



MEMORANDUM, DCD #23, 2020-21

To: Chairs and Academic Director
Cc: Chairs' and Academic Director's Assistants, Departmental Assistants
From: Katherine R. Larson, Vice-Dean Teaching, Learning, & Undergraduate Programs
Date: 3 May 2021
Re: **Summer 2021**
Note: For distribution broadly

Dear Chairs and Directors,

It has been an extraordinary year - one that has brought tremendous challenges, as well as new insights about teaching and learning that we will carry with us out of the pandemic.

As the summer term approaches, we want to remind you of the teaching resources available to support faculty and departments, since, with the exception of essential laboratories, all classes will continue to be running online. Please share this information with your faculty members, summer course instructors, and TAs who may be new to U of T Scarborough, as well as with staff members in your units.

Centre for Teaching & Learning (CTL) Academic Continuity Resources

Over the past year, the Centre for Teaching & Learning has developed and expanded an excellent set of online teaching supports on its [Academic Continuity](#) site. The site includes dedicated sections on course building and syllabus design; setting up and facilitating an online course; designing assessments and running online tests and exams; engaging and supporting students; remote experiential learning; academic integrity; and accessibility. If instructors have not already bookmarked this site, please encourage them to do so. It continues to be updated regularly.

I would like to draw your attention in particular to two recent communications that are linked to the "Crucial Memos" section of the Academic Continuity site: First, a reminder about the importance of the **pedagogy of care, compassion, and kindness**: the VP Dean's Office asks instructors to plan their courses with this in mind and to be as flexible as possible with course and assessment policies. For advice on how to provide this flexibility within the context of regulations related to student petitions and grade submission, please contact the Registrar, Curtis Cole, at curtis.cole@utoronto.ca or Associate Registrar Student Services, Fiorella Sabadin, at fiorella.sabadin@utoronto.ca. The continuity site also includes a resource on **responding to microaggressions in the classroom**, which we hope will be helpful for instructors and TAs, as well as for Chairs and Directors.

A significant amount of local expertise has been generated over the past year. Last summer, CTL launched a ["This Worked for Me" webinar series](#) that enabled U of T Scarborough faculty to share their experiences teaching remotely. The tips and best practices shared in these recorded webinars are a valuable reference point as instructors are preparing their courses for the summer. A vibrant webinar series has continued throughout the year; recorded sessions can be accessed here: <https://q.utoronto.ca/courses/209988/pages/ctl-webinars>. CTL is also available for individual, personalized faculty support.

Centre for Teaching Support and Innovation

In addition to the resources provided by CTL, the tri-campus Centre for Teaching Support and Innovation (CTSI) [website](#) has consolidated guidelines for syllabus design, including information on accessibility and site anchors that enable faculty to jump to [sample syllabus statements](#) on the following topics:

- Academic Integrity,
- Turnitin,

- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion,
- Notification to Students when Recording Online Course Meetings, and
- Accommodations.

Please take note as well of the [Provostial Guidelines on the Use of Digital Learning Materials](#). Along with CTL, CTSI has an ongoing schedule of webinars and events related to teaching in the online context that are open to faculty across the university.

Recommended Tools for Synchronous Lecture Delivery

Bb Collaborate and Zoom are available for teaching in real-time. Please refer to this guide for more information: <https://q.utoronto.ca/courses/156214/files/7406704/download>. With students in multiple time zones and balancing complex challenges related to the pandemic, it is crucial to plan synchronous classes with accessibility in mind. Be sure to record your sessions as described in the guide to ensure students can watch even if they are unable to attend the live session; having access to recorded lectures also benefits multiple learning styles. Please also ensure that students are able to engage in any graded participation activities asynchronously (e.g. through written participation options).

Recommended Tool for Asynchronous Lecture Delivery

Snagit is available for pre-recording lectures and mini-lectettes. Please refer to this guide for more information: <https://q.utoronto.ca/courses/156214/files/6619585/download>

Learning Tool Integration

U of T also supports a range of educational technologies and related tools through its systems. For a full list of university-supported platforms, visit the Ed Tech Catalogue in the Quercus Support Resources section of your Quercus dashboard (accessible via the “Help” link on the main menu).

Exams and Assessments

As you plan exams and related assessments for the summer term, please continue to be aware of the additional challenges that the online environment presents for academic integrity, as well as the additional stress that timed online assessments represent for students. Whenever possible, we encourage you to explore alternative modes of assessment, including final projects and take-home options. Students should not be required to have cameras on during timed assessments, though instructors may ask for a T-Card check. Should a student not have a T-Card, please accept alternative photo ID.

Guidance for Potential Risks in Remote Teaching

The University of Toronto has prepared a set of resources to assist instructors in [planning around potential risks in remote teaching](#). Instructors should be mindful of students’ geographical locations and potential access and technological limitations when planning their courses. Pedagogical frameworks like universal design and flexible assessment design may help in supporting individual circumstances. Questions can be directed to the Information Security Risk Working Group at remoteinstructionrisks@utoronto.ca.

Campus Access

Students should not come to campus unless they are attending essential in-person classes or needing to access computer spaces. The Bladen Wing study space will re-open on May 7. The Library will be closed for the duration of the current stay-at-home order. Continue to check the [UTogether site](#) for updates about campus resources and hours. Anyone coming to campus must complete a [UCheck health screening](#) before arrival.

Student and Faculty Well-Being and Mental Health

As we continue to grapple with the pandemic context, and in particular the local and global impact of the third wave, including ongoing school closures, the health and well-being of our entire community – faculty, staff, and students – are our main priority. We encourage faculty to prioritize connection and community for students during your classes. Please be sure that students are aware of [campus supports for well-being and mental health](#). Students who need to miss academic activities due to illness or other reason should submit a [self-declaration form](#) through the Registrar’s Office. Faculty who are in need of additional support should not hesitate to reach out directly to their Chair or Director. The Office of the Vice-Principal Academic & Dean encourages all staff and faculty to set aside time for vacation during the summer.

Movement Breaks

The Athletics Department has developed a series of short videos for faculty to incorporate movement breaks into their online classes. Examples can be found [here](#). The Athletics team is also available to run short live sessions. If you would like to incorporate one of these pre-recorded segments or host an Athletics team member in your class, please contact Sheila John, Assistant Dean, Wellness, Recreation, and Sport, at sheilaj.john@utoronto.ca.

Inclusion, Accessibility, and Anti-Racism

The past year has brought significant challenges, but we are also in a moment that has brought important pedagogical insight as well as impetus for institutional change. The shift online has opened up new perspectives on teaching and learning, accessibility, and student engagement. The campus is also in the process of rethinking how our courses and teaching reflect U of T Scarborough's commitment to inclusion and anti-racism, as well as our diverse population. As you prepare to teach this summer, please let us know how we might support and assist you as you consider your courses through these lenses. We also encourage you to take advantage of the resources offered by U of T Scarborough's [AccessAbility Services](#) and [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Office](#), as well as the University's [Anti-Racism and Cultural Diversity Office \(ARCDO\)](#).

We wish you well for the summer term, and we hope that the summer months will also bring some restorative time for you and your loved ones.

Kind regards,



Katherine R. Larson

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