

THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
FACULTY OF ARTS

Faculty Guideline on Online Teaching and Learning (April 2020)

The Faculty would like to express our gratitude to our teaching staff for adapting swiftly to online teaching and learning and for their unfailing devotion to providing the best learning experience for students.

The University has been in continuous communication with staff and students about online teaching and learning (T&L). We appreciate that at times colleagues may feel overwhelmed by emails they are bombarded with; on the other hand, some colleagues are looking for more clarity about what the expectations are for their online teaching. Therefore, with a view to enhance the quality of online T&L, the Faculty has compiled the following set of guidelines to provide a baseline for online teaching practices in the Faculty, with reference to the student feedback collected by a survey administered by the Teaching and Learning Evaluation and Measurement Unit (T&LEMU) from March 12 to March 17, 2020 and current practices in use by other institutions. To ensure consistency and quality in our students' learning experience, we urge colleagues to align their teaching practices to the guidelines, if they have not already done so, as soon as possible for the remaining teaching period of second semester, 2019-20. We also provide resources and technical support information at the end of this document to help colleagues troubleshoot.

Lectures

- For livestreamed lectures, please adhere to the timetable stipulated on SIS: for instance, a two-hour lecture scheduled from 1:30 p.m. to 3:20 p.m. on Monday (Hong Kong time) should commence and end at the stated times and days. If you are recording your lectures in advance, please also try to make sure that the total length of your recordings is similar to the stipulated lecture hours.
- Record and upload lectures for students' reference after class, to ensure that students who cannot attend the live lectures (due to time zone, internet connectivity, or other reasons) will have the chance to review the materials. If, for any reason, such recording is not possible (for example, due to the sensitivity of some topic or material), the instructor should use other means to ensure equity in participation and interactivity in teaching. Instructors should avoid creating situations where students who fail to show up to a live session could not then gain access to relevant teaching materials.
- Due to privacy concerns, students should not be obliged to turn on their camera during a livestreaming session.

Interactivity in Teaching

- Merely uploading reading materials (such as PDFs or PowerPoint slides) is *not* an acceptable form of online teaching. Seek help from your Head of School/Centre/Programme if you have difficulty conducting online teaching in an interactive way.
- To encourage interactions, instructors may wish to take advantage of breakout rooms on Zoom* (or equivalent online meeting software) to conduct group discussion in lectures/tutorials. Consider assigning roles (e.g. chat provocateur, sweeper) to tutors (if applicable) or students in each discussion to keep the discussion more lively. Please see a video showcasing an online group discussion of an Education course of HKU for your reference: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H2H5Mf4d4XE&feature=youtu.be>
- Teachers will find it helpful to set ground rules on Zoom* (or equivalent online meeting software) lectures. For example, teachers can let students know that taking part in a discussion will grant them participation mark, or that they can raise questions in the

chat box. Explain these rules to students at the outset.

- Encourage students to discuss the content of the lectures/tutorials after class on online forums.

Consultation hours

- Devote at least an hour each week for students to approach you with questions related to the course. Online meeting software (such as Zoom* and Skype) is preferred over email as the former enhances interactivity.
- Do reply to students' emails in a timely manner.

Assessments and Feedback

- Provide feedback (by audio, video or in writing) on coursework/assessments to students in a timely manner.
- Where possible, design your assessment tasks so that continuous feedback is given throughout the semester.
- If there is a participation or attendance score in your course, revisit what it means in the online teaching environment and communicate clearly to students. Do not deduct any score for students who do not turn on their camera during a live session. Consider using chatroom, forum discussion, Moodle activities, or other means as indicators of participation. Consider measuring participation instead of attendance.

Reference for students

- Provide students with instructions on how to use online platforms. You may include the relevant links of TELI and/or ITS on the course Moodle.
- Provide online resources via Moodle.

Group projects

- Students are given the option to be assessed via letter grading or on a pass/fail basis for most courses offered in 2019-20. This may affect the quality of work produced by students, and may create tension between group members as they may have different ideas as to what constitutes "acceptable work". Create a system that requires each individual student to be accountable for their contributions in group work (for instance, the group must collectively submit a "List of Contributions" by each group member when they submit their work). Teachers should strive to assess each member's contributions to the group project fairly and proportionally.
- Consider carefully whether group project is appropriate if T&L is expected to be conducted online for a long period of the semester. Students have expressed that they find it difficult to connect with their group members. If necessary, reduce the weighting of group projects in the assessment scheme.

Notifications and reminders

- Students should be notified of changes to the syllabus or assessment scheme ahead of time. Avoid making last-minute changes if possible.
- Make sure any notifications are also available on Moodle in case students miss your email.
- In these uncertain times, it is better to risk over-communicating than under-communicating. Send students a reminder before due dates of coursework and assessments.

Be flexible

- Students may find it difficult adjusting to online learning, and they may not currently live in an environment that is conducive to their learning. Understand that this may have an effect on their performance. Be lenient and empathetic to students experiencing

problems.

Planning Ahead (for 2020-21)

- As the coronavirus outbreak may not subside completely after the summer 2020 and global travel restrictions may remain in place in the near future, Programmes are encouraged to build more flexibility into their course designs for 2020-21, so that classes may be shifted from face-to-face to online teaching (and vice versa) when necessary.
- Adapt assessment formats that suit both face-to-face and online T&L environment.
- Although it may be difficult to conduct fieldtrips or other experiential learning activities before the virus outbreak is contained, the Faculty encourages internationalization at home. Teachers may use their overseas networks to facilitate exchanges with teachers and students in peer institutions to create opportunities for cross-cultural learning (such as through common online discussion forums).

* While Zoom is currently working to enhance the security of its online meetings, the University also recommends to following as alternatives for those who want to avoid Zoom:

- Cisco Webex (free): supports up to 100 people with unlimited meeting time;
<https://www.webex.com/>
- Microsoft Teams (already included in HKU's Office 365 subscription): supports up to 250 people with unlimited meeting time.
<https://teamsdemo.office.com/>

Enquiries about online T&L software

- TELI: enquiry@teli.hku.hk;
WhatsApp (during office hours): 9162 3384 (Dr. Leon Lei) or
5964 8396 (Dr. Tyrone Kwok)
- ITS: ithelp@hku.hk; Phone (during office hours): 3917 0123

References

- e-learning@HKU
<https://tl.hku.hk/staff/elearning/>
- TeL@HKU (Technology Enhanced Learning)
<https://www.cetl.hku.hk/tel/guides/>
- HKU Online learning FAQs (for Staff)
<https://tl.hku.hk/2020/02/online-learning-faqs-for-staff/>;
<https://tl.hku.hk/2020/02/online-teaching-and-learning-for-staff-updated-february-7-2020/>
- NUS Quick Guide to Online Teaching
<https://wiki.nus.edu.sg/display/NQGTOT/Overview>
- eLearning@CUHK
http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/clear/prodev/General_Tips_for_Online_Teaching_and_Learning.pdf

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