1) Regardless of the course format, faculty and students should plan for all class activities after Thanksgiving Break to be conducted remotely, with the possible exception of final exams. The likelihood of widespread travel over the break, in conjunction with the increased health risk of flu season, have led to this approach throughout all University of Texas System academic institutions.

2) All organized courses taught fully online should use Blackboard as their primary platform. This enables UTEP to support students, faculty development, educational program integrity, ADA compliance, and several other principles. To facilitate this approach, Technology Support and the Center for Instructional Design will work with faculty to integrate software tools that are supported by either UTEP, a software vendor, or both.

3) All organized courses planned for any of the hybrid options should use Blackboard as their primary platform. MS Teams may also be used for certain graduate or small upper-division seminars that meet infrequently on campus in a low-residency model but have synchronous online discussions for class sessions.

4) All course instructors (online, hybrid and F2F) should post on Blackboard, at minimum, the course syllabus, course calendar, and the course gradebook. This will facilitate compliance with state law (HB 2504), and access to these items for all students, including those who must isolate due to illness of themselves or family members. In addition; if there is another stay-home order, these courses will have a structure in place to allow them to continue. The gradebook is important not only for access to grades, but because the gradebook is a mechanism by which assignments in online courses can be submitted electronically in a safe and secure way. When other mechanisms are used for submission of course work, grades should still be recorded in the BB gradebook.

5) Some courses may benefit from including strategically planned synchronous (real time) sessions for the purposes of small group discussions, live demonstrations with questions and answers, assessments, or other interactive engagements. Synchronous sessions must
   • adhere to ADA guidelines
   • conform to the scheduled time indicated in the Goldmine schedule
   • notify students if the session will be recorded

Faculty should strongly consider challenges that students may have with technology, time conflicts, and quiet space to work that could interfere with synchronous sessions. It is recommended that faculty provide nonsynchronous alternatives (such as recordings or transcripts of sessions); that such sessions are not used for high stakes attendance or assessments, where possible; and that the required use of webcams be reserved for situations where it is absolutely necessary to the pedagogy of the course.

6) One-on-one courses (no syllabus, course calendar, or gradebook – such as dissertation, thesis, independent research, independent study, independent lessons), where the virtual platform is simply a way of managing communication, may continue to use whatever platform is preferred, provided that appropriate accommodations are in place for ADA compliance. We strongly recommend the use of UTEP-supported Blackboard Collaborate or of MS Teams for these, in order to maximize availability of assistance for faculty and students.

Office of the Provost, June 2020