

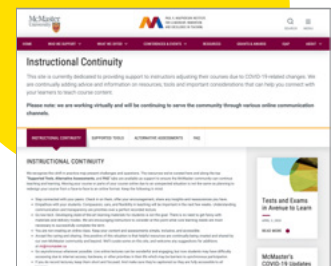


Teaching Remotely

Introduction

This guide provides an introduction to teaching remotely and shares best practices, tips and links to resources for teaching in virtual or online classrooms. It is intended to provide the information you need to quickly transition to teaching remotely. The guide can be referenced prior to, and throughout the course design process.

**Instructional
Continuity web
resource.**



In keeping with the **McMaster University Policy on Accessibility, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act**, and the **Ontario Human Rights Commission**, all virtual and online classrooms must be accessible.

Teaching Remotely: **Accessibility**

When teaching remotely there may be additional considerations to ensure your content and course are accessible to all. The more you understand about creating accessible content prior to developing your course and lecture content, the easier it will be to ensure you are developing an inclusive and equitable learning experience. In many cases the institutionally supported tools assist with compliance.

McMaster's Accessibility Hub is a central resource that shares how McMaster can support you in creating and distribute accessible content. It also includes resources and instruction for **Digital Media Accessibility** requirements.

If you are an instructor who is concerned about encountering barriers that may affect your ability to teach in a virtual or online classroom, please consult your Chair or Director. You may also contact the MacPherson Institute at our **support request page** or by **contacting your Faculty liaison**.

Resources:

[Accessibility in eLearning](#)

[Tips for Accessibility When Teaching Remotely](#)

[McMaster's Workplace Accommodation Policy and Process](#)

Some important strategies to promote accessibility include:

- Create and/or share videos and web conferencing recordings with captions and transcripts (possible through MacVideo, WebEx, Zoom and Echo 360) - see Additional Resources.
- Use large fonts and avoid using font colour to convey information.
- Provide students with enough time to read and engage with your course content.
- Consider how you will plan for interruptions due to internet connectivity and how this will be reflected in online tests or quizzes.
- Make your course easy to navigate. You can section content into modules, use headings and labels to organize text, and explain the purpose of any linked content in-text so that it is accessible with a screen reader.

Learning outcomes are often phrased as:

“by the end of this course, you will be able to [verb] + [noun].”

Teaching Remotely: **Course Alignment**

As you begin to teach remotely a good first step is to review your existing course and evaluate which components, if any, need to accommodate the shift in modality. Designing a course to be taught remotely is very similar to teaching in the classroom. It is important to ensure that there is alignment between your learning outcomes (course goals), your teaching and learning activities (discussions, case studies) and your assessment methods (quizzes/tests). This is also a good time to consider a universal design approach to the course to ensure it is designed with all students in mind.

Learning Outcomes, Assessments, and Activities

Learning Outcomes:

As you assess your learning outcomes to ensure they apply as you teach remotely you can think about them like planning a trip - start with the end in mind and determine how you will get there. You may need to consider a detour to get to your new destination. In the course context, clarify the main knowledge or skills that you want your students to know or be able to do by the end of the course/ lesson and ensure the course provides the required learning to be successful.

As you consider and refine the learning outcomes, ensure they are achievable when teaching remotely. For example, a learning outcome that asks students to “describe the metaphors in *Wide Sargasso Sea*” can be achieved in a variety of ways, regardless of modality. However, in some cases where outcomes are tied to applied skills or physical infrastructure (e.g., working in a lab), you may need to consider how this may need to be adapted to better suit learning remotely (eg. Virtual lab/simulator).

Teaching and Learning Activities:

Many institutionally-supported tools, such as Avenue to Learn, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, and WebEx, Echo360 and MacVideo enable students to engage in learning activities. In some cases, these tools can enhance the accessibility of the activities by providing different options for engagement. For example, if you run a discussion-based activity, you could offer students the option to participate in a synchronous video call with Microsoft Teams, Zoom, or WebEx or create a post on an Avenue discussion board for asynchronous interaction. Group work can be a particularly effective way to encourage active learning.

Resources:

[Simple Techniques for Applying Active Learning](#)

[Facilitating online discussion Strategies to Online Course Videos](#)

Teaching Remotely: **Course Alignment**

Assessment Methods:

Remote teaching environments offer many options for online assessment. Avenue to Learn allows students to submit assignments in an Assignments Folder and to complete quizzes, tests or online exams using the Quiz tool.

It is important to remember that assessments should be equitable and accessible. Asynchronous assessment options enable students in different circumstances to complete the work to the best of their abilities.

Resources:

[UDL Assessment resource](#)

[Should I Move My Exam Online?](#)

[Queen's University Webinar on Remote Exams](#)

[Humber College Assessment Decision Flowchart](#)

Universal Design

Universal design recognizes the diverse ways that students learn and provides a framework for instructors to purposefully incorporate learner variability into curricula from the outset. In practice, this means providing different options for engagement, expression, and representation, such as holding asynchronous tests or exams, offering flexible deadlines, giving students choice in assignment types, offering regular formative feedback, and creating accessible media. Embedding universal design strategies in each stage of course design can facilitate barrier-free learning for all students.

Resources:

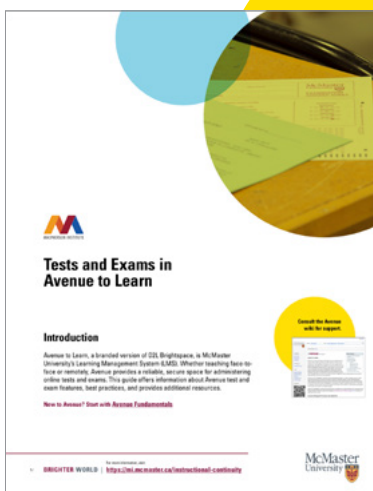
[McMaster's Flex Forward Accessible Teaching and Learning Resource](#)

[Universal Design for Learning Resources and Tips \(CAST\)](#)

[Universal Design in Higher Education: Promising Practices \(University of Washington\)](#)

[Universal Design - Best Practices for Online Learning](#)

This guide offers guidance and resources for planning assessments in Avenue to Learn



Teaching Remotely: **Developing Content**

As you shift to teaching remotely you will need to consider your content and determine if you need to adapt it or add new content to meet the new modality.

Preparing to Teach Remotely

Teaching remotely offers different ways to share your subject matter expertise. Regardless of modality, using these strategies may improve the teaching and learning experience.

- Provide/Produce media content that is less than 10 minutes. Presenting information in smaller “chunks” makes it easier to process, remember, and apply.
- Begin each lecture segment with a question/hook to generate student interest and active engagement. End each segment with a question that students can use for self-assessment.
- Connect lecture content to participation opportunities and assignments. For example, you can encourage students to use Avenue discussion boards to share their thoughts about a topic or to ask questions about content.

The Campus Store provides content sourced and supplied that has obtained Digital Rights Managed (DRM), copyright, royalties and secure transaction processing (including content from a large number of Canadian Publishers) through their [digital delivery platform](#).

[Contact
The Campus
Store](#)

Using PowerPoint:

A common way to share content is in the form of a presentation, typically using PowerPoint.

Tips for PowerPoint lectures:

- Minimize the amount of information on one slide and avoid including text or graphs that are not described.
- Use large, purposeful images and animations.
- Minimize the number of fonts.
- Keep colours consistent and comply with colour contrast standards.
- Ensure presentations comply with accessibility requirements.

In addition to creating slides with visuals and text, PowerPoint has many features that allow the content to be re-purposed for teaching remotely. To do this, record audio (e.g., your voice) in a presentation. You can use slide notes to create a script and capture audio as you click through slides by recording your lecture. Once you have finished, you can upload, caption, and share your content in your Avenue shell.

Resources:

[LinkedIn Learning: Recording PowerPoint](#)

[Upload content to MacVideo](#)

[Captioning content in MacVideo](#)

Teaching Remotely: Developing Content

Recording Audio

One of the key components to a quality virtual/online learning experience is good audio. You can use the headphones, earbuds, and mic that came with your phone to get much better audio than the mic on your computer.

Ensuring students can hear and understand the content is essential for a positive learning experience.

Tips for recording audio:

- Record in a quiet room with soft features (e.g., avoid concrete walls and hard surfaces).
- Keep the mic close your mouth (approximately 6").
- Turn off notifications, cell phones, and minimize distractions.
- Create a script (and stick to it).
- Speak at a natural, quick pace of approximately 150-160 words per minute.
- Check the quality and volume before recording.



A USB mic can produce rich, quality audio.

The McMaster Library has licensed access to more than 90,000 e-journals and 600,000 e-books which are available for use in teaching, learning and research. **Durable links** to specific resources provide secure local and remote access for use in McMaster courses.

Curate Existing Content

You may wish to supplement content that you regularly use in your teaching with other already-existing resources. Creating an engaging learning experience can be done by combining your materials (e.g., PowerPoint lectures) with existing texts, videos, podcasts, or other media to deliver instructional content. Consider browsing McMaster's Open Educational Resources (OER) hub, and the OER by Discipline Guide that lists resources by subject area and discipline.

Resources:

<https://libguides.mcmaster.ca/oer>

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/mcmasteroerdiscipline/>

Access to Equipment, Tools, and Resources

Depending on the type and complexity of the content you want to create, there may be considerations for required physical resources. Creating video of any type may require a newer desktop, laptop, or tablet with sufficient storage space, memory and processing power. Many of the computers purchased in the last several years are compatible with most software used to develop online content.

Resources:

[**Science - Hardware Recommendations for Teaching Remotely**](#)

Teaching Remotely: **Delivering the course**

Once you have all of your content in order, you will need to share it with students. To do this, McMaster University uses Avenue to Learn. The Learning Management System is a robust platform to manage and share your learning outcomes, activities, assessments and content.

Syllabus Information

The syllabus is an important document that communicates goals and expectations for your course. To review syllabus requirements please review **Undergraduate Course Management Policies**. Instructors should also check with their Chairs or Directors about Faculty-specific requirements.

When teaching remotely, it is important to clarify what type of equipment, software, or other technological requirements will be required. You may consider linking instructional resources that support the technology or create a discussion board section for students to ask questions or troubleshoot challenges. Your syllabus should also contain information about how students should proceed if they are unable to access the necessary resources or if they encounter challenges during timed assessments.

Using Avenue to Learn

Whether teaching face-to-face or remotely, Avenue provides a reliable, secure space to facilitate your course. We encourage instructors to request an Avenue course shell well before the course begins. When your shell is created, it will automatically enroll registered students. The shell will not be visible to students until you activate it by going to Course Admin > Course Offering Information and checking "Course is active."

Organizing Content in Avenue

Learning modules, weeks or units of study, are sequenced collections of content and activities. These can be organized by time (week) or by content (topic, unit). Consistency in design can help learners better understand expectations. Here is an example of a typical module design organized by week:

- Week #: Title of the Module.
- Summary of previous module (if applicable).
- Introduction to the module: state learning outcomes and checklist/summary of content/activities in order of completion.
- Content Items (1-4 - videos, readings, case study with estimated time commitment and references).
- Activity (1-2 e.g., Asynchronous and synchronous discussions, independent/small group active learning).
- Assessment (Individual/Group Assignment, Weekly Quiz).
- Summary of module with key takeaways and prep for next week, and reminder of upcoming, ongoing, long-term assessments.

Resources:

[MacPherson Institute Course design support](#)

Teaching Remotely: Delivering the course



Consult the
Avenue Wiki
for support.

Adding Video Content to Avenue to Learn

Content can come in a number of forms – videos, PowerPoint, Text, PDFs, or links to existing content. Depending on the type of content the process to add it to the course may vary slightly but the Avenue Wiki has instruction to assist.

Adding Video - often YouTube or recorded lectures/presentations:

- In your course shell, click Content.
- Below the Welcome heading is a blue button labeled “Upload/Create” .
- Click the button and choose “Video or Audio” from the list .
- If it is a YouTube or video from a website you can paste the link where it says “Enter URL or Embed Code”.
- Avoid uploading video directly into Avenue (not accessible), instead, use [Macvideo.ca](https://www.macvideo.ca/). Everyone with a MacID has access to MacVideo.
- All multimedia (audio/video) must have captions - See Additional Resources Section.

Resources:

[Uploading MacVideo Content to Avenue](https://www.macvideo.ca/)

Importing Other Content and Existing Resources into Avenue

In addition to video you can easily add existing content – Word Docs, PDFs, websites, Open Educational Resources, PowerPoint files, etc. The process is similar to adding video:

- Below the Welcome heading is a blue button labeled “Upload/Create” .
- Click the button and choose “Upload files” from the list then Click “My Computer” and locate the file on your computer – you can either drop the file where it says “Drop files Here” or click below where it says “Upload” .
- When you see your file listed in blue, click the “Add” button. The content will be added to the course shell.

Once you have your content added to the course shell you can explore how Avenue to Learn makes teaching remotely easy.

Resources:

[Avenue communication tools \(announcements, calendars, forums, email\)](#)

[Information about class lists](#)

[Creating groups or sections](#)

[Assessment tools](#)

[Adding a grade book](#)

[Online assignment submission and Turnitin](#)

Teaching Remotely: **Additional Resources**

Institutionally Supported Tools

Avenue to Learn

McMaster University's Learning Management System (LMS). It is a secure online platform for instructors to share course content, administer quizzes, collect assignment submissions, and facilitate asynchronous discussions with and between students.

PebblePed

An online platform that provides the space and tools for students to create learning portfolios to demonstrate their learning achievements and abilities.

WebEx

A videoconferencing tool that allows users to connect using video and audio, a text-based 'chat', and screen-sharing.

Echo360

A video platform that allows users to record and stream accessible videos.

Zoom

Much like WebEx, Zoom is an online videoconferencing tool that allows users to communicate via audio, video, and text, and also allows users to set scheduled and repeated meetings in one-step.

Microsoft Teams

An online communication and collaborative work platform that allows users to engage in channel-based conversations, share and synchronously work on Word and other Microsoft-formatted files, and connect via videoconferencing.

Mac Video

McMaster's own video portal similar to "YouTube". It's a tool that McMaster uses through our Kaltura media hosting license which allows you to make and upload video and other media available to anyone you choose online. MacVideo also provides automatic captioning and connects directly to Avenue to Learn with your MacId.

Accessibility

Student Accessibility Services Q&A for Students

Student Accessibility Services Q&A for Educators

Accessibility in WebEx (Meeting Centre only)

Accessibility in Microsoft Teams

Accessibility in Zoom

Accessibility in Echo360

Accessibility in MacVideo (Kaltura)

Accessibility Check Resources

Check this page for updated information, supports, and services.

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Instructional Continuity

This site is currently dedicated to providing support to instructors adjusting their courses due to COVID-19-related changes. We are continually adding advice and information on resources, tools and important considerations that can help you connect with your learners to teach course content.

Please note: we are working virtually and will be continuing to serve the community through various online communication channels.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONTINUITY SUPPORTED TOOLS ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENTS FAQ

INSTRUCTIONAL CONTINUITY

We recognize this shift in practice may present challenges and questions. The resources we've curated here and along the top "Supported Tools, Alternative Assessments, and FAQ" tabs are available as support to ensure the McMaster community can continue teaching and learning. Moving your course or parts of your course online due to an unexpected situation is not the same as planning to redesign your course from a face-to-face to an online format. Keep the following in mind:

- Stay connected with your peers. Check in on them, offer your encouragement, share any insights and reassurances you have.
- Empathize with your students. Compassion, care, and flexibility in teaching will be important in the next few weeks. Understanding communication and transparency are priorities over a perfect recorded lecture.
- Go low-tech. Developing state-of-the-art learning materials for students is not the goal. There is no need to get fancy with materials and delivery modes. We are encouraging instructors to consider at this point what core learning needs are most necessary to successfully complete the term.
- You are not creating an online class. Keep your content and assessments simple, inclusive, and accessible.
- Accept the caring and sharing. One positive of this situation is that helpful resources are continually being created and shared by our own McMaster community and beyond. We'll curate some on this site, and welcome any suggestions for additions at mi@mcmaster.ca
- Go asynchronous whenever possible. Live online lectures can be wonderful and engaging, but now students may have difficulty accessing due to internet access, hardware, or other priorities in their life which may be barriers to synchronous participation
- If you do record lectures, keep them short and focused. And make sure they're captioned so they are fully accessible to all learners.
- Consider alternative assessments - especially with quizzes and exams. We have provided options in the Alternative Assessments tab of this site, but also welcome your ideas for others - forward them to mi@mcmaster.ca

Tests and Exams in Avenue to Learn
APRIL 3, 2020
READ MORE

McMaster's COVID-19 Updates
For the most recent information

Teaching Remotely: **Support**

While this guide is intended to get you started quickly, we understand more information may be required.

The Instructional Continuity page is a hub on the MacPherson Institute website which is regularly being updated to share new information, supports and services.

If you experience technical challenges with Avenue, you can submit a support request by visiting the **Avenue Support web page**. If you have pedagogical questions about Avenue features or require other support, please submit a request for **MacPherson Institute Support**.