

THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
FACULTY OF ARTS

Faculty Guideline on Online Teaching and Learning (January 2021)

Further to the [email](#) of the VP(T&L) of January 8, 2021 concerning the “S2 T&L Arrangements (UG & TPG)”, the Faculty would like to draw your attention to the following important information concerning teaching and learning (T&L) arrangements:

T&L arrangements in Semester 2, 2020-21:

- All courses will be available online, apart from a few exceptions requiring hands-on engagement. Every student will have the option to attend classes online. The majority of Arts courses should be able to adapt to the online mode. Please contact the Faculty Office if a course is deemed as an exception.
- Students will be provided with a ‘self-enroll’ function in HKU Moodle only during Add/Drop Period to allow courses to be audited. Self-enrollments will be deleted after the Add/Drop Period unless students have formally registered through the course registration system.
- The University is offering all UG and TPG students two assessment choices for Semester 2 courses: letter grade, late drop. Assessment choices can be submitted through SIS from 09:00 on March 8 (Mon) to 23:59 on April 9 (Fri). This deadline is final, and no modifications will be permitted once it has passed. In the case of late drops, the Class List of a course will need to be updated in mid-April and some students may need to change groups to complete their group coursework.
- 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).
- To enable students to use the tutorial sign-up system, teachers need first to enter tutorial group information in the [Class Planner and Room Booking System](#) through the Examination Office’s website.
- Examinations (i.e. those taking place in the Assessment Period of the Semester) will be conducted online, unless there are special requirements or all the students taking a course are in Hong Kong and it is safe for them to attend an in-person exam.

To ensure consistency and quality in our students’ learning experience, we urge colleagues to align their teaching practices to the Faculty’s guidelines on online T&L (January 2021) during Semester 2, 2020-21. We hope that this will provide a baseline for online teaching practice in the Faculty. The Faculty would like to express our gratitude to our teaching staff for adapting swiftly to online T&L and for their unfailing devotion to providing the best learning experience for students during these challenging times. Throughout S2, we will keep the public health situation under close review. Should there be a deterioration, we may need to suspend all f2f teaching at short notice, and switch back to online delivery for all courses. In making your plans for the semester, please bear this in mind.

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. In the cases that interaction with students is a key element and students express concerns about lectures being recorded, instructors may need to obtain students' consent before recording.
- In 2020-21, students taking online classes are required to turn on their webcams when the teacher asks them to do so. (Virtual backgrounds are permissible.) Students with special needs or circumstances may apply to their teachers for exemption on a case-by-case basis. If it is not possible for a teacher and student to reach agreement, the case may be referred to the relevant Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning) or, in the case of Common Core courses, to the Director.

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 apply for exemption to 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.
- Students may have completed some courses with “Pass/Fail” grading basis rather than the default letter grading basis from Semester 1, 2019-20 to Semester 1, 2020-21. As courses that are simply passed (which are recorded as ‘P’ on the transcript) have no impact on the GPA calculations, this could have important knock-on effects, especially for UG students. Internally, the University/Faculty rely on data of Semester GPA, Year GPA or CGPA for award selection and elective opportunities, such as academic exchange and other funded programmes. Externally, employers and universities around the world examine transcripts in some detail when taking decisions about jobs and postgraduate study. In September 2020, the VP(T&L) announced that a UG student with fewer than half the total credits letter-graded will normally be awarded a pass degree with no honours classification.
- Student Feedback on Teaching and Learning (SFTL) will replace the original Student Evaluation of Teaching and Learning starting from Semester 1, 2020-2021.

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

- When students are given the option to be assessed via letter grading or on a pass/fail basis for most courses offered in a semester, the quality of work produced by students may be affected, and tension between group members may arise 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 to 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

- Course changes not aligned to University and Faculty guidelines, or changes made to

syllabus and assessment scheme after January 18, need approval from the Faculty or even the VP (T&L) to ensure consistency and quality.

- 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.

* Both Zoom and Microsoft Teams have been fully integrated into HKU Moodle. Teachers can decide which online meeting software to use and inform students accordingly. A brief comparison of the two software could be found at: <https://tl.hku.hk/2020/08/online-teaching-through-zoom-or-microsoft-teams/>. Below are some “How to” videos introducing the use of these software:

- Panopto: <https://hku.to/UsePanopto>
- Zoom: <https://hku.to/UseZoom>
- Microsoft Teams: <https://hku.to/UseTeams>

For lectures involving both f2f and online teaching, this is a simple video (making reference to Zoom, though the points also apply to Teams): <https://tl.hku.hk/elearningblog/?pid=30618>.

Enquiries about online T&L software

- TeLi: enquiry@teli.hku.hk
Book 1-to-1 e-learning consultation with TeLi: <https://appointment.teli.hku.hk/>
E-learning matters (via WhatsApp): 6437 8034
- ITS (for Moodle or SIS): ithelp@hku.hk; Phone (during office hours): 3917 0123

References

- A Beginner's Kit - HKU E-learning Quick Start Guide
https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/e/2PACX-1vSLhzNNgycki08sJozULWw7q5secf7NUXo_qMNSe0Ob5IglRzwwWuUf7bNqTWboC8hDfXzDqIV9PBxV/pub?start=false&loop=false&delayms=3000#slide=id.p
- HKU E-learning Resource Hub (<https://elearning-resource.hku.hk>).
You are most welcome to suggest new resources either developed by HKU or other institutions for inclusion into the E-learning Resource Hub via its e-form (<https://elearning-resource.hku.hk/submit-resource-2/>). The Libraries will continue to develop the contents and feature useful resources on the platform to support your teaching and learning.
- About the New Semester
<https://tl.hku.hk/teachonline/>
- Section for teachers: <https://tl.hku.hk/teachonline/online-resources-for-teachers/>

- Section for students: <https://tl.hku.hk/teachonline/online-resources-for-students/>
- Seminars and workshops relating to online T&L
<https://tl.hku.hk/elearningblog/>
- Seminars and workshops from CETL
<https://www.cetl.hku.hk/seminar-workshop/>
- 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

January 2021

Amended February 2021