

AS&E Spring 2021 Academic Policies

The document below outlines policies for AS&E courses at the undergraduate and graduate level for Spring 2021. Questions on these policies can be sent to Alan Czaplicki (alan.czaplicki@rochester.edu) in the Dean's Office.

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General Information

Departmental Decision-Making on Courses and Course Content

Departments continue to have discretion to determine course offerings and appropriate instructors for courses. These decisions should continue to be made in relation to the needs of departmental academic programs and other departments' programs when applicable (e.g. service courses). Departments should also consider the ability of majors to successfully complete their degree based on their course offerings. Courses critical to the completion of the degree should not be cancelled unless no other option is available.

Departments should evaluate whether supplementary instruction will be necessary (either this semester or in the future), especially for "hands-on" components (labs, workshops, studios, performances), for any courses offered in a fully online format. Departments should plan and schedule this additional instruction based on their assessment of student needs. (See section on "[Use of Incomplete Grades for Laboratory and Studio Courses](#)" for information on grading related to additional instruction.)

Departments and individual faculty continue to have control over course content, but are required to follow AS&E rules about course modality (format), use of technology (e.g. Zoom), and College policies (e.g. S/F policy, deadlines for add/drop, etc.).

Contingency Plans for Spring 2021 Instructors

As occurred last semester, the Dean's Office requires that departments and programs develop contingency plans in the case of instructor illness during Spring 2021 courses. Departments and programs should identify an alternative instructor for their spring courses. It is also important that departments and programs have, at minimum, all syllabi for Spring 2021 courses to provide to alternative instructors. Departments should also facilitate quick access to other course materials (Blackboard, assignments, grades, etc.) for use by alternative instructors.

If an alternative instructor is not available, departments and programs must determine how they will manage the unavailability of an instructor due to illness. This should include plans for how to manage this situation at the beginning, in the middle, and towards the end of the course, as the most appropriate course of action may change across these time periods. This includes indicating possible alternative courses for students if the course is completely cancelled.

This type of planning is necessary for all Spring 2021 courses, and departments should pay special attention to highly subscribed and/or required courses.

Plans should be held in the department and available for sharing with the Dean's Office upon request. However, departments must notify the Dean's Office if a change in instructor is required. This information (current instructor, course, replacement instructor) should be emailed to Alan Czaplicki (alan.czaplicki@rochester.edu).

Student Arrival in Spring 2021

Some students will continue to have difficulties arriving on time for courses during the spring semester. International students may face visa issues, including delays in processing times, and will also have to quarantine upon arrival. Domestic students will also have to quarantine if they are from states that are not contiguous to NYS. (See this [link](#) for information provided to students.) Instructors should plan to provide online equivalent instruction (as much as possible) for any on-campus content that students may miss. This may include asynchronous recordings of lectures and recitations, videos of experiments and other laboratory activities, alternative written assignments or readings to facilitate learning key concepts, etc. These equivalent activities should allow students learning remotely to meet the learning objectives of the course similarly to students on campus.

Student Requests to Learn Remotely in Spring 2021 Courses

Undergraduate and graduate students have been asked to complete a form indicating whether they will participate in class remotely or in-person. Students can also indicate if they will return to campus after the start of the semester. Students have made these choices based on their best assessment of their current situation, and it may be that their assessment will change as their situation changes. If this occurs, instructors should accommodate students as necessary. In particular, students deciding to attend courses in-person based on changing circumstances should be allowed to, assuming that they have met any mandatory quarantine (or other) requirements set by the University.

Instructors retain the right to modify assignments (e.g. group activities) and grading in response to a student's transition to in-person or remote learning during the semester. Any changes in requirements or grading must be clearly communicated to that student.

Tracking of Remote Learners in Courses

As noted above, AS&E will be tracking which students are learning remotely in Spring 2021 through an online survey. This information will be added to course rosters to assist instructors in developing and targeting online course elements for this group of students. As in fall, students will be coded as being in-person at the start of the semester, arriving "late" on campus in the semester (e.g. in the first few weeks of the semester), and learning remotely.

In addition, students will be required to enter quarantine and isolation at any point in the semester if exposed to COVID-19 and will attend courses remotely through this period of quarantine. Instructors should be flexible in making accommodations for students in this situation.

The Dean's Office will update this information as much as possible as student plans change. However, instructors should be aware that students do not always indicate to the Dean's Office when their plans have changed. Instructors may encourage students to provide updated information in the [Spring 2020 Survey](#). Students should NOT email the Dean's Office with this information. The survey form is the official repository of this information.

Student Hiring (Teaching Assistants, Research Assistants, Administrative Support)

Current information on student hiring can be found on the [Student Employment](#) website for most hourly positions and on [this site](#) for bimonthly (stipend hires).

General Academic Policies

Academic Calendar and Instruction

Full semester courses:

In Spring 2021 (2/1-5/15), instructors are expected to teach according to their assigned meeting schedule when teaching synchronously. Asynchronous activities are permissible, but must continue to meet contact hour requirements for the course. See the [credit and contact hours section](#) and the [AS&E Credit Hour Policy](#) for an explanation of these requirements.

Half-semester courses:

Instructors of half-semester courses must meet the same expectations regarding teaching schedules and contact hours as noted for full semester courses above. All half-semester courses must follow the [AS&E Credit Hour Policy](#) regarding contact hours.

Academic Deadlines in Spring 2021

Graduate and undergraduate academic deadlines for Spring 2021 [can be found at this site](#).

The add-drop period will be through the first four weeks of the semester (2/1-2/26). For undergraduates, the last date to add a four-credit independent study course is the third week of the semester (2/15). (See the [independent study page in the academic handbook](#) for timeline for courses with fewer than four credits.)

The withdrawal deadline will be on the last day of classes (5/7) for undergraduate students.

See the section on [“Policies on Course Grades”](#) and this [site](#) for information on the modified S/F and P/F policy for undergraduate students in Spring 2020.

For AS&E graduate students, the withdrawal deadline will be the last day of classes (5/7). There are not changes to the pass/fail system for graduate students in Spring 2021.

Course Enrollment Caps

Instructors should continue to have course caps that reflect the number of available seats and normally expected size for the course. While it is true that a significant number of students may not be able to take the course in-person, there is no expectation that instructors should increase course size to allow additional students learning remotely into the course. In fact, given that some of these remote learners may have the opportunity to return to campus, instructors should remain attentive to the overall room capacity as adjusted for social distancing requirements.

Course Time Conflicts (Student Schedules)

Due to the increase in the number of online courses in Spring 2021, students may request instructors to approve time conflicts in the scheduled meetings of their course and other courses. Requests might be justified by the claim that the student can review materials asynchronously for the course and therefore is able to “double-up” by registering for multiple courses with overlapping meeting patterns.

AS&E strongly discourages instructors from approving these requests. This strategy of “doubling up” may lead to poor academic outcomes for students as they struggle with unanticipated difficulties with increased coursework. It can also upset the balance of the course as instructors attempt to meet the needs of an increased number of students within that course. Students should be encouraged to keep to a standard course load (i.e., 16-20 credits for undergraduates) without time conflicts as in past semesters.

Course Work Load

Student difficulty in managing the workload during the 2020 semesters has been a theme nationally and is also represented in student feedback from surveys in Spring 2020 and Fall 2020. Students hold a fairly widespread belief that student workloads have increased in the transition to online and other new course modalities. The reasons for this belief vary and at times overlap. Instructors may be assigning additional work or facing challenges in calibrating and communicating appropriate workload expectations to students in online courses, while students may be having difficulty transitioning to new instructional modalities with different demands. Students have also expressed difficulty with instructor and peer interactions that create barriers to the successful completion of assignments, especially group projects or assignments. In addition, students continue to face family situations, technological issues and personal health concerns (mental and physical) that pose challenges to successfully completing courses. Whatever the causes, it is important for instructors to recognize that workload concerns have contributed to mental health problems, morale issues, and feelings of burn-out among a significant number of students. Instructors are encouraged to proactively engage students in a discussion about workload in the course—including the purpose and estimated completion time of assignments—and to adjust expectations when students raise concerns deemed legitimate by the instructor.

Accommodations for Students with COVID-Related Illness

Instructors are encouraged to consider the use of incomplete contracts for students who miss significant class time and/or assessments as a result of COVID-related illness and associated complications. The College Center for Advising Services (CCAS) can serve as a resource for instructors exploring this option. **Instructors are also highly encouraged to use the Interim Grade Warning system for students experiencing difficulty in the course due to COVID-related illness (or other non-COVID) issues.** (The Registrar’s Office will communicate on use of this system several weeks into the semester.)

On occasion, students reach out initially to CCAS or the Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs office regarding these issues. Depending on the situation, these offices may request that instructors consider making accommodations for those students. The Dean's Office encourages instructors to support these requests whenever possible.

Please note that COVID-related illness will not generally be considered an official disability requiring accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This will typically be the case even if the student has an approved disability accommodation through Disability Resources. As a result,

students should be referred to CCAS or the Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs office. These offices will be able to assist students and refer students to the Office of Disability Resources in those rare cases that it might be appropriate.

Off-Campus Course Activities

University travel restrictions currently prohibit University-sponsored domestic and international travel. These have been updated at this [site](#) for Spring 2021. Per this policy, study abroad and faculty-led programs that require travel outside of the Rochester area have been cancelled.

The University has developed [guidance](#) for community-engaged learning that addresses broader issues of off-campus course activities. Instructors are expected to follow this guidance and should reach out to the Dean's Office with any questions (alan.czaplicki@rochester.edu). It is expected that approved course-related activities must follow University and state guidelines on social distancing and use of personal protective equipment (PPE) at all times.

Instructors should also follow any and all additional New York State regulations for COVID, including those specific to designated zones (yellow, orange, red). Information on the impact of these designations can be found at the University's COVID-19 Resource Center.

Course Evaluations for Spring 2021 Courses

AS&E will conduct course evaluations for Spring 2021 courses for instructors and teaching assistants. These will occur during the last weeks of courses at the end of the semester. As in Fall 2020, it is anticipated that the evaluations will include questions on student experience with remote learning and related pedagogical changes associated with COVID-19.

Course evaluations from Spring 2021 will be used for administrative activities, including Faculty Activity Reporting and promotion/tenure cases. Faculty will be given the opportunity to contextualize the results of these evaluations in relation to the continuing disruptions caused by COVID-19.

Allowed Research Activities for Graduate and Undergraduate Students

Undergraduate students will be able to register for independent research (395 and other research-related courses) and serve as research assistants in Spring 2021 under certain conditions. For research conducted in laboratories, the principal investigator or facility director must have received approval to open the lab and the student must follow all safety protocols (PPE, distancing) outlined in the reopening plan. If not previously submitted, the PI or facility director should add undergraduate research assistants to the "work shift" portion of the research plan and obtain approval from the relevant chair or director. For research outside labs, students must follow University social distancing and PPE guidelines for public spaces. Research conducted off-campus may have additional rules or regulations. Supervisors should review the information linked on [this section](#) and may contact the AS&E Dean's Office (alan.czaplicki@rochester.edu) with questions on specific situations.

Undergraduate students will continue to be able to use Research & Innovation Grants (RIGs) and Humanities RIGs (HRIGs) in Spring 2021 per the rules of these programs and subject to University and AS&E research guidelines.

Research is central to graduate education and graduate students will be able to conduct their research activities under University and AS&E guidelines.

Course Modality and Instructional Format

Course Modality

Courses will be offered in a hybrid (part in-person, part online) or completely online format in Spring 2021. Instructors are not allowed to teach in an exclusively on-campus, in-person format in Spring 2021.

If a course is in a hybrid format, in-person elements should be constructed such that students taking the course in-person should complete those elements (barring illness or other related issues) on campus to successfully complete the course. However, there should also be an online equivalent for in-person elements required for successful (100 percent) completion of the course by students learning remotely due to visa issues, health concerns, illness, or other factors. In other words, any in-person elements of the course for students on-campus must have an online “equivalent” for those learning remotely that meet the same learning objectives as the in-person activities.

See the section, [“Use of Incomplete Grades for Laboratory and Studio Courses,”](#) for those rare cases in which an online equivalent is not possible.

Coding of Courses in Spring 2021 in UR Student

Courses will be coded in one of two ways in UR Student in Spring 2021 – online or in-person. Other categories used in past semesters will not be used in Spring 2021. Coding may vary across the components of the course (e.g. lecture, labs, workshops, recitation) depending on the instructor’s decisions on management of these course components. Students are aware that they should check all components to determine whether the overall course is in-person or online, but instructors may add language to the course description or otherwise communicate this to students.

The course section will be coded “online” if this particular component of the course must be completed 100% in an online format. If there are “in-person” elements that are purely optional, meaning that they are not formally scheduled in UR student, not required to complete the course, and do not factor into grade calculation, then the course would still be considered “online.”

The course section will be coded “in-person” if there are any required components of the course that will take place “in-person” for students on campus. This coding would still be used even if some students will complete an online equivalent because of their own personal situation.

Distinct offerings of the same course by a different instructor (or the same instructor using different modalities) may be coded differently based on the instructional approach of that instructor.

Instructional Format

For courses with over 100 students, all lectures will be transitioned to an online format and must be recorded. Laboratories, workshops and recitations in these courses may be online or in-person as determined by the instructor. If in-person, the instructor must develop an online equivalent for students learning remotely that meets the same learning objectives as the in-person activities.

For courses with 50-99 students, lectures may be conducted in person or online and must be recorded. If lectures are in-person, students may need to be split across lecture sessions per week (depending on classroom size) to improve social distancing within the course. Instructors are expected to divide students appropriately into these groups and provide a schedule identifying when these groups should attend lectures in-person. (The [group function](#) in Blackboard can be useful in managing this process.) Laboratories, workshops and recitations in these courses may be online or in-person as determined by the instructor. If in-person, the instructor must develop an online equivalent for students learning remotely that meets the same learning objectives as the in-person activities.

For courses under 50 students, instructors may not need to divide students into groups depending on room size, but should still plan to record lectures and other course elements per the guidance above. In-person elements must have an online equivalent that meets the same learning objectives as the in-person activities.

For courses of all sizes, instructors may choose to stream lectures, discussions and other course activities synchronously via Zoom. However, instructors must record these course activities for asynchronous viewing by students, especially those learning in significantly different time zones.

Course Syllabi and Management

Generally Required and Recommended Syllabus Elements

Instructors are encouraged to review the [syllabi requirement page](#) for information about required and recommended syllabus elements.

Academic Honesty

Faculty should keep in mind that academic honesty rules apply to courses and work completed by all AS&E students—and that faculty are required to call attention to this policy, as well as any additional rules or expectations they may have set for their courses, during the first two weeks of the semester.

Collaboration and groupwork, authorized vs. unauthorized materials, and authorized vs. unauthorized use of materials are some of the areas in which faculty may wish to consider giving specific guidance beyond what is specified in the policy (or accompanying documentation such as proctoring with Zoom policies and guidance).

A copy of the [policy itself](#) can be found on the [academic honesty website](#), and a list of tips for encouraging honesty in online teaching and learning can be found on the [instructors' resources page](#) of the site as well. Further queries can be directed to either the Academic Honesty Liaison or the Chair of the Board on Academic Honesty (see the [contact us](#) page of the honesty website).

Suggested Syllabus Additions for Spring 2021

Classroom Behavior Requirements related to COVID-19:

Instructors should reiterate University policies regarding social distancing and masking in classroom settings in their syllabus and in their first class sessions. Sample syllabus language and procedures for responding to students who fail to comply with guidelines can be found [here](#).

Students are also expected to adhere to the principles outlined in the [UR COVID-19 Community Commitment](#).

Communication with Students:

Whether teaching on campus or remotely, instructors should specify how students can communicate with them, along with safe-interaction protocols. Specific information to include:

- Online only or online/in-person office hours (best practices from CETL can be found [here](#))
- Office hour locations for in-person and online meetings
- For in-person meetings, provide safe-interaction instructions (e.g., wear masks, follow waiting and social distance procedures in hallways or waiting rooms if another student is in the office, maintain 6ft distance, use sanitizer before entering)
- For virtual meetings, include technology platform (e.g., Zoom), access information (e.g., meeting ID), instructions for requesting a meeting, and instructions for accessing meeting room (e.g., you

will first enter a waiting room, and then I will let you in); additionally, when scheduling online office hours, instructors should be sensitive to time zone differences and might consider expanding their weekly standard meetings to account for these differences.

Recording of office hours by instructors is **not encouraged** due to student privacy concerns. Students may record one-on-one office hour sessions with the instructor for their own personal use. Instructors may provide written summaries of common questions asked during office hours when useful for other students.

Attendance policies:

Instructors may set course policies on attendance in lectures and other course activities. However, instructors should keep in mind that students on-campus may have legitimate concerns about their physical presence in class due to health concerns. It is important that instructors not create conditions in which students feel compelled to attend class when potentially harmful to themselves or others (e.g. when exhibiting symptoms of illness). Attendance policies must be written to allow for accommodations and/or exceptions in these circumstances. As in previous semesters, instructors must also accommodate students with disabilities related to attendance and remote learning per guidance from the Office of Disability Resources. (See [this link](#) for general information on accommodations and [this link](#) specific to online teaching.)

In their attendance policy, instructors should also specifically address the concerns of students who will be learning remotely in significantly different time zones. "Significantly different" can be defined as time zone differences that result in students needing to attend courses between 10 p.m.-7 a.m. local time. Instructors should factor in the ability of these students to meet attendance requirements (due to time zone issues or otherwise) when assigning attendance-related grades. This is particularly important when calculating attendance as part of the grade for an assignment or the course.

See section on "[Recording of Class Sessions and Use of Web Cameras](#)" for more information on requiring attendance at Zoom lectures through use of computer web cameras.

Student Notification of Recording:

University counsel has issued guidance that instructors should notify students that synchronous Zoom sessions are being recorded using one or more of the following methods:

- Syllabus statement (sample: "Please note, all online classes will be recorded.")
- Verbal statement at outset of first several class sessions
- One-time email to all students

Among these options, the best practice is to provide this notification in writing on the syllabus.

See the section, [Recording of Class Sessions and Use of Web Cameras](#), for additional information on this topic.

Etiquette in online formats:

Instructors should communicate expectations for online etiquette with students, including proper forms of address, use of appropriate language, common courtesy around asking or answering questions in online class settings (e.g. Zoom sessions or discussion boards), including when interacting with instructors, teaching assistants and peers, and other matters. Information on online etiquette ("netiquette") can be found on [the core rules of netiquette](#) page.

Student Mental Health Services:

Students may experience a range of mental health and physical health conditions that may negatively impact their academic performance and ability to participate in day-to-day activities. Instructors may consider adding the information below as a resource to students. Instructors can find additional information on the [responding to distressed or distressing students page](#).

The following confidential resources exist to help students:

- University Health Service: (585) 275-2662
- University Counseling Center: (585) 275-3113
- University Health Educator: (585) 273-5772
- RESTORE Sexual Assault Services 24-Hour Crisis Line: (585) 546-2777
- Title IX Office: titleix@rochester.edu
- Public Safety: (585) 273-3333.
- CARE Network: <https://www.rochester.edu/care>
- Mindful University Project: <https://www.rochester.edu/mindful>

Group Projects:

When constructing membership in group projects and other activities, instructors are highly encouraged to take into account time zone differences and/or actively consult with those groups to develop an appropriate plan for accommodating students who will be participating from a significantly different time zone.

Assignment of Textbooks

Students learning remotely in some countries may find it difficult to purchase textbooks due to lack of availability or excessive costs. Instructors should keep this potential constraint in mind when selecting textbooks for the course.

Instructors can also check the Rush Rhees Library [catalog](#) to determine if online versions of textbooks are available. Instructors may also want to consult the Library's comprehensive guide to [open education resources and services](#), which can assist with finding course materials.

Opportunities for Engagement Inside and Outside of Class

Many students reported that it was difficult for them to get to know other students in their classes during the Fall 2020 semester, particularly for those students studying remotely. This led to feelings of isolation and poor class attendance for many students. Instructors are encouraged to create opportunities for students to form connections with each other so that they can identify study partners,

schedule informal study groups (both virtual and in person) and effectively utilize course TAs. If students “disappear” from classes and are not responsive to emails, instructors are encouraged to submit a CARE referral so that students can be contacted and offered support.

Accessibility and Closed Captioning of Lectures and Other Course-Related Activities

As a best practice, AS&E encourages all instructors to caption materials, including recorded lectures, when possible. Captioning resources and best practices for developing inclusive courses can be found on the Office of Disability Resources' webpage on [digital accessibility](#). Computer-generated captioning is available for videos uploaded through [Panopto](#) but should be manually added and edited for accuracy.

Instructors of students with disabilities who require captioned media as an accommodation will be notified via a student accommodation letter sent from the Office of Disability Resources. For instructors of students who require this accommodation, support for captioning and transcription will be available through the Office of Disability Resources.

Updates to the Course Syllabus Over the Semester

Instructors should keep their syllabi up-to-date over the course of the semester, and notify students when an updated version is available. Syllabi should reflect current assumptions about course content, assignments, and grading, especially if circumstances surrounding the course change. Students often depend on syllabi as the "document of record" to understand the instructor's current expectations for the course. Other course materials updated over the semester should also be easily accessible to students, and students should be instructed on how to find these materials.

Credit and Contact Hours

General Policy

Courses in Spring 2021 will continue to follow the [AS&E Credit Hour Policy](#). This policy mandates one hour of direct instruction and two hours of out-of-class activities (three hours total) per week per credit hour. For example, a four-credit hour course would have four hours of instruction and eight hours of out-of-class activity per week, or 12 hours total per week, for the entirety of the semester. Direct instruction includes in-person or recorded lectures or discussions, or any other activity in which the instructor is directly engaged in teaching students. Asynchronous recordings also constitute direct instruction. Out-of-class activities include course reading, papers, problem sets, or other associated "homework" for the course. It may also include group projects or field trips.

There are no differences in credit hour requirements for students on-campus or learning remotely. Instructors may provide different assignments or activities for students on-campus vs. those learning remotely if there is a pedagogical reason or logistical barrier (i.e. students learning remotely need access to campus to complete the activity) for doing so. These assignments should be equivalent as much as possible and have the same learning objectives. For the purposes of this policy, equivalence would be defined as having similar scope and focus, having a comparable difficulty level, and requiring roughly the same amount of time and effort for the average student to complete.

As noted in the [academic calendar and instruction section](#), instructors are expected to adhere to contact hour requirements for the entire semester.

Management of Independent Studies, Independent Research, and Reading Courses

As in previous semesters, instructors should adhere to the credit hour policy as regards independent studies, independent research, reading/research courses (graduate), and supervised teaching. Instructors can find information in the [AS&E Credit Hour Policy](#). Based on the credit hour policy, this corresponds to the one hour of in-person and two hours of out-of-class activities per week for 15 weeks in the credit hour policy ($45 = (1+2) * 15$). The general rule of thumb for is that students should be expected to complete 45 hours of work *per credit* over the course of the semester.

Designation of credit hours for these courses should be based on an assessment of the actual work expected to be completed by the student in relation to these requirements.

Instructors and students have flexibility to conduct individual meetings either virtually or in person.

Policies on Examinations and Other Assessments

The best strategy for examinations and assessments will vary depending on the discipline, the learning objectives of the course, and the role of the course within the program of study. Instructors should keep in mind student learning conditions (both in-person and remote) in Spring 2021 when designing assessments.

In courses typically offering one or two large exams as a significant portion of the course grade, faculty are encouraged (1) to create multiple versions of the same exam in order to reduce opportunities for academic dishonesty (and to be able to more quickly detect any dishonesty that does occur), and (2) to consider implementing take-home exams in order to reduce some of the stress and pressure that can contribute to academic dishonesty. This structure of assessment will allow faculty to assess student learning more effectively across any disruptions in the learning environment. It will also allow students arriving late or learning remotely across widely diverse environments to adjust to course expectations. While even these methods have some drawbacks and need to be adjusted to the structure of assessment within a specific academic discipline, they can benefit students and instructors when used strategically.

Instructors are also expected to provide clear instructions and guidance on exams and other assessments. These should be of equivalent quality and clarity for students in-person or learning remotely, including clarifying questions during the exam or other assessment. Instructors should be especially attentive to communicating this information in a timely fashion to students working remotely.

Information about course pedagogy in online and hybrid formats is available on the [resources for teaching online page](#) from CETL, including information about specific kinds of assessments such as tests, presentations, and projects.

Timing of Mid-Term Exams

Mid-term exams are expected to take place during normal class times when in-person or synchronously online. Exams should not exceed the scheduled time for the class, since this may cause conflicts with student attendance in other courses. Instructors may schedule exams outside normal class times, but must determine a suitable time with students and accommodate any student conflicts with exams or class sessions in other courses.

Asynchronous and open-book exams should be scheduled to be submitted during normal class sessions or a suitable time that does not create conflicts with student attendance in other courses.

Common Exam Times

The College will continue to offer a common exam period for highly subscribed introductory courses in Spring 2021. The College Center for Advising Services (CCAS) has reviewed the common exam schedule and has added Friday dates to maximize scheduling of exams. This reflects the desire of some instructors to offer more frequent, "lower stakes" exams to students.

Instructors may also provide evening exam hours for students in significantly different time zones. This should be managed at the level of the department and/or individual instructor.

Reading Period

AS&E will have a reading period in Spring 2021. As in past semesters, this period may not be used for final exams, papers, projects, or presentations. Students use this period to prepare for their finals. Instructors should contact the Dean's Office if they have concerns.

Final Exam Period

Instructors will be expected to generally adhere to the final exam schedule when giving remote final exams. (Schedules are posted on the [Registrar's Office final examinations page](#).) As in previous semesters, no cumulative assessments of any type may be given during reading week or the final week of classes (5/3-5/10). Instructors should clearly explain the nature of the final exam and rules associated with taking the exam in the syllabus. Instructors should also discuss plans for the final exam early in the semester.

For "in-class exams," instructors should use the official time and time duration on the exam schedule for students on-campus or in similar time zones. Instructors may offer a second exam time for students in significantly different time zones, accommodating scheduling conflicts as they arise.

For open-book exams, instructors should use the official exam date as the completion time for the exam. For example, if the instructor gives the students 24 hours to complete an exam, the end of that 24-hour period should be the end of the official exam period for the course.

Equivalence Between In-Person and Remote Exams

Faculty are expected to construct exams and other assessments of equivalent range and difficulty of material, and that assess the same learning objectives, for students on-campus and learning remotely. Exam deadlines may be adjusted to allow for time zone differences for students learning remotely, but with attention to not give either set of students (in-person or remote) an unfair advantage in the amount of time to complete the exam or advanced knowledge of exam content.

If students on-campus and learning remotely are given different types of exams, the exams should assess for the same learning objectives or the instructor should make an adjustment in how overall course grades are calculated. This adjustment should be clearly articulated and announced early in the semester with reminders before the exam(s).

Instructors may give online exams for students learning remotely and in-person exams for those students physically attending the course. Instructors may also decide to offer exams online for all students regardless of whether learning remotely or physically present.

Instructors are encouraged to take the same approach to proctoring for in-person and online exams. However, instructors have flexibility deciding to use proctoring in online exams versus in-person exams as long as they ensure that students meet expectations for academic honesty. If instructors decide to use online proctoring, they must follow the guidelines on consistency in the application of proctoring as outlined in this document - [proctoring with Zoom policies and guidance](#). (See section on "Uniform Application of Zoom Proctoring.")

Online Synchronous and/or Timed Exams

Instructors should be aware that one of the most common sources of student discontent in Spring 2020 and Fall 2020 was the use of online synchronous and/or timed tests. Discontent resulted from managing the pressure of the exam in a context in which students faced complicated (and somewhat variable) testing environments and technological issues. Students reported leaving exams feeling that these factors inhibited their ability to show their true mastery of course content. Strong preference was given for asynchronous and take-home exams due to the flexibility these formats provided to students in navigating those circumstances.

Instructors are strongly encouraged to keep this student feedback in mind when constructing exams for Spring 2021. Many students will be on-campus, but it is expected that some students will be learning remotely in each course. Instructors will need to balance the needs of both populations of students when giving exams to ensure fairness in testing and grading. If offering synchronous exams, instructors should keep in mind the situation of students in significantly different time zones and provide alternative testing times for these students.

Policies on Course Grades

Courses Used for Curricular Elements (Major, Minor, Cluster)

AS&E will maintain current grading policies for Spring 2021 with the one exception of the modified S/F policy (see below and the [following section](#) for more information). See section on "[Incompletes from spring 2020 and S/F policy](#)" for guidance on the S/F policy in Spring 2020.

For undergraduates, courses counting towards majors, minors and the primary writing requirement must be taken for a letter grade. If the student initially completed the course S/F, this grade will need to be uncovered before graduation per College rules. More information on the policy can be found on the [satisfactory/fail \(S/F\) option page](#).

For clusters, the College has instituted a modified satisfactory/fail policy for Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 that enables students to use one course with a "satisfactory" grade taken in Fall 2020 or Spring 2021 to meet the requirements of a cluster. More information on the policy can be found at this [link](#).

Satisfactory/Fail (S/F) and Pass/Fail (P/F) for Fall 2020 and Spring 2021

For undergraduate students, the College has instituted a modified satisfactory/fail policy for Fall 2020 and Spring 2021. The policy allows students an extended time period to select the satisfactory/fail option, allows two courses to be selected under this option (as opposed to the existing policy of one), and enables students to use one course with a "satisfactory" grade taken in Fall 2020 or Spring 2021 to meet the requirements of a cluster. More information on the policy can be found at this [link](#). General information on the policy can be found on the [satisfactory/fail \(S/F\) option page](#).

As in past semesters, students are not eligible to declare S/F in courses where they have been found responsible for violating the Academic Honesty Policy, or if they have an unresolved academic honesty case pending.

For graduate students, students will not be able to select P/F as a grading option. However, instructors can choose to make a course into a P/F course according to existing policy. Instructors are reminded that all graduate students in a course section must be graded according to the same scheme (e.g. letter or P/F)

Incompletes from Spring 2020 and S/F policy

The modified S/F policy from spring 2020 will apply to all courses being completed as a result of a "N" grade or incomplete ("I") contract. The Registrar's Office will use the option selected by the students in spring 2020 when entering grades. Students will not be able to change this selection. Instructors may request information on the student's grading basis from the Registrar's Office or simply provide a letter grade (which will be converted if the student chose S/F).

Use of Incomplete Grades for Laboratory and Studio Courses

Instructors should provide online equivalents to laboratory, studio or other "hands-on" elements of their course whenever possible. These equivalents should meet the same learning objectives as the in-

person version. However, in some rare cases pedagogically valuable equivalents will not be possible and students will have to "make up" these experiences through department-provided opportunities in subsequent semesters. In these cases, students should be given an "incomplete" grade in the course that will be resolved upon completion of the "make-up" activity.

Technology Requirements for Spring 2021 Courses

Minimum Technological Requirements for Spring 2021 Courses

For online courses and online elements of hybrid courses, instructors must provide information to students on the minimum quality of internet access and computing necessary for course activities, including download/upload of material, internet streaming, video recording, scanning and/or photos, or other needs.

In general, for a “standard” online course, students will need a laptop with a webcam, 8GB of memory and 256GB of local storage. Standard would be defined in this case as requiring the student to use Blackboard, library resources, and the web (to access journals, articles, etc.), to have the ability to watch Zoom lectures (synchronously and asynchronously), and potentially be available for use with Zoom proctoring.

Courses using specialized software and/or services may have additional requirements. Instructors must make these clear to students on the syllabus and in their initial class sessions.

Non-supported Course Software and Teaching Tools

The College recognizes that many different educational technologies and teaching tools are available to instructors. University IT has an active program to review security and privacy issues for software and works with UR Counsel to evaluate potential liability around data breaches. Software and services that satisfy University IT’s criteria in these areas are considered “supported” and are available for instructor use.

The College actively discourages instructors from using any non-supported software or teaching tools. In particular, instructors must not use non-supported software when the following conditions apply:

- The software has not been vetted by AS&E IT and University IT and passed the necessary Information Security Program requirements.
- The software imposes additional costs on students outside those collected by the University bookstore. Up-front course costs processed by the bookstore ensure that these costs can be covered by financial aid.

Available Course Technologies

Thematic lists of supported software and teaching tools can be found at the following webpages:

- [University IT’s teaching and learning page](#)
- [University IT’s software page](#)
- [University IT’s blackboard online discussions page](#)
- [IT resources’ learning management page](#)
- [CETL’s education technology tools page](#)

Computing software currently licensed for student use in AS&E computer labs and remote access to AS&E computer labs can be found at:

- [ECM's windows software page](#)

Instructors may contact Jason Wagner (jason.wagner@rochester.edu) for questions on instructional software and to discuss the possibilities and process for approving new software.

Recording of Class Sessions and Use of Web Cameras

Course Elements Requiring Recording

All formal course elements must be recorded on Zoom and uploaded for the use of students learning remotely, except in the case of class discussions on politically charged or sensitive topics. In this case, instructors should make student aware that this information may not be available for the duration of the course (or longer) and clearly communicate when this material will be removed. Instructors should also carefully consider when such material should be assessed by examinations or other means, given reduced access. See this [site](#) for more information.

This policy applies to lectures, recitations and discussion sections, labs, PLTL Workshops, etc. It is recommended that instructors record optional sessions, such as instructor-led exam review sessions, if offered at times that will be difficult for students learning remotely to attend. Office hours are not subject to this requirement.

For tutorials on how to record in Zoom and upload into Panopto, please see the following video tutorials: [AS&E tutorials](#) and [Central IT tutorials](#).

Student Notification of Recording

University counsel has issued guidance that instructors should notify students that synchronous Zoom sessions are being recorded using one or more of the following methods:

- Syllabus statement (sample: “Please note, all online classes will be recorded.”)
- Verbal statement at outset of first several class sessions
- One-time email to all students

Among these options, the best practice is to provide this notification in writing on the syllabus.

Student Engagement and Use of Cameras in Lectures and Other Class Activities

Instructors are allowed to mandate that students learning remotely turn on their cameras during lectures and other class activities. However, instructors should be aware of the complexities associated with such a request before instituting as a policy.

Instructors should be aware that students may experience technical difficulties when turning on cameras, especially the need to turn off the camera to stabilize poor internet quality on Zoom calls. Within the educational community, instructors have also noted that there may be personal and social dynamics associated with students showing their background (i.e. living/working conditions). Students may feel distracted or uncomfortable with allowing the instructor and fellow students “into their world” in this way.

On the other hand, instructors have also noted the importance of virtual face-to-face interaction in class sessions, particularly in relation to building a community of learners in the classroom. These interactions can be seen as mitigating some of the “transactional” and impersonal aspects of distance education, generating more positive educational outcomes. Virtual backgrounds or still photos on Zoom can

potentially be used to generate these interactions while also respecting student privacy, provided there are no technological issues.

Each instructor will need to decide how to balance these competing prerogatives in their course, but should do so without penalizing students who have technological barriers to turning on their cameras. Instructors should also keep in mind that it may be difficult to independently verify such barriers when constructing policies. In cases where barriers appear to be significant, students should be referred to the College Center for Advising Services to discuss their circumstances. Upon consultation with the student, and other relevant offices, CCAS may provide the instructor with a letter requesting leniency in the use of their camera.

Captioning of Video Recordings

See section on "[Accessibility and Close Captioning of Lectures and Other Course-Related Activities](#)" for information on this topic.

Deletion of Video Recordings

Video recordings may be removed only once every student in the course has a resolved final grade, including the final resolution of all N and I grades. For most courses, this will be a minimum of six months and may be longer depending on the nature of the incompletes in the course (with the possible exception of class session recordings of politically charged or sensitive conversations per section above on "[Course Elements Requiring Recording](#)").