Q&A Faculty Teams Live – Updates: Instruction, Technology, and Classroom Set Up
July 30, 2020

Questions about cleaning

Are Clorox wipes OK for cleaning computer keyboards?
Please refer to the University's "Electronics Cleaning and Disinfection Guidance."

Is UVM going to install cleaning supplies in classrooms and labs?
All general purpose classrooms, all teaching/academic labs, all departmental classrooms, and all spaces that the Registrar's office has designated as fall 2020 instructional spaces will have disinfectant wipe dispensers in the room and hand sanitizer stations in the vicinity of the entrance.   Research labs have sinks and PPE as part of their normal processes. If the department safety officer or supervisor identifies additional needs for cleaning supplies, they can request those from Facilities [FAMIS request] and UVM Facilities personnel will evaluate the request.

Questions about masks and face shields

For all questions in this section, please refer to the University's guidance on "Face Coverings."
https://www.uvm.edu/returntocampus/face-coverings

Are faculty allowed to wear a face shield without a mask in the classroom? Will UVM supply face coverings and face shields to faculty?
Face coverings are to be worn at UVM whenever in the presence of other people or in a public setting. Appropriate use of face coverings helps protect others from droplets from coughing, sneezing, or talking, therefore reducing the spread of COVID-19. Face coverings are not a substitute for physical distancing, frequent handwashing, and other disease prevention methods.

Face Shields do not meet the requirements of face coverings, and cannot be worn for COVID-19 protection except as a supplement to a face covering. Face shields may be worn over a procedure mask or respirator in clinical, laboratory, mentoring, and similar settings where people cannot maintain 6 feet or more of distance for an extended period of time. When face shields are worn, the shield must extend from forehead to below the chin, wrap around the side of face [to ears].

Faculty will be provided three approved face coverings. One face shield will be provided if needed to faculty and graduate teaching assistants. Replacement face coverings and face shields may be requested through the department's safety officer or logistics coordinator.

If we will have any students who will require us to wear face coverings that show our mouth, for example those students who are hard of hearing, will we be alerted in advance so that we can have them for the first day of class?
ADA Coordinators will notify faculty through the normal process for handling student requests for accommodation. Faculty may have the option to use clear face masks supplied by UVM.

Are there safe, non-fogging masks that can show the face?
There are several face coverings with sewn-in plastic inserts that show a person's face that have been approved for use. Transparent face coverings allow for people to show mouth and lip movements while maintaining COVID-19 protections. These may be useful for teaching language, conveying emotion, or facilitating communications with people who read lips.

When teaching remotely from a UVM facility (i.e., "pod"), if the faculty member is alone in the space does he or she have to wear a face covering/face shield?
Face Coverings are not required when:
- Inside a private office or single-occupancy workspace with the door closed; or
- When working alone in an area where access is controlled and at least 6 feet distancing can be maintained at all times.

Will UVM signage be specific that face coverings must cover both nose and mouth?
Yes, signage indicating the proper wear of face coverings is being developed and will be distributed to departments for posting in appropriate locations within their facilities.

Will a locally controlled classroom scheduled for mixed instruction automatically be equipped with a Plexiglas shield?
Classroom layouts have been redesigned to de-densify and allow appropriate physical distancing between students. Plexiglas shields will not automatically be installed in classrooms. Plexiglas barriers are used to minimize COVID-19 exposure in areas where physical distancing is difficult to maintain. Plexiglas barriers are most effective in areas where a person must remain stationary and has repeated close contact with multiple people. Classrooms do not generally fit this, but a course instructor may identify such a scenario and request from the Provost's office that a barrier be installed in a classroom. Once approved, the department's safety officer and/or logistics coordinator may arrange the assessment from the physical plant department through FAMIS.

Are masks needed in the field, given social distancing protocols observed?
Face Coverings are not required when working outdoors with at least 6 feet distancing at all times

There are several questions about airflow and classroom ventilation. Since most of the questions were asking the same thing, we have provided an explanation of how facilities and physical plant is working to ensure safe classroom environments.
Like many college campuses, UVM buildings have different means of ventilation, generally based on the era in which they were built. Some older UVM buildings utilize air infiltration and open windows for air ventilation, while newer buildings generally have state-of-the-art HVAC systems. Physical Plant staff will make every reasonable effort to ensure that all UVM building ventilation systems are appropriately maintained and working at maximum efficiency as designed.

The University is using a layered approach to reduce risk, including mandatory use of face coverings in the classrooms, 6 foot distancing in classrooms, as well as ensuring HVAC systems are working correctly and opening windows where appropriate.

Other safety questions

If based on emerging epidemiological findings, the governor will eventually reduce social distancing to 3 feet not only for elementary school kids but also for adults, as long as people wear masks, will UVM adjust class room capacity accordingly during the semester?
UVM will be responsive to new guidance from official sources as it is issued.

If we have not heard anything about resumption of operations, are we to assume that our department has not been approved yet for resumption? And can we expect that we will hear something as soon as the department's plan has been approved?
Until they hear, the plan has not been approved.

What's the protocol for revising a resumption plan after it's been approved? If usage indicates changes could happen, how do they get the new plans approved?
If a department requires a material change to their approved plan impacting the health and safety efforts of the department the department may submit a revised plan and have it reviewed for approval.

What will happen if a student in a class tests positive?
If a student or employee tests positive, contact tracing protocols will be employed and individuals who have had meaningful contact will be notified.

Will in-person faculty be equipped with gloves, given that we probably won't be able to sanitize everything such as whiteboard markers, erasers, etc.?
Gloves are not recommended in this instance since contagions can be transferred from glove to face just as easily as from hand to face. Personal Hygiene and Disinfection is the appropriate defense.

   Hygiene
- Faculty, staff and students must wash their hands for 20 seconds frequently throughout the day.
- Avoid shaking hands or other direct contact.
- Cough into their elbows and not their hands.
- Avoid touching their faces.
- Alcohol-based sanitizers are located outside of classrooms, use sanitizers before entering and when leaving classrooms if handwashing is not available.
- Faculty and graduate teaching assistants should not share personal microphones or stylus, and in classrooms where required, should use those provided them.
- Classrooms will be provided with cleaning/sanitizing wipes. Students are expected to wipe down their seats, desks and areas and instructors are expected to wipe down their areas after each class.

   Cleaning and Disinfection
- Classrooms will be provided with cleaning/sanitizing wipes. Students are expected to wipe down their seats, desks and areas before each class.
- Instructors are expected to wipe down their areas after each class as well.
- UVM Custodial Services clean classrooms once daily and common touch points throughout the day.

Questions about technology

Can we use Zoom instead of Teams for class meetings?
Teams is the tool the University is supporting for class meetings. In order to provide a consistent experience for our students, Zoom will not be permitted except in limited, pre-approved circumstances.

Can you say anything more about the options for breakout rooms in Teams? If MS doesn't issue their version of the breakout rooms before the start of classes in August, is there another option we're considering?

Teams supports using channels for small group meetings and these can be used as breakout rooms. You can join these smaller meetings and be on-hold in the original meeting so you can easily re-join it. Please see the attached Knowledge Base article for more details: https://www.uvm.edu/it/kb/article/microsoft-teams-using-channels-for-small-group-meetings/

Consider case of a "remote synchronous" class. What is the difference in the student experience between a pod and a faculty member's office (whether home or on campus)? Does it depend only on internet speed and reliability? So if you hold that factor constant, it's the same from the student's point of view?

The pods are likely to have higher quality video and sound capability than individuals have on their personal devices. But, if the faculty member has good internet speed and reliability, access to all the technology they'll need, and is comfortable with the sound/video from their own device, then the student experience will be the same regardless of location.

Can you say more about the "content" support? Does that mean that we can have someone assigned to our class to help out with monitoring the chat and screen sharing, or is this an as-needed person to be called if we're having a problem?

Teaching assistants are the people who will be helping with chat and screen sharing, while technical staff will be available to help as-needed with failures of equipment and other technical issues.

Generally speaking (I think for Julia), if a laptop worked for us well in the past, should they going forward, assuming we won't be using additional tools like the white boards and so on?

Yes, if a laptop with its built-in microphone and video worked well in the past, it should continue to work well in the future, particularly from home or a faculty member's office. If faculty are teaching from a classroom or pod, they should plan to log into the console computer and then join the Teams meeting with their laptop if they have specific use cases/applications that are otherwise not available.

How will we make appointment to try a classroom?

We will have sign-up information available the week of August 3rd and will send out an announcement with the details. The CTL website will also have this information when it's available.

Will instructors be able to use traditional white boards or chalkboards in the classroom? If not, I'd like to know more about the Walkum-1 that Julia spoke about (not sure of spelling).")

Our testing with traditional white boards and chalkboards revealed that they did not work well with video capture. We strongly recommend either the Wacom One or a document camera. The Wacom One is a high-resolution device that will allow for more advanced whiteboarding and note taking. The Wacom One allows you to directly write on the screen. Here is a blog post showing some of the capabilities of the Wacom One paired with OneNote: https://community.wacom.com/remote-learning-how-to-use-wacom-one-and-onenote-to-engage-students-online/

I will need to use breakout rooms very frequently as I am teaching and will need to be able to easily set them up while teaching. Zoom is very well set up for this. What if Teams doesn't get their channels up to the level of functioning that I need them to be? I don't want my students' educational experience to suffer because I have to rely on Teams instead of Zoom.
Teams will support a modern breakout room functionality this fall. We are working with Microsoft to get this as soon as possible for UVM. Until this functionality is available, the ETS Knowledge Base has information on how to incorporate small groups into meetings. Faculty have been having good success using this approach.

Is there a way to set up a second TEAMs account so that I can test how things may work before classes?
The ETS Help Line (techteam@uvm.edu) can be your first point of contact if this is your concern. They will ask for more details on what you're trying to test and will help direct you to the best resource so that you can test what you need.

Is UVM purchasing the new "Teams Together" mode?
Teams together mode is already available to anyone at UVM, as is the new large gallery view that shows 49 videos at once. Right now, you have to enable the new meeting experience for these options, but they will be enabled by default in the coming weeks. To enable the feature, see this documentation: https://www.uvm.edu/it/kb/article/teams-new-meeting-experience/

It sounds like a Team will be created and auto-populated for each class. If faculty would prefer to use a link for their classes rather than a Class Team (e.g. because all class materials will be organized on BlackBoard), can we delete any auto-generated Teams?
The automatically created Teams will not be enabled by default. Faculty or TAs will need to go to the Team and turn it on. You could not enable it and just have Teams meetings if you don't want the full features of a Team.

Recommendations about headsets?
We've had the best experience with USB wired headsets from Logitech, Jabra, or Poly.

We will have a lot of brand new students on campus in the fall. What kind of support will students have for Teams so that faculty are not put in the position of troubleshooting technology problems? Will telephone numbers or a Teams help page for students be prominently displayed some place so that students can easily find these?
 ETS provides help to students through our Help Line and this group is well-prepared to assist students with Teams in the fall. The Help Line number is available on the IT website and in the Knowledge Base articles and can be added to the syllabus so that students always have it. Additionally, Admissions, the Residential Learning communities, and Orientation have been introducing new students to Teams as part of their programming so it should be familiar.

What date will MS TEAMS be populated by ETS with our class rosters? I'm anticipating contact with students and sending them some preliminary TEAMS instructions/ practice before 8/31.
We intend to have this automation done by August 20.

When will MS Teams have the "breakout room" feature available for use?

"Fall 2020" is all we have for timing information today, though we are in conversations with Microsoft leadership about getting access as soon as possible. In the meantime, there are Teams breakout workarounds that are mentioned above.

Will instructors be provided with headsets (headphone/mic)?
We are working on the logistics of providing headsets to instructors scheduled to teach in the 12 largest classrooms, where these headsets are particularly important. We will share distribution information as soon as it is available.

Will laboratory classrooms receive the updated electronic technologies that have been described today?
We have partnered with our IT colleagues in the colleges and schools to identify all classroom spaces that need technology. If the college/school has placed a laboratory on the list, it will receive the technologies we have discussed.

Will the classroom microphones amplify voices for in-person teaching as well as for remote instruction? Will the microphones project to the whole class as well as the remote students?
In the largest classrooms, the microphones will amplify the voice for in-person teaching and for remote students. Small rooms that do not require amplification will have microphones that project only to the remote students. We continue to explore alternatives for medium-sized rooms that have not required amplification in the past but may benefit from it now.

Will the technical support Julia described be available 1) during evening class times and 2) for all classes regardless of size?
Yes, technical support will be available during the evening and independent of class size.

Will we have to open up TEAMS on the computer in the classroom to use the camera for streaming, or will we be able to use our laptop and just use the laptop camera
Using Teams from the computer in the classroom is recommended since that will use the room camera and microphone, which should provide a better experience for your remote students.

Would the Wacom 1's be issued to each faculty and/or installed in each classroom?
The Wacom One's are being installed in each classroom. We will have a small number on hand for emergencies (e.g. hardware failures) as well.

Are there any photos of the classroom set up (e.g., position of the camera, etc.) available so that we can visualize the space during our planning for fall teaching?
We have begun to take some photographs and expect to have those available via the CTL the week of August 3rd.

Questions about instruction

Can we expect to receive substantive pedagogy guidelines for each modality from our college soon?

The Center for Teaching and Learning is offering workshops on instruction in each modality. If you missed a workshop, recordings will be available. To view the events calendar, visit: https://www.uvm.edu/ctl/events/

Do you have suggestions for how to make it work for multiple students to give presentations during a class period and those presentations require use of the classroom technology?
Two suggestions are:
1. Use the classroom technology (with only one presenter at the presentation area, even if it is a group project) and follow room instructions for cleaning technology between presenters. The instructor should maintain distancing during the presentation.
2. Project a Teams meeting onto the room screen, and have students present from their seats by sharing their desktop to the meeting. This approach may require muting the room audio to avoid echoes.

For in-person classes, are students allowed to get up and move around the classroom as long as they stay 6+ feet distant from others? Thinking about group work on a board with sticky notes, etc.
This is possible as long as distancing is maintained and should be carefully planned and executed for this reason. Having students get up and move in stages or small groups will help maintain distancing. You should avoid activities where students move others' sticky notes or touch objects such as markers that others have touched. Online tools such as Mural may also allow the class to simulate some of these activities and involve any at-home or remote students in the class activity. The Center for Teaching and Learning can provide more information on online tools.

How is the university planning to support faculty and staff given the public schools three days at home and two days in school?
This issue is under discussion between the administration and UA. Many of the flexible measures established last spring for non-represented employees will remain in place for the fall semester.

How should those of us teaching online schedule our final exams? We do not have a scheduled class meeting time, so the final exam grid doesn't apply to our courses. For reasons of academic integrity, I do not want my final exam open for an extended period of time.
Faculty teaching fully online courses will have the opportunity to request a scheduled exam period to take place during the week of December 7 for this purpose. More information about how to request an exam slot for an online course will be sent directly to faculty teaching in this modality; at present the timing is still being determined. These exams would likely be scheduled during less busy time slots and on Friday, which is used as an exam makeup day. CTL provided a resource last spring that helps faculty consider a broader range of options for final exams in remote/online courses.

If you are instructing students outside, what are the guidelines? Still 6 foot distancing?
Outdoor classroom guidelines are in development.

What if students in the lab are also required to wear a face shield as well as a mask, can students be closer together than 6 feet?

All currently operating labs have created plans for operations including training. If there is a need for close contact, and it is not in their current approved plan, the lab should submit a revision. Higher levels of PPE protection for close work has been approved where no alternative is possible, but this is limited to cases where no other means exist. The necessary PPE under those circumstances should be determined by the activity itself and reviewed by Lab Safety and OVPR on a case by case basis. Plexiglass face shields are one possible protection enhancement, but may not be appropriate or sufficient in all cases. Specific questions related to specific activities should be addressed to Lab Safety.

Is there any guidance anticipated on having classes meet outside when the weather is nice and how to do that safely?
We are working on this guidance and on potentially adding some outdoors spaces to the room scheduling system so that they can be reserved. However, given the many uses for outdoor space on campus, those will need to be carefully chosen and guidance for class gatherings issued.

Room assignments are being adjusted for the number of students. If it is a hybrid course, would the course director be able to work with facilities to determine the best structure for their classes (e.g., splitting the class into 2 in-person groups).
Courses in the mixed modality were scheduled into rooms that could fit the number of students divided by the number of meeting days (i.e. by 3 for MWF, or by 2 for MW or TR). Due to severe reduction of room capacities, and the high demand for rooms with capacity greater than 30 students, additional requests for larger rooms to accommodate alternative course organizations will not be possible.

There is a lot for faculty to learn in the next few weeks, and also many changes to pedagogy, course content, and assignments to match the modality, even for those teaching in-person that faculty need to make plans for. It would be appropriate to pay faculty from CARES $$ for at least an additional week of August before the normal contract period begins to recognize this extra labor.
The administration is currently engaged in impact bargaining with UA regarding related issues.

There was mention awhile back of possibly having a large space available for in-class exams, such as at Patrick Gym. Is that still part of the plan?
Yes. Sections of the Multipurpose facility will be available for scheduling in-person exams. Information about scheduling exams in the facility will be available closer to the start of classes.

What has been done to thoroughly explore and vet outdoor classroom space construction that are fully equipped with AV to support and create a high level learning environment? I would like to strongly advocate for outdoor classroom construction.
This option has been carefully considered and discussed with partners from facilities, ETS, and UVMStrong. AV constraints as well as uncertainty regarding the availability of tents made it difficult to predict whether the significant investment of resources would result in a usable classroom space.

What is the process to request a different classroom assignment?
Given space constraints few room changes are possible at this point, and we ask that only critical room change requests be made. This process is the same as in the past and originates with the department chair or dean's office.

When can faculty, if we can, go check out assigned classrooms on our own?
We are working on a procedure that will allow faculty access to classrooms.

When will classroom assignments be finalized?
We are working on placing a few courses that are too large for available classrooms. Final assignments will be made as soon as possible.

Where can we find the fall seat capacity for each room? I have not been able to locate it.
Capacities for most classrooms are listed on the Fall Schedule of Courses – scroll down to the very bottom of the page and click on "Revised Classroom Capacities for Fall 2020." The list of General Purpose classrooms is first, followed by a list of non-GP classrooms.

Will faculty teaching MIXD courses get the info on scheduling pods? I'd like to do some in-person days and some remote days.
If your course is MIXD, you have been assigned a classroom for all days of your course. You can use your assigned classroom as a pod during your class meeting day and time even if students do not come to an in-person class that day. Priority scheduling for pods will be given to faculty teaching remote (REMT) courses.

Will the scheduling for the instructional pods include weekends?
Pods have been entered in the EMS room scheduling system. After priority scheduling for remote courses ends, these pods can be scheduled using the regular scheduling system by having your admin select "Request a Pod Teaching Room."