

# ACADEMIC CONTINUITY PLAN

## CGS INSTRUCTOR CHECKLIST

Use this checklist to identify all the areas of your course you may need to quickly convert to an online format. This first page is an overview that can be used by itself. The remaining pages go into more details about each choice, how to implement it, and resources to guide you.

To get started, choose one or more options in each area.

### SCHEDULED CLASS TIME:

- Have class as usual through web conference (Zoom, etc.).
- Record lectures in advance.
- Run the class discussion through Canvas.

### GRADEBOOK:

- Assignments are already in Canvas Gradebook.
- Convert assignments to run through Canvas.

### TESTS/QUIZZES/EXAMS:

- Tests are already in Canvas.
- Have students upload a file to Quiz.
- Convert test questions to Quiz.

### UNIQUE PROJECTS:

- I'm not sure how students could submit this online.
- I'm not sure how students collaborate online.
- I just need to change the whole assignment.

### ATTENDANCE POLICY:

- Use Attendance Tool.
- Create an activity or other policy.
- Drop it entirely for duration of online transition.

### OFFICE HOURS:

- Keep current office hours, use web conferencing.
- Optional: Set additional meetings by request.

\*\*\* Setup a communication plan regardless.

# SCHEDULED CLASS TIME

## OPTION 1: HAVE CLASS AS USUAL.

### Resources

- [Zoom Tutorials \(recommended\)](#)
- [Upload recording to Panopto](#)
- [Microsoft Teams](#)
- [What are Conferences?](#)

Called a “live synchronous session,” this functions most like an in-person class. Instructors share their screen, turn on their mic and camera, and present their material.

**Advantages:** Lesson plans can often be used without change. Students interact with you in real-time.

**Disadvantages:** You need to be comfortable with muting students when appropriate, sharing your screen, and recording the session for students who can't attend. Some students may not have great internet access for streaming the conference.

**Tools:** Zoom, Teams, Canvas Conferences

**Tips:** Muting students is necessary to control background noise. Start the session by confirming every student can hear you and see your screen.

## OPTION 2: RECORD LECTURES.

### Resources

- [Start a Panopto recording](#)
- [Record with Zoom](#)
- [Share your recording](#)

This is what many online instructors already do. Record yourself in advance with a slide deck.

**Advantages:** You don't have to coordinate getting students to meet with you.

**Disadvantages:** You need to be comfortable with recording technology and how to share the video. Some students may not have great internet access for streaming video. You may still need to communicate outside the lecture.

**Tools:** Panopto, Zoom

**Tips:** Break up longer content (a 45-minute lecture) into smaller sections. Share the PowerPoint file you used with your students in addition to the video. Use tools like Announcements to share timely information.

## OPTION 3: CANVAS DISCUSSIONS.

### Resources

- [How do I create a discussion?](#)

Use Canvas's built-in Discussions tool to ask questions and solicit responses.

**Advantages:** You don't have to coordinate student participation; there are low internet access requirements. Students can participate any time of day.

**Disadvantages:** No immediate interaction.

**Tools:** Canvas Discussions

**Tips:** Reply to your student's comments. Ask open-ended questions like you would during class. Use other tools like **Announcements** to share timely information.

# GRADEBOOK

## OPTION 1: ASSIGNMENTS ARE ALREADY IN THE CANVAS GRADEBOOK.

If your students are already submitting everything through Canvas, then you don't need to make any submission changes.

If you are already entering student scores in the gradebook, then this stays the same, too.

## OPTION 2: CONVERT ASSIGNMENTS.

### Resources

- [How do I create an online assignment?](#)
- [Assignments Overview](#)  
(Video length: 4:29)
- [How do I create a discussion?](#)
- [Quizzes Overview](#)  
(Video length: 4:09)
- [How do I use the Gradebook?](#)
- [Speedgrader Overview](#)  
(Video length: 2:57)

Canvas will let students submit work to you and will let you give direct feedback. Canvas treats all of the following as assignments:

- **File Upload:** Students can upload essays, PowerPoints, spreadsheets, recorded presentations, files for specific programs (Microsoft Project, Vizio, SPSS, etc) into a standard Assignment.
- **Quiz:** Canvas calls all tests and exams "Quizzes." Quizzes can be automatically graded by Canvas.
- **Discussion:** Class discussions or debates can happen on discussion boards.

Creating your assignments will build your gradebook at the same time. Canvas has two tools for grading: **Grades** and **Speedgrader**.

- **Grades** is a spreadsheet where every row is a student and every column is an assignment you created in Canvas.
- **Speedgrader** allows you to view what a student submitted to one of your assignments. It's how you read their essay or see their reply to a discussion.

**Tips:** Add a due date to every single assignment you create. Put all of your instructions and any necessary files *directly on the assignment itself*. This will save you multiple emails from students independently asking similar questions.

# TESTS/QUIZZES/EXAMS

## OPTION 1: ALREADY IN CANVAS.

No additional changes are needed.

## OPTION 2: STUDENTS UPLOAD A FILE TO CANVAS.

### Resources

- [Quizzes Overview](#)  
(Video length: 4:09)
- [How do I create a File Upload question?](#)
- [What's the difference between due dates and availability dates?](#)

If your final exam or other test exists as a Word document, and you were already planning on grading it manually, you can convert it to a 1 question quiz.

**Advantages:** Minimal changes occur to your test.

**Disadvantages:** Cheating can be easy since students will be working on your final outside of Canvas and re-uploading it. You will have to manually grade it.

**Tools:** Canvas Quizzes.

**Tips:** Create a 1 question Canvas Quiz. Set the Available From to be the earliest you want them to start, and the Until to be the latest you want them to submit. Add a time limit if this should happen “during class.”

Create 1 question using the **File Upload** question type. Attach your word document to this question. Students will download, complete, and upload their finished final.

## OPTION 3: CONVERT QUESTIONS.

### Resources

- [Quizzes Overview](#)  
(Video length: 4:09)
- [How do I create a quiz with individual questions?](#)
- [Quiz Settings to Maximize Security](#)

Students can actually enter their answers directly into Canvas.

**Advantages:** Common question types (multiple choice, true/false) are automatically graded. (In some instances, Canvas may be able to use anti-cheating tools like Respondus Lockdown Browser).

**Disadvantages:** You have to translate your test into a Canvas quiz the first time.

**Tools:** Canvas Quizzes.

**Tips:** Minimize cheating by randomizing the order of questions, the order of answers for a question, and which questions students can see. Add a time limit like you would for your test in class.

# UNIQUE PROJECTS

## OPTION 1: HOW CAN STUDENTS SUBMIT THIS ONLINE?

### Resources

- [Start a Panopto recording](#)
- [Record a video using the Canvas Rich Content Editor](#)
- [How do I create an online assignment?](#)

Complex projects, like presentations or lab work, could potentially be adapted by changing what is submitted:

**Presentations:** Students can use Panopto or the video recording option in the Canvas rich content editor to record themselves and a slide deck. Create an assignment with submission type **Text Entry** so that students can submit their recording. This applies to speaking a foreign language, playing an instrument, performing choreography or monologues.

**Portfolios:** Many free website options exist, like Wix or Blogspot and submit a link to their website. Students can also use Powerpoint to build a portfolio of images or other text and submit it as a file.

**Labs:** Start by separating what students need to do from what they need to submit to you. Could they submit a picture or video as a temporary work around? What if they accompanied it with text or an interview with you?

## OPTION 2: HOW CAN STUDENTS COLLABORATE ONLINE?

### Resources

- [Zoom Tutorials](#)
- [How do I create groups?](#)

Students have plenty of options for working together online:

- **Meetings:** Use Zoom (breakout rooms) /Canvas Conferences.
- **Create documents:** Use Office 365 or Google Docs.
- **Record group presentations:** Use Zoom or Video feature in the Rich Content Editor.

**Tips:** Use the People area of Canvas to split students into groups. You will lose time waiting for students to pick groups themselves. Turn on the group function of assignments so that you can have 1 submission per group and give everyone the same grade.

## OPTION 3: I STILL THINK THIS WON'T WORK. HOW CAN I CHANGE IT?

Start by identifying what exactly you want to accomplish with the assignment. Do you want them to...

- **Apply skills in a realistic situation?** Are there prominent cases or events in your field you can recreate? Take an important moment and give students the first half. Then have students devise a plan for continuing the project that they submit in a discussion, presentation, or paper.
- **Demonstrate comprehensive course knowledge?** An exam can be a way to quickly pivot for one semester (if not ideal). Give them a topic that is actively being researched in your field. Students have to apply concepts from class to the topic and form an opinion.

# ATTENDANCE POLICY

## OPTION 1: THE ATTENDANCE TOOL.

### Resources

- [How do I use the Roll Call Attendance tool in a course?](#)

Canvas has a built-in attendance tracker that can be quickly updated and produce an attendance grade. It calculates a grade by dividing the number of times a student has been marked “Present” by the number of times you have taken attendance in class.

**Advantages:** You don’t need a separate document to manually update. It automatically communicates to students what their attendance is.

**Disadvantages:** It uses a specific way of calculating an attendance score that might not align with how you want to use it.

**Tools:** The Attendance Tool is already part of Canvas, and only needs to be enabled in your course navigation.

**Tips:** This works well if you are meeting with your students live via web conference.

## OPTION 2: CREATE AN ACTIVITY OR OTHER POLICY.

### Resources

- [How do I create a discussion?](#)
- [How do I view Course Analytics?](#)

You can adapt Attendance or Participation to a weekly discussion board or other Canvas activity. Canvas allows you to track what a student clicked, when, and how much total time they’ve spent in the course.

**Advantages:** This works well if you’ve dropped live meetings and are using recorded lectures.

**Disadvantages:** May require extra work if you choose to check student activity to determine participation.

**Tools:** Canvas—Discussions, Course Analytics.

**Tips:** Craft an announcement or email explaining how you are determining they are “present” for class. If it’s a weekly activity, use Canvas Modules to create a folder for each week. Place that week’s “attendance activity” in that folder

## OPTION 3: DON’T HAVE ONE.

One option is to simply not try to track attendance online.

**Advantages:** This saves you work if you have already decided not to run live sessions.

**Disadvantages:** You may have to reallocate points or adjust total points for the class.

# OFFICE HOURS

## OPTION 1: KEEP CURRENT HOURS.

### Resources

- [Microsoft Teams](#)
- [Zoom Tutorials](#)
- [Canvas Inbox](#)

Web conferencing tools make it possible to simply open a session alone and have students available. You can mute your mic and video until a student actually joins.

**Advantages:** This is most consistent with your syllabus.

**Disadvantages:** You have to remember to start a session when your office hours start. You need to share a link with students. You need to be comfortable with Teams or Zoom.

**Tools:** Teams or Zoom.

**Tips:** If you use Teams, students can chat you without joining a meeting. If you use Zoom, share your personal link so you don't have to constantly schedule new meetings.

## OPTION 2: SET ADDITIONAL MEETINGS BY REQUEST.

### Resources

- [Microsoft Teams](#)
- [Zoom Tutorials](#)
- [Canvas Inbox](#)

You can also setup meetings with your students as necessary outside regular office hours.

**Tools:** Teams or Zoom.

**Tips:** Prepare to remind students of how to contact you since they may be used to only talking to you before or after class.

## SETUP A COMMUNICATION PLAN.

### Resources

- [Microsoft Teams](#)
- [Zoom Tutorials](#)
- [Canvas Inbox](#)

Regardless of how you handle office hours, tell students how they can communicate with you. We recommend the Canvas Inbox or Teams:

- **Canvas Inbox:** It's basically email, but it automatically sorts by classes. You can always tell which class a student is from. It also forwards messages to your Pitt email.
- **Teams:** Allows students to have impromptu chats with you. You can set your status to indicate whether you are available or not.

The key is to decide how they should communicate with you and then send this information to them.

# MISCELLANEOUS

## IMPORTANT POINTS

- **Do not assume your students are all equally comfortable with technology.** Some of your students will be using Canvas for the first time (Some of *you* will be using Canvas for the first time).
- **Do not assume your students have equal access to technology.** Not every student has a smartphone. Not every student with a smart device has a new or fully functional device. And not every student with an up to date device has reliable, consistent internet access.
- **Communicate at regular intervals.** Set up a consistent pattern for how you distribute new information to your class. Ideally, this will involve using a regular, repeating structure in Canvas. However, plan on a weekly announcement or email to keep the class together. One of the biggest hurdles of online learning is for students to feel like they are part of a *class*.

## OTHER RESOURCES

[Canvas Video Tutorials](#) — 300+ quick videos.

[Canvas@Pitt](#) – webpage by Pitt’s Teaching Center

[Resources for Remote Teaching & Learning at Pitt](#)

[Instructional Accessibility at Pitt](#)

[CGS Faculty Resources Website](#)

[CGS Canvas Online Demo Course for Faculty](#)