

Online Teaching: Advice and Expert Panel Discussion Summary

COVID-19 Online Teaching Updates

As of January 5, 2022, there has been no further updates from UBC with regards to the delivery modality of instruction after January 24. However, while we continue monitoring the community, it is probably not unwise for faculty members to consider how they might teach online beyond January 24, due to the uncertainty and fluidity of the situation.

GAA Support

GAA assistance will be forthcoming (to supplement TA support) and be available to assist faculty members with additional logistics and transition to teaching online. Faculty members will need to sign up for this resource. Courses which have never been taught online will likely be eligible for a larger funding allocation than courses which already received online GAA support during previous semesters of online learning. More information will come soon.

Online Teaching Resources

Keep Teaching

Centre for Teaching and Learning Technology (CTLT) has created a wide array of resources to support all UBC Faculty members with the transition to online instruction, which can be accessed on their [Keep Teaching website](#).

Planning for Fall Adhoc Committee (PPFAC) Resources

As a response to the pandemic, deans, teaching professors and numerous learning technology experts came together to form a committee to provide strategic oversight and recommendations for the UBC Faculty of Forestry in its transition to online teaching and learning. Please feel free to explore the following resources created by the committee:

- [PPFAC Canvas Resource Course](#) - a central hub where you can learn online teaching best practices, get introduced to common teaching and learning technologies, and access other helpful resources.
- [Online Teaching Guidelines](#) – Key teaching guidelines put together by PPFAC.

Online Learning Technologies

- Check out the [Overview of Online Learning Technologies tipsheet](#), which summarizes all the learning tools.
- More learning technology-specific tipsheets can also be found [here](#).
- Have an unanswered question or need additional support? Please do not hesitate to reach out to the Teaching and Learning Support team (led by Michelle Zeng) at the [Get Help](#) page.

Getting Started with your Course

Building a Canvas course can be scary, but we are here to help.

- Feel free to use the [Forestry Canvas Template](#) to help you get started.

- Explore and gain inspiration on how you want to structure and design your course by looking at [different online course examples](#) developed by our faculty members.

***Important:** If you plan to incorporate Zoom into your teaching, please ensure that you register for a UBC Zoom account. UBC Zoom accounts are not automatically granted to instructors nor TAs. Please refer to the instructions found under ['Zoom Registration'](#).

Tips from our discussion with guest panellists Dr. Andrés Varhola and Dr. Neil Leverage

1. Dominate Canvas through exploration of resources, of different courses and the different features available on Canvas. One recommended Canvas Feature would be setting up module pre-requisites to help organize the content flow and keep students on track.
2. Keep it simple and consistent by organizing modules and grouping assignments together.
3. Create and utilize low-stake frequent quizzes pre- and post- lecture.
4. Use the Canvas Calendar to organize office hours, due dates, lab sessions, lecture sessions. It will act as an easy reference for students and instructors to know when everything is happening.
5. Keep grading structure and weights simple.
6. Create a welcome module that includes the following:
 - Course Syllabus
 - A clear communication protocol that informs students who, when and how to contact.
 - Attendance and Grade policies
 - Any course policies relevant to the COVID-19 pandemic

This information could also be presented in the form of an engaging video. If you require additional support with video producing and editing, feel free to head over to [UBC Studio Service](#).

7. Try to keep students engaged through humor, fun exercises (e.g., Completing a flowchart while listening to lecture), Zoom breakout rooms, Piazza forums, etc.
8. To best utilize Zoom breakout rooms, please also consider the following:
 - Ensure to give explicit instructions to your students PRIOR to going into breakout rooms
 - Have an external document such as a Google Doc may be helpful for collaboration, as each team can fill out a page of a form which is visible to the Instructor who can then monitor progress of individual teams.
 - However, please be aware that some international students may have trouble accessing Google Docs depending on where they are located
 - Have TAs constantly check the breakout rooms to ensure students understand their role and main tasks. Meanwhile, the professor can stay in the main room to read any broadcast message.
9. If you are using Zoom, consider making a plan with your TAs and assigning them co-host privileges, in case you disconnect or need to tend to an emergency.
10. Creating a welcome page with agenda before every Zoom meeting can help students get ready before class.
11. Have the right equipment! Consider getting ergonomic-friendly desks and chairs.

12. Don't be pressured to use the most advanced tools. Simple tools can also help enhance the learning experience, sticking with what you are comfortable with can be great too.
13. Consider creating videos or guidelines as an opportunity to build materials for future in-person teaching.
14. Lastly, have fun, relax and enjoy the experience of creating an online course!

If you require any support, feel free to explore the helpful links and guides under our [Faculty Resources page](#). In addition, the [TLS team](#) is here to support and answer any questions you might have!