

Instructional Strategies

As we approach Thanksgiving break, this edition of the weekly digest focuses on strategies¹ to support our students and address student concerns.

- Please **consider the number of platforms** you are using from the perspective of a student taking multiple online/remote classes. Explore ways to further simplify, clarify, and bring increased consistency to your course materials and teaching methods.
- Please make certain you have a plan to **make class recordings or alternative materials available** to enable students to keep up when they are not allowed to attend class as a result of quarantine or isolation requirements.
- The majority of our undergraduates will **transition to fully remote instruction** following Thanksgiving break. Please adhere to your assigned class time, and take time well ahead of the break to **communicate your plans** to students so they are clear about expectations for remote instruction, and the technology and materials they will need to engage fully with their classes. Flexibility may be needed if students anticipate or encounter connectivity issues. Please be sensitive to the needs of your students.
- Please **adhere to the exam schedule** that has been created by the Registrar's Office to minimize instances of conflicting exam times for students, and follow all other aspects of [the UVM exam policy](#). **Communicate exam structure and expectations** to students so they are prepared for exam week.
- If you are using **Blackboard for your exams**, please make sure students have sufficient time to answer the questions posed. If you enable the **no-backtracking feature** for a Blackboard exam, please inform students that they will not be able to go back and review their answers. Please be aware that students with certain SAS accommodations may need a version of the exam without this feature turned on. CTL has an excellent summary of ways to [encourage academic honesty](#) without creating high-pressure timed assessments, as well as a helpful [exam decision tool](#).
- There are **no plans to offer a Pass/No Pass** option this fall. To provide students with additional time to make informed decisions about withdrawals, the **withdrawal date** has been extended from October 29 to **November 2**.
- Student Services offices across campus are reporting higher than usual numbers of requests for incompletes, withdrawals, and academic flexibility. **Students who receive incompletes** should be encouraged to complete course work during the extended January break and discouraged from taking any winter session courses. When possible, faculty should assess and grade the work of incompletes before the spring semester begins.
- The higher rates of requests for withdrawals include **withdrawals from required courses**. Students need to be supported in understanding the cumulative effect of withdrawals and the potential impact on progression and time to graduation. That said, there are times when partial or full withdrawals may be of benefit to students.
- A number of students are reporting significant stress over their **GPA's and financial aid implications of their fall grades**. Please refer these students to your college's Student Services office and Student Financial Services to identify options and whether any flexibility is possible.
- It is not too late to seek support from the Center for Teaching and Learning if you need assistance with the use of Blackboard or other instructional technology. The [ETS Knowledge Base](#) offers comprehensive self-help guides on Blackboard and Teams if you prefer to look up how-to's on your own.

¹ The strategies were developed by student services professionals and the Associate Deans; some may apply only to undergraduates, while others apply to both graduate and undergraduate students.