

**From:** [Provost](#)  
**To:** [HOF-FACULTY](#)  
**Subject:** A MESSAGE FROM THE PROVOST  
**Date:** Monday, March 30, 2020 5:45:34 PM

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## A Message from the Provost

**Date:** March 30, 2020  
**To:** Hofstra University Faculty and Staff  
**From:** Herman A. Berliner,  
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs  
**Subject:** Current Guidelines for Course Completion this Semester

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I hope you, your family and communities are staying safe and well. As you know, in response to the spread of COVID-19, our university is using remote learning through the spring semester. To replace classes not held in the week before Spring Break, we will use the snow-study-reading days.

Moving to remote learning has been challenging and I truly appreciate all your work toward assisting in the smooth transition. Our community has been working across multiple fronts to assemble resources for students and faculty to provide every opportunity for all students to complete the semester and earn credit in every course. For your convenience, below is a compilation of the policies and guidelines, including some general suggestions for remote teaching and learning. We understand that your plans for remote teaching may change during the semester to accommodate the various disruptions to your daily routine, such as caring for children or other family members. We trust that you will soon discover a rhythm for remote learning that works well in these times for your students and you.

### **General Suggestions for Remote Teaching**

As you move forward this semester with remote teaching and learning, we offer these general *suggestions*.

#### **1. Course management**

- The choice of synchronous or asynchronous remote instruction belongs to the faculty, but if at all possible, we suggest that faculty use some degree of synchronous interaction with students, such as Zoom or Blackboard Collaborate, during scheduled class time to deliver some version of what normally is done in the classroom. If and when faculty become more comfortable with synchronous presentations to students, some or all of these presentations can be recorded and posted for student use as appropriate.
- When remote instruction is largely or exclusively asynchronous, it would be helpful for students if a portion of the scheduled class time is made available for discussion, questions or other forms of interactive learning.
- While you may decide that synchronous classes throughout the semester are a good way of maintaining structure and normalcy for students, some students may not be able to attend classes at the regularly scheduled time for example, due to time zone issues, limited access to wifi, family care responsibilities. Please be flexible and understanding, and provide alternative asynchronous methods for students to access relevant course materials.

- Some courses include components that may be impossible to deliver online (e.g., training on specialized on-campus equipment). In these cases, we urge faculty to think creatively about how key elements of these activities might be adapted for remote learning. If these new activities require reconceptualization of the course's original learning goals, this could be acceptable under these unusual circumstances. Consult with your chair and dean as appropriate.
- Communication with students is key. An updated syllabus should be distributed to students as soon as possible. Revisions to the course syllabus or changes to modes of assessment should be made clear to students.
- Many students have accommodations for documented disabilities, but it is possible their needs for assistance are only now apparent or have changed with the adoption of remote learning. We suggest you remind students that SAS is available if anyone wants to discuss or review classroom accommodations.
- Some of your students may have left campus without books and course materials and were unable to return to campus to retrieve these materials. Faculty are encouraged to contact the [library](#) for available electronic resources or encourage students to contact the [bookstore](#) for information about free ebook access.
- We encourage faculty to be flexible by accepting late assignments and giving makeup exams as many students may be faced with health, housing, technology, and other challenges. Please submit an Alert through Student Success Connect to report student hardships and ensure that students receive support to the extent possible.
- Some student's ability to participate in synchronous and asynchronous communication and discussions may be limited because of insufficient wifi bandwidth or other problems. It would be helpful to provide several options for student participation, such as the Chat function in Zoom for synchronous class meetings, or the BlackBoard Discussion Board function for asynchronous interaction.
- Faculty should consider multiple forms of office hours such as Zoom, BlackBoard, Collaborate, or email.

## **2. Exams and Culminating Experiences**

Faculty may postpone midterm examinations to a time that works for the course adjustments currently in place. Please contact the Help Desk for assistance with administering digital examinations.

<b>Support</b>	<b>During the semester, on days when classes are held</b>	<b>Between semesters, and on days when classes are not held</b>
Phone (516-463-7777), and E-mail ( <a href="mailto:help@hofstra.edu">mailto:help@hofstra.edu</a> )	Mon.-Thu., 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Fri., 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.	Mon.- Fri. 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Walk-in (by appointment only, visit <a href="https://calendly.com/hofstraits/walkin">https://calendly.com/hofstraits/walkin</a> )	Mon.- Fri., 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.	Mon.- Fri., 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

There are many options for online assessment: quizzes, open book tests, special projects, or formal examinations. Online examinations can be proctored through Respondus, a browser locking resource. This resource requires online exams in the Blackboard platform. Please contact Ed Tech through [help@hofstra.edu](mailto:help@hofstra.edu) or 516-463-7777 for assistance.

Faculty are encouraged to carefully review culminating activities (performances, presentations, and group activities) in their courses and make changes necessary to transition toward virtual experiences.

Doctoral candidates can defend their dissertations using Zoom to bring committees together. If public presentations are required, defense chairs should transition such activity toward virtual experiences.

### **3. New Grading Policies for Spring 2020 Only**

#### **Pass/Fail Option**

##### **Undergraduate Students**

- For the Spring 2020 semester, Hofstra University will allow undergraduate students to elect a Pass/D+/D/Fail option through Friday, May 8, 2020 for current term courses that are in progress.
- Faculty are not able to select this option for any student or an entire class.
- For this semester's courses only, the Pass/D+/D/Fail option for undergraduates may be applied to any degree requirement, including general education courses, distribution courses, major and minor courses, and electives and will not count towards the regular 15/30 credit limits for the Pass/D+/D/Fail option.
- Students who are enrolled as part of the INTO program must contact Dr. Frank Gaughan ([e-mail](#)) to see if you are eligible for this grade option.
- The grade of P is equivalent to a C- or better.

##### **Graduate Students**

- For the Spring 2020 semester, Hofstra University will allow graduate students to elect a Pass/Fail option through Friday, May 8, 2020 for current term courses that are in progress.
- Faculty are not able to select this option for any student or an entire class.
- Graduate Students should contact their program advisor to discuss the ramifications of the P/F option for their specific degree program. The Pass/Fail option may also be applied to any requirement without the normal credit restrictions, except for programs with national accreditation that does not allow Pass-Fail grading.
- Students who are enrolled as part of the INTO program must contact Dr. Frank Gaughan ([e-mail](#)) to see if you are eligible for this grade option.
- A grade of P is equivalent to a B- or better.
- This grading system does not apply to either the Law School or the Medical

School.

## Incompletes

As per the Hofstra [Undergraduate Bulletin](#) the normal incomplete policy states:

*At the instructor's discretion, a grade of Incomplete ("I") may be granted upon the request of a student if the student has completed a substantial portion of the course and unforeseen circumstances prevent the student from completing some of the course work on time. In unusual circumstances, an instructor may submit an "I" grade without prior discussion with the student. An "I" grade should be given only where there is a reasonable expectation that completion of the outstanding work will result in a passing grade. The instructor will decide the time frame in which the student will complete the required course work. However, the deadline may not exceed the last day of the next full semester following the granting of an "I" grade.\* In cases where lab work is required or the student is working on an Independent Study, additional time may be granted. A student will not be allowed to attend the regular class meetings at the next offering of the course. The instructor will inform the student of the completion requirements and terms. As part of the normal final-grade process, the instructor must submit an "I" grade online to the Office of Academic Records with a default grade, the grade the student will receive if the missing work is not completed. The default final grade must be a letter grade other than UW.*

- For the Spring 2020 semester, we encourage instructors to only grant incompletes upon the request of the student and when a substantial amount of the coursework has been completed.
- If students report *temporary circumstances* preventing them from accessing technology (travel, illness, hospitalization), flexibility on the part of the faculty member is encouraged and an incomplete may be considered and warranted.

## 4. Student Attendance

### **Student Attendance Policies for Spring 2020 Only**

If students anticipate missing classes due to travel, illness or hospitalization, they should contact faculty directly via email or Blackboard. Several students were moving out of the residence halls through March 25, 2020. Additionally, some students are trying to locate computers that they can use remotely. We ask:

- Faculty for flexibility in attendance policies during what may be a temporary absence.
- Students should not be required to provide official medical documentation during this time.

## 5. Resources and Support

### **ITS/EdTech Web Pages for Faculty and Students**

The best one-stop website for faculty is ITS [Faculty Online Learning](#) page. There you will find step-by-step instructions for remote teaching technologies such as Zoom and Blackboard Collaborate, video tutorials, webinar registration links, and an example of an online class meeting plan. It also contains links to [Library](#) resources, [Student Access Services \(SAS\)](#), and HU Museum of Art [Support for Remote Learning](#).

To find learning resources for students and FAQs, visit the ITS [Student Online Learning](#) page.

## Center for University Advising

The full CUA team is available remotely to our undergraduate student population for advising appointments and support throughout the spring semester. Each advising dean has contacted their student cohort and encouraged them to continue using Connect to [schedule their advising appointments](#). As students schedule appointments, CUA follows up to confirm advisement by [Zoom](#) or phone. If students are experiencing any challenges scheduling an appointment or have specific advising questions or concerns, they have been encouraged to email their advising dean directly for guidance.

Additionally, [the CUA team](#) remains available to assist faculty, chairs, and academic administrators with navigating complex advising-related issues. Please reach out to them about any situations that need their attention. Feel free to email CUA Director Marc Oppenheim ([Marc.Oppenheim@hofstra.edu](mailto:Marc.Oppenheim@hofstra.edu)) for assistance. While things continue to remain fluid, please keep CUA partners aware of your concerns via email.

## Center for Academic Excellence

The staff in the Center for Academic Excellence welcome and strongly encourage a continued, strong partnership with faculty to help us best serve our undergraduate students in three ways during this difficult and unusual semester: alerts, virtual peer tutoring, and success advising.

### • Alerts

In addition to completing your mid-semester advisory reports (which is a direct communication tool between you and your students), the CAE team asks that faculty please use the existing Alert system via Connect in the Portal for any student concern that they wish to bring to CAE's attention. Success advisors will outreach to students via phone and email regarding your concerns in order to help students successfully complete their spring semester courses.

Here are some **examples of helpful information faculty should report**:

- Students who are not "attending" your synchronous, online, virtual courses
- Students who are not participating in your online discussion boards
- Students who are not completing assignments in a timely manner
- Students who stop communicating with you
- Students who you believe should consider the P/D+/D/F grade option for your

course

- Students who report personal health concerns

- **Virtual Peer Tutor Support**

The Undergraduate Tutorial Program within the CAE will provide virtual, peer tutoring support for most of the courses that were supported by our in-person peer tutors. The team is in the process of creating these platforms and will slowly be rolling out one-on-one online peer tutoring appointments and peer group-tutoring appointments starting the week of March 23<sup>rd</sup>. Almost every course that we previously supported through one-on-one and group tutoring will continue with remote, virtual access. However, CAE may not be able to provide tutoring for courses that were not previously offered by our peer tutors. For additional questions related to tutoring support, please email us at [utp@hofstra.edu](mailto:utp@hofstra.edu)

Understandably, CAE tutors are uncertain about what to expect regarding time demands required for their own distance learning classes and our goal is to not overwhelm them. CAE may reach out to faculty with questions that come to us from our peer tutors or your enrolled students and for more information on how students can utilize faculty's online office hours. Your help and prompt responses in these circumstances are appreciated. If you have additional ideas for how the Center for Academic Excellence and faculty can work together to better serve our students, please don't hesitate to contact Diane Herbert ([email](#)).

- **Success Advising**

The Center for Academic Excellence will continue to serve students via phone or virtual (video) appointments for the remainder of the semester. Students are highly encouraged to make appointments through Connect on the Portal. CAE recognizes that students are facing diverse and challenging circumstances and remains available to help them navigate the completion of their Spring 2020 coursework. Students can make an appointment to discuss strategies to help manage their time while completing distance learning assignments, strategies to stay engaged in their distance learning courses, as well as other academic questions or concerns they may have. If you have any difficulty scheduling an appointment, please email [cae@hofstra.edu](mailto:cae@hofstra.edu).

### **Student Access Services**

Student Access Services staff is available through email ([sas@hofstra.edu](mailto:sas@hofstra.edu)) to support students, staff and faculty as we transition to virtual learning. Faculty can email questions or concerns about addressing specific student needs to [sas@hofstra.edu](mailto:sas@hofstra.edu) with a general idea or what you need to discuss, so that SAS can connect you to the appropriate staff member.

While most commonly used testing accommodations, such as extended time, can be facilitated in Blackboard by instructors without specific intervention, the SAS team remains available as a faculty resource to provide:

- Extensive testing services for a smaller population of students who may need scribes and readers for exams.
- Support in scheduling extended time test options during synchronous class



sessions.

- Support in implementing accommodations during online assessments.

To request a Zoom video conference with SAS team members to discuss your concerns or to schedule one-on-one testing with scribes/readers, please email [sastesting@hofstra.edu](mailto:sastesting@hofstra.edu).

SAS staff is already in communication with students with hearing or visual impairments, their professors, and the outside vendors that provide the unique accommodations they require to coordinate how these services and accommodations will function going forward. If you have questions about this, you can contact Victoria Simon at [Victoria.Simon@hofstra.edu](mailto:Victoria.Simon@hofstra.edu).

### **Resources:**

**Extra time on Tests:** To adjust time limits for specific students who have extra time on exams as an accommodation, change settings in blackboard. Click this [link](#) to a video demonstration of how to do it

**Note Taking:** SONOCENT is an Audio Notetaker the note-taking software that many of our students were using as a note-taking accommodation in your classrooms. Contact [Victoria.Simon@Hofstra.edu](mailto:Victoria.Simon@Hofstra.edu) for technical support.

**Reducing Barriers:** To make sure your remote learning environment is accessible, usable, and convenient, take a look at advice from Ed Tech on the Principles of Universal Design for Learning:  
<https://wiki.edtech.hofstra.edu/display/KB/Universal+Design+for+Learning>

Thank you once again for your commitment and collaboration.

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