

In the Event of a GW Closure: Instructional Continuity Options for GWSPH Faculty

As the university considers new policies for dealing with weather related closures, please review the following options for continuing with course instruction and activities.

Option 1:

Utilize the University make-up day policy and hold that class session at a future date.

Please be aware that make-up days are not assigned until later in term and not all missed classes receive a make-up day.

Please review Option 2 and Option 3 below for alternative methods for engaging with your students should inclement weather cause a GW closure.

Option 2:

Hold a synchronous online class meeting using WebEx or Blackboard Collaborate.

Synchronous class meetings can be an ideal way to meet with your students when GW is experiencing a weather or emergency related closure. The WebEx and Collaborate meeting platforms allow for recording of that session should a student not be able to attend.

Steps for Running a Live Class Meeting:

- 1.) Select the live meeting platform you will use in event of a closure.
- 2.) Set up and run a practice session on that platform to get familiar with audio/video/screen sharing functionality.
- 3.) When a closure occurs, email your students with instructions on how to join you for that live session.
- 4.) Be sure to record the session for students who are unable to attend.
 - Online class meetings can be recorded for students who are unable to attend for reasons such as: power outage, loss of internet access, concern for personal safety, etc.
 - If you are interested in running live class sessions, please review this more detailed [Guidance on Running Live Sessions using WebEx or Bb Collaborate](#).

GW Technology Support and GWSPH Instructional Strategy Contacts

GW Instructional Technology Lab:

assistance with Blackboard tools, Collaborate

Phone: 202-994-0485

Email: itl@gwu.edu

Face-to-Face Support: Gelman Library, B05A (9:30am–5:30pm)

GWIT Support Center:

assistance with WebEx

Email: ithelp@gwu.edu

Phone: 202-994-4948

Face-to-Face support: Rome/ Phillips Hall, Room B101 (10am-5pm)

GWSPH Academic Affairs:

To discuss instructional strategies for translating your face-to-face course activities to the online environment, contact Andrew Wiss, Director of Online Learning.

Email: awiss@gwu.edu

Continuity Planning: What Steps Do I Need to Take?

At the beginning of the term: Establish your plans for communicating with students in the event of a closure. Share those plans in-class and electronically via email and Blackboard.

In the event of a closure: Please be sure to reach out to students in a timely fashion and communicate your plans for making up or proceeding online with that week's class session.

Please review this additional [Guidance on Planning for a Potential GW closure and Questions to Consider](#).

Option 3:

Use Blackboard to post online course content and create activities that students can work through independently.

- These types of alternate course activities can be worked on by students at a time of their choosing with completion dates assigned by you.
- Some examples: Participating in discussion boards, engaging in additional course activities such as a short skills-building project or writing assignment and reviewing posted content.
- For a list of Blackboard tools and assignment/activity options, please review this [Guidance on Using Asynchronous Online Tools and Methods](#).

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Instructional Continuity – Communication and Planning

Communication is Key:

- Establish your plans for communicating with students in the event of a closure at the beginning of the term. Share those plans in-class and electronically via email and Blackboard.
- In the event of a closure, please be sure to reach out to students and communicate your plans for making up or proceeding online with that week's class session.

Questions to Consider:

Consider the following questions regarding how you might make-up a missed class session.

- What didactic elements of my face-to-face class sessions could be supplemented using online content created by myself or others?
- Would I be interested in recording and posting my own lecture content for students if a class session is missed? If so, what tools would I use to create those recordings (see options below)?
- How might the hands-on and interactive elements of my face-to-face sessions be translated to online activities during a GW closure?
- Would I be willing to host a live/synchronous class meeting using WebEx or Blackboard Collaborate in lieu of a face-to-face class meeting?
- What elements of my course are best delivered/facilitated in a face-to-face format?

Getting Comfortable with the Selected Tools:

Take time to explore and practice with any technologies you might use in the event of a closure. You might also consider integrating those same technologies into your regular class activities/assignments as an opportunity to familiarize yourself and your students with their usage.

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Option 2: Live/Synchronous Class Meetings:

GW Supported Tools Include: WebEx and Blackboard Collaborate Ultra

Other Non-GW Supported Tools: Google Hangouts, Zoom, Adobe Connect

Primary Support Contact: GW Instructional Technology Lab and GW IT for WebEx

Synchronous class meetings can be an ideal way to meet with your students when GW is experiencing a weather or emergency related closure. Most live meeting platforms also allow for recording of that session should a student not be able to attend. GWSPH have access to WebEx and Blackboard Collaborate Ultra as GW supported technologies for holding live class meetings – but any meeting platform you have personal access to and have comfort with might also be used.

Class Meetings via WebEx – All GW faculty have access to a WebEx account and this platform is supported by the Division of IT.

- Login to GW WebEx from this address: <https://it.gwu.edu/webex-faculty-staff>
 - Scroll down that page and click “Log In to WebEx”.
 - Click “Start Meeting” along the left hand side of the screen.
- Once in WebEx, you can invite your students to the meeting using their email addresses.
 - Click “Participants” -> and then “Invite and Remind”.
- Both you and your students can join via webcam and either computer or phone audio.
- Faculty are encouraged to download and review this [quick reference guide](#) prior to hosting their first meeting in WebEx.
- Faculty can also [schedule on-demand training here](#).

Class Meetings via Blackboard Collaborate Ultra – All GW faculty have access to the Blackboard Collaborate Ultra meeting platform as a part of their course on Blackboard. Collaborate is supported by the GW Instructional Technology Lab.

- Collaborate Ultra must be enabled from with Bb for each course you wish to use it. (Tutorial - [Enabling Blackboard Collaborate Ultra in Your Course](#))
- A number of PDF guides are available from the GW ITL ([Blackboard Collaborate Ultra Guides](#))
- *Please contact the GW ITL for hands on training prior to using Collaborate in your course.*

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Option 3: Using Asynchronous Online Tools and Methods:

- **Tools Include:** Email, using the Blackboard LMS for posting content, Discussion Boards, Tests, and lecture recordings.
- **Primary Support Contact:** GW Instructional Technology Lab

There are a number of options and tools faculty may wish to consider to allow their students to work independently or collaboratively on GW Blackboard through a missed class session's content, discussions activities. Commonly used asynchronous tools are outlined below.

Share content via email or Blackboard - Readings and links to outside web content can be posted on Blackboard or distributed via email. ([Guidance – Posting to your Blackboard course](#))

Blackboard Assignments - If not already using an online method to collect assignments– Blackboard or email can be used to collect them during a closure. ([Guide - Blackboard Assignments](#))

Blackboard tests/quizzes - Tests and quizzes can be administered on Blackboard. ([Guidance - Blackboard Tests](#))

Blackboard discussion boards – Threaded discussions can be used as a substitute for in-class discussions. ([Guidance - Blackboard Discussion Boards](#))

- In cases where more detailed exploration of that class session's topics are required, you might create multiple discussion questions for students to respond to. You might also ask students to perform additional research or synthesize course content as a part of their posts.
- Some faculty choose to actively facilitate their discussion boards and allow their written commentary to serve as substitute for the in-class instruction they would have provided during the class period.
- It's a best practice to clearly specify expectations for length and number of posts/responses.

Pre-recorded lecture - Record and post a full or condensed version of the week's lecture content. There are a number of tools available to do this – some of which require some initial training/support to get started.

- Add audio narrations to your existing PowerPoint ([tutorial](#)) and post the narrated file for students on Blackboard.
- Contact the GW Instructional Technology Lab to receive training on other options such as Camtasia, iSpring and VoiceThread in advance of a closing.
- Record your lecture with or without students present using a live meeting platform such as WebEx or Bb Collaborate and share the recording link with students (details on these platforms below).

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