable for their course.

