

## Quick Guide to Spring 2021 Instructional Topics (Tri-Cities)

January 15, 2021

This quick guide to instruction is intended to assist instructors with navigating the changes imposed by WSU's response to the public health emergency caused by COVID-19. It also provides some key resources for both faculty and students. <https://provost.wsu.edu/documents/2018/08/key-policies-reminder-memorandum.pdf/>

This information evolves frequently, and significant changes will be communicated via updates and on the Provost's COVID-19 website: <https://provost.wsu.edu/procedures/classrooms/policies-and-reports/covidplanning/>

Questions not answered here? Contact Anna Plemons at [aplemons@wsu.edu](mailto:aplemons@wsu.edu)

### Academic Calendar—Spring 2021

<https://registrar.wsu.edu/academic-calendar/>

The academic calendar for spring 2021 has been modified:

- First day of classes January 19, 2021
- Class-free days: Feb. 15, Feb. 25, March 17, April 13  
**Please do not schedule assignment due dates or tests immediately after these days—they are intended to be mini-breaks to lessen stress.**

### Absences (Student)

Students are responsible for ensuring that they attend all class meetings and complete all in-class and out-of-class work as assigned by the instructor. Students are also responsible for communicating with the instructor should they need to be absent.

During the spring semester it is likely that some students will be required to quarantine or will fall ill for an extended period. Many students will also have challenges related to access to technology and internet or quiet spaces to attend a remote class. Faculty should exercise understanding and generosity in responding to students' requests to keep up with the coursework or make up missed work. It is the expectation of the Provost's Office that instructors will reasonably accommodate students who are absent for an extended period. Regularly using Panopto or recording Zoom sessions will assist students in keeping up with the course.

"Reasonably accommodate" means coordinating with the student on scheduling examinations or other activities necessary for completing course requirements and includes offering different times for examinations or activities. Instructors may determine that the missed work and/or class time is so extensive that the student cannot make it up without taking an Incomplete grade. Students have one year to complete the work, unless a shorter interval is specified by the instructor. Incomplete Grade Agreement

Forms must be completed and on file with the department and the Registrar's Office. The Incomplete Grade Agreement Form can be found here:

<https://registrar.wsu.edu/media/762164/incompletegradeagreement050620.pdf>

The Incomplete grade will administratively convert to an F grade after one year if the work is not completed as agreed. There are no extensions beyond the one year.

### **Assistance (Virtual) for students**

Students can access virtual help desks for the following service areas here:

<https://tricitie.wsu.edu/televisit/>

- Advising
- IT
- Writing Center
- Cashier's Office
- Trio
- Veteran's Center
- Library

### **Attestation:** <https://attestation.wsu.edu/>

- Faculty and teaching assistants must attest to not experiencing [COVID-19 symptoms](#) before arriving on campus/to work or immediately upon arrival. Employees complete their attestation on-line at [MyWSU](#).
- All visitors to campus must also attest prior to arrival.

### **Blackboard and Canvas**

- Blackboard and Canvas are the official learning management systems (LMS). Students should not be asked to purchase other systems that function as an LMS.
- Activate course space before the semester begins and post syllabus (draft OK). Students need time to buy materials and required technology. Recommended date: Jan. 11<sup>th</sup>.
- LMS support: Faculty can access IT support through the Virtual Help Desk--  
<https://tricitie.wsu.edu/televisit/>

### **Grading**

The regular grading scheme (WSU Catalog, Academic Regulations 50, 90) applies in Spring 2021 with one exception. Students may choose an NRC grade at the end of the semester—see NRC entry below.

### **Incomplete Grade**

Incomplete grades should be used sparingly and only in instances where a student has already completed a majority of the coursework. Students have one year to complete the work, unless a shorter interval is specified by the instructor (the Office of Academic Affairs is supportive of assigning specific, reasonable—and shorter—intervals for completing work. Incomplete Grade Agreement Forms must be completed and on file with the department and the Registrar's Office. The Incomplete Grade Agreement Form can be found here:

<https://registrar.wsu.edu/media/762164/incompletegradeagreement050620.pdf>

The Incomplete grade will administratively convert to an F grade after one year if the work is not completed as agreed. There are no extensions beyond the one year.

### **Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA)**

- Students and faculty will have to authenticate using two devices (e.g., computer, phone) for zoom, Canvas, Blackboard.
- Students will need to have set up authentication before their first class.
- Visit: <https://login.wsu.edu/enduser/settings>

### **NRC Grade**

A new temporary grade for AY 20-21 that functions like a withdrawal for final grades of C- and below.

- <https://facsen.wsu.edu/2020/11/20/new-grading-policy-no-record-covid/>
- <https://registrar.wsu.edu/nrc>

### **Open Educational Resources**

Low or no-cost educational materials curated by faculty; they assist with equity and inclusion of all students. WSU OER page

<https://provost.wsu.edu/open-educational-resources/>.

### **Proctoring**

- Proctoring will be available only through ProctorU and managed by AOI.
- All proctoring requests go through the assistant vice chancellor for academic affairs and must be approved by January 30, 2021 for the spring term.
- Proctored sessions will be managed by AOI through the LMS.
- For information on proctoring, see: <https://gcps.wsu.edu/for-faculty/online-proctoring/>

#### **Webcams during proctored exams**

Instructors should apply the same protocols for proctored remote exams as they would for in-person exams, albeit the situations are not entirely parallel. If you allow students to step out to visit the restroom during a regular exam, you should allow them to do so virtually during a remote exam by briefly turning off the camera. (note: ProctorU will flag this behavior as suspect). Students should be notified in advance that faculty will disregard these flags.

Some faculty do not allow any exit from the room during in-person exams. In this case, students should be notified in advance of the exam, so that they can make alternate arrangements for situations that might require their attention (e.g., childcare, eldercare).

### **Reasonable accommodation**

- Students with high risk conditions who must study remotely are entitled to accommodation (through the Access Center for F2F courses), and departments are obligated to provide reasonable accommodation for the course. See: <https://li.wsu.edu/teaching-tool-boxes/emergency-tool-kit-for-extended-distance-delivery/distance-delivery-for-faculty/supporting-students-who-have-approved-accommodations/>
- Students studying remotely who become ill or must quarantine should be supported in keeping up with coursework. See “Absences” above.

## Recording Sensitive Topics

Making recordings of Zoom class meetings is a good accommodative practice that allows students to review what they learned or missed in class.

AOI recommends that recordings of class sessions be posted to the cloud, and not directly in Blackboard (Canvas); that they be available only for the current semester; and only to the students in the class. The ability for students to download is apparently already turned off by default in Zoom. Faculty can select a setting either in their Zoom account or for each recording “only authenticated users can view cloud recordings”. This would be an additional level of security that faculty could add so that if a student tried to share a video it could be viewed only by someone with WSU NID and Password. AOI also has posted a “talent release” (consent to be recorded) that you can have students sign if you wish:

<https://li.wsu.edu/documents/2017/08/global-campus-talent-release.pdf/>

Nonetheless, Zoom recordings of class meetings may have the disadvantage in some courses of chilling student discussion of controversial ideas if students fear that their comments made in the “privacy” of the classroom are made more public by distribution of the recordings beyond the classroom. It is reasonable for students to expect that what is said in the classroom stays in the classroom. Thus, to achieve both ends of providing accommodation and preserving privacy, it is recommended that:

**Faculty should set their Zoom settings so that only the host of the meeting can record the meeting.**

For classes that emphasize student discussion of personal, sensitive, emotionally- laden or controversial topics, faculty should only make recordings of lectures and class discussions available to students who have been absent from class due to illness or who have accommodations through the WSU Access Center. When such recordings are made available to these students, we recommend faculty provide students with a learning agreement (see draft below) that suggests they do not share the recording with others:

*In this class, students are encouraged to both express and evaluate multiple points of view. A key aspect of a college education is exposure to and engagement with the complexity of various issues. Therefore, it is important that we listen and respect one another. We do not have to come to consensus, but we do need to agree to honor the privacy and educational processes of our classmates. Because this class is virtual, that commitment includes digital privacy, meaning that students are not allowed to make, remix nor share or post course recordings, nor in any way capture, manipulate, or circulate the likeness of a classmate.*

Unless a student’s accommodation requires such recording, faculty should also exercise their discretion to not record class conversations in which students may discuss personal, sensitive, emotionally-laden or controversial topics that may not be intended for public consumption or transmission outside the class members.

Instructors may provide absent students with summary notes of the discussion, or alternate assignments, in lieu of a recording.

## “Regular and Substantive Interaction”

In order to meet federal criteria of regular and substantive interaction in distance courses (non-Global Campus), instructors must provide regular synchronous learning opportunities for students.

“Regular Interaction” must occur between a student and an instructor or instructors, prior to the student’s completion of a course or competency. It may be accomplished by:

1. providing the opportunity for substantive interactions with the student on a predictable and regular basis commensurate with the length of time and the amount of content in the course or competency,
2. monitoring the student’s academic engagement and success,
3. and ensuring that an instructor is responsible for proactively engaging in substantive interaction with the student when needed, on the basis of such monitoring, or upon request by the student.

“Substantive Interaction” entails engaging students in teaching, learning, and assessment, consistent with the content under discussion, and includes at least two of the following:

1. providing direct instruction; assessing or providing feedback on a student’s coursework,
2. providing information or responding to questions about the content of a course or competency,
3. facilitating a group discussion regarding the content of a course or competency,
4. or other instructional activities approved by the institution’s or program’s accrediting agency.

### Synchronous and Asynchronous Activities in Distance Courses

WSU recognizes that many students taking courses this spring will have access issues or obligations that make meeting a full synchronous pattern of five courses very difficult if not impossible. Not all scheduled hours of a distance course need be conducted synchronously if at least some are. In other words, the course might meet synchronously one or two times a week, with the other time structured in asynchronous activities. The expectation is that faculty are engaging with students in the course space as frequently as they would be meeting with students in classrooms, even though it may not all be happening in real-time interaction.

The synchronous component of a course must take place during the meeting pattern stated in the Schedule of Classes. While the specific nature of synchronous opportunities will necessarily vary, merely offering open office hours is not sufficient to meet the regulation.

Where the needs of the students (in different time zones, perhaps) dictate a departure from the scheduled meeting pattern for the synchronous component, a class contract signed by all stating the agreement about a new synchronous time will protect both the instructor and the students from conflicts and miscommunications.

Synchronous activities can be recorded (Zoom, Panopto) for students who are quarantining or ill.

## Religious Holidays

Please see the calendar at <https://provost.wsu.edu/manuals-and-forms/religious-holidays/> in reference to Academic Regulations 72 and 82 on religious accommodations.

## Syllabus requirements

Current required syllabus elements and statements are available at <https://syllabus.wsu.edu/>

- **Post syllabus before classes start** so students can see what materials and technology are required and make timely arrangements.
- **Please let students know in the syllabus what technology will be required (e.g., camera and microphone for Zoom; see “Student Tech Ready Checklist” at end of this document).**
- Faculty are encouraged to build flexibility into their syllabus, so that students may have alternative ways to complete assignments that support course learning outcomes or related assessments, anticipating that absences or quarantines will impact some students this semester.
- Similarly, it is important that each course provide regular and substantive interaction between the instructor and students, regardless of the delivery mode (in person, remote instruction or online) and beyond recorded content and office hours.

## Web Cams

**Instructors can require students to have their camera on during live lecture or discussion. However, instructors cannot penalize students for briefly turning off their camera** and the instructor should not immediately penalize a student who leaves the camera off for an extended period. Instead, the instructor should first interact with the student after class to learn why the camera was turned off, without, however, requesting sensitive personal information. There are valid reasons for needing to step away briefly (up to 15-20 minutes). Not allowing students to temporarily turn off the camera is akin to not allowing physically present students to step out and use the bathroom.

**It must be stated on the syllabus that the camera is expected to be on unless the student has a need to stop being seen momentarily.** If students know of this on the first day they can plan accordingly if they do not want their residence visible in the background. Such students should either identify a different location from which to participate in the course or post a virtual background.

A student’s residence being publicly visible during a live lecture is not a FERPA violation. FERPA applies only to records, not to privacy in general. BUT a student’s residence being visible on a recording of a lecture may be a FERPA violation, because the class becomes a legal record by virtue of being recorded and stored. If lectures are going to be recorded it must clearly be stated on the syllabus so that students can plan accordingly.

### Summary of instructor actions:

- If you have not done so already on the syllabus, notify students in writing if:
  - Webcams are required (class sessions, proctored exams).
  - Webcams are required to be on during course sessions.
  - Lectures are being recorded so that they can plan accordingly (backgrounds, venue for class).

- Your exam protocol forbids “leaving the room,” i.e., turning off the camera during an exam.
- Do not penalize students if they have to step away from the camera briefly.
- Do follow up if the absence from the camera was lengthy to see what the student’s issue was, and whether problem solving is required for remaining connected in future class sessions.

## **OTHER RESOURCES**

### **Reminders of Key Academic Policies:**

<https://provost.wsu.edu/documents/2018/08/key-policies-reminder-memorandum.pdf/>

### **Academic Regulations**

<https://registrar.wsu.edu/academic-regulations/>