

Remote Instruction - Start Here

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Wharton Faculty are all transitioning to remote instruction for the rest of the semester, including the final exam period. Instructors will have to deliver their course from a location off-campus (i.e., standing in an empty classroom, using classroom tech, is not an option).

This document has been prepared to be your starting place for planning this transition. It will be updated as we learn more.

The Bare Essentials

1. **Decide how you want to deliver your course online.** This document describes some options, and links to other resources. Don't try to do too much, especially at first. Think about what is most essential to you, from both a content and delivery standpoint.
2. **Communicate your plans to students as soon as possible** Update your syllabus and send a Canvas announcement or email before your next class session.
3. **Install the BlueJeans video meeting app.** Make sure to test the app with a colleague or by following the instructions in the "Test Your Equipment" section of this article. Even if you choose not to do real-time (synchronous) teaching, you may wish to do virtual office hours or discussion sessions. Research on online teaching finds that seeing the professor's face makes a significant difference for student engagement.
4. **Come up with a detailed plan for your first class session.** Think about backup options if something goes wrong (especially if you choose synchronous delivery). Have a plan to evaluate and refine your approach after the initial experience. Ask students to be understanding, and be understanding of them as well.

How You Teach

Wharton faculty teach using a wide variety of methods. Our courses range very significantly in size, and are taught to multiple distinct student populations. There is no ideal way to teach our students in-person, and there is not an ideal way to teach online. Use your judgment as an educator to create the best possible experience for your students under these difficult conditions.

The first decision you'll have to make is if you want to hold your class online in **real-time via a Virtual Meeting** (synchronous), if you're going to do something like record a lecture and have students watch on their own time and then gather online to discuss (asynchronous), or a combination of both.

Synchronous Teaching

We believe the easiest route is to choose the synchronous/live option. This may seem counter-intuitive, but here are the supporting reasons:

- Teaching synchronously will likely result in the fewest changes for both yourself and your students. It uses many of the same skills you're honed as an in-person lecturer and given the speed at which you'll need to

transition to remote instruction it seems unwise to give up the advantage those skills confer.

- Wharton Computing has implemented a video meeting tool, **BlueJeans**, which is integrated with Canvas. Sessions will be recorded for students who cannot attend live or who want to refer back to the session.
- Students already have the time in their schedule dedicated to your class session. Furthermore, a sense of routine is valuable.

Asynchronous Teaching

The remainder of this document focuses on *synchronous delivery*. (That said, we recognize that there are likely going to be unforeseen issues that could disrupt synchronous classes, such as technological compatibility issues, time delays, poor connections, and surprise interruptions at home), but if you're thinking of going with asynchronous teaching click "Read More" for some things to consider.

Connecting with Students - Updated Syllabus and More

Reach out to your students by email and/or **Canvas announcements** as soon as possible to explain your plans for the class. We strongly recommend that you communicate these changes using whatever means you currently use to communicate with your students. If you don't already use Announcements in Canvas, we encourage you to do so and also post an announcement, which will become a permanent part of your Canvas site that students will be able to easily locate.

Create and post an updated syllabus, with adjusted dates and policies. It would be helpful to have a section in the syllabus dedicated to the changes that are due to switching online. Be particularly specific about what changes and what remains the same regarding requirements (what is due, when it is due, how it will be submitted), classroom meeting times, and assessments.

It would be a good idea to ask students before the class what time zone they are in, and whether they have reliable internet access available. Some students may also have medical or family situations that prevent them from participating during the normal class period. This may influence your decision about synchronous vs. asynchronous teaching, although keep in mind that recordings will be available. One option is to create a shared document (e.g. Google spreadsheet) for students to fill out prior to the class or use a Canvas quiz/survey.

Install the BlueJeans app

Wharton's **Virtual Meeting service** is powered by **BlueJeans**. **We recommend that you download the native application for the device that you plan to use for teaching** as the mobile and browser apps lack key functionality (**this table** details what is available in each app).

Before your class starts you should also install the app on a mobile device, just in case your computer isn't working as expected. The app is available for both **iOS** and **Android devices**.

Test your Equipment

Test all of your equipment well before your class starts. Things you should have charged/plugged into your computer include:

- Your laptop (if you're using one).
- A Webcam.

- A Microphone and headphones or a headset (USB or Bluetooth both work, though a wired connection will be less fiddly).

Once you've confirmed that all of your equipment is charged and properly connected it is time to make a test call. Clicking on bluejeans.com/111 will connect you to a Virtual meeting where you can "talk to the parrot," which is BlueJean's test call. You'll be connected to a video call with a parrot. Say something into your microphone and the beret wearing parrot will repeat it back to you. If you don't hear anything, or don't see your video, try these [troubleshooting steps](#).

The BlueJeans app is resource intensive. Be sure to plug in your laptop (if you're using one) and quit any programs you won't be using to teach.

Set Up a BlueJeans session via Canvas

Wharton supports using a combination of Virtual Meetings and Canvas for Remote Instruction. When combined these tools allow you to:

- Notify students of classes using a tool they are familiar with.
- Automatically record and post videos to your Canvas room.
- Automatically restrict access to the class video to enrolled students.
- Leverage existing on staff expertise for support of both tools.

Please refer to "[Virtual Meetings for Instruction](#)" for details on how to set this up for your courses.

All courses now have Canvas sites set up for them.

Practice your first Virtual Meeting in Advance

From your Canvas course you can create a "practice" virtual meeting with only yourself invited ([following these instructions](#)). You can record a portion of your session to familiarize yourself with the controls. You can later view the video from the practice session to see what you produced and make any adjustments to your physical space needed.

For an even better practice, include one or more of your TAs in the session. They can provide feedback from the student perspective.

Delivering a Class Session

To conduct your class you will create a virtual meeting in BlueJeans via Canvas [following these instructions](#).

Students will be able to see you via your device's camera. Be aware of your physical space – be sure that you are OK with everything students see behind you and minimize distractions around you (e.g., noises, talking, people moving about). Click "Read more" for some best practices to ensure your session goes smoothly .

Be Present for Students

Throughout the course, it is critical for students to feel that you are present and engaged with the course delivery. Some ways to do this:

- Post **Canvas announcements** frequently about what is happening and what will happen in the course.
- Respond to the class **discussion boards**.
- Respond in a timely manner to emails.
- Hold office hour sessions. You will set these up like a class session, **using Virtual Meetings**. These meetings do not need to be recorded, and signups can be handled via the **Appointment Groups** feature of Canvas.

Student Engagement

Engagement can be challenging in an online teaching environment. Think about ways to break up your lectures frequently, even if just to solicit questions on the chat.

Use polls to increase engagement

A simple way to increase engagement is to interrupt a lecture with a request for students to provide their own opinion or information. It is easy to quickly collect this information using **PollEverywhere**. For example, consider giving students some time to work through an example and to report their responses. This allows you to explain the correct method and to clarify incorrect methods.

Create the polls ahead of time and either add them to your slides, as you normally would, or share the link via chat with your students when appropriate.

Use breakout rooms to increase engagement

Many classes have students break up into small groups to do work and then report back to the larger class. You can absolutely do this during the Remote Instruction period using Virtual Meetings, though our recommendation for how you accomplish this varies depending on how the groups are formed:

- Randomly assigned groups: Using the Virtual Meetings breakout room functionality works for this scenario, though we have found the feature to be less than stable in practice. More details about that can be **found here**.
- Pre-existing/assigned groups: For 2 person groups we suggest the students decide how they would like to connect on their own. For larger groups each group can designate a meeting organizer and have them invite only their group members to a separate Virtual Meeting.

For the reasoning behind this recommendation check out **Breakout Room** section of the **Virtual Meetings for Instruction** article.

Attendance/Participation

Given the circumstances, if you grade attendance or participation we encourage you to reconsider how these are graded or even whether they are graded.

Virtual Meetings doesn't have a built-in attendance feature. If you want to keep track of who attended a session, you could ask students to type something into a chat or use **PollEverywhere**. Keep in mind that some students may be unable to participate live due to time zone differences, internet connection limitations, coronavirus-related restrictions, and family or personal medical emergencies.

Rather than tracking participation via comments or questions during a session, consider asking students to participate in a discussion board. A widespread participation requirement for online courses is to ask each student to submit a discussion board post and comment on two other students' posts.

Grades

Students will be naturally anxious about how they will be graded, especially undergraduates. As already mentioned, you should be as clear as possible in your syllabus with respect to how grading will change and how it remains the same. Reiterate those policies in subsequent announcements and assessments.

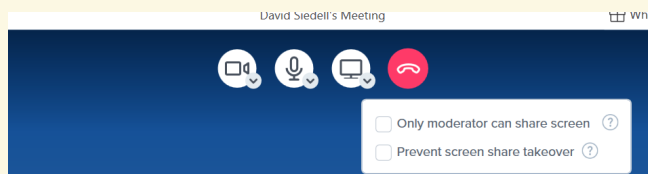
Screensharing

A key component of any Virtual Meeting is screensharing. You can share a PowerPoint presentation, a website, a document, or another other application with your students using Screensharing.

This article covers the ins and out of the feature but a few things to be aware of:

- If you share your Desktop all participants will see whatever applications and documents you have open. Before class make sure to clear your desktop of anything you don't want people to see.
- If you plan on playing a video for class use the **Upload & Share Video feature** of the BlueJeans desktop app. If you simply play a video via screensharing it will be choppy and nearly unwatchable. Sharing YouTube links also works.
- Disable incoming email/text and other app notifications if you're sharing your entire screen.

Click dropdown arrow on the screenshare icon for more controls → only allow moderators to share screen and/or prevent screenshare takeover



When you're sharing your screen during a Virtual Meeting you'll no longer be able to see the chat window. We recommend joining the Virtual Meeting with a secondary device (a smartphone or tablet) and monitor the chat from that device. Be sure to mute the audio/video on the secondary device!

For the best experience on a tablet or smartphone download the **BlueJeans app**.

Annotation

If you annotate your PowerPoint during class this can be replicated in Virtual Meetings:

- If you're already screensharing in a Virtual Meeting click the blue "Annotate" button at the top of the shared screen.
- If you aren't screensharing click the "Apps" in the BlueJeans app and then click "Start" on Annotate. You'll then select what screen you'd like to share (annotating only works if you're sharing a screen) and then starts the annotation tool.

You can draw and drop text on the screen with this feature.

Annotations disappear when you select "Stop Annotation."

Whiteboard

Virtual Meetings does include a Whiteboard app that you can use to draw formulas and other figures, though it does have some limitations:

- Only a single whiteboard, controlled by one person, can be shown at a time. If someone else launches a whiteboard it replaces the current whiteboard along with its contents. A warning does appear before this happens, but there is no way to disable someone from doing this.
- Drawing on a whiteboard with a mouse or trackpad isn't a great experience. If you plan to use the Virtual Meeting whiteboard heavily consider joining the Virtual Meeting on tablet using the BlueJeans app. You can then share your tablet's screen ([iOS instructions](#) | [Android instructions](#)) as launch a drawing app on the tablet which will be shared to the meeting.

The only way to save the contents of a BlueJeans whiteboard (perhaps to share it with students) is to take a screenshot ([OS X instructions](#) | [Windows 10 instructions](#)). If you plan to share whiteboard contents with your students on a regular basis we recommend using a dedicated application like Word or Google Docs and sharing those files with your students.

For fans of low tech solutions you can also purchase a small white board and display it somewhere within your webcam's field of vision. HD webcams offer up high enough resolution that your students should have little problem seeing what you're writing as long as you write with large letters and use a contrasting color of dry erase pen.

If you opt for the physical whiteboard be sure to run a test first to make sure there's not any kind of glare which could make it difficult to see.

Student Presentations

For more information about the options for online presentations, visit [this article](#).

Teaching Assistants

Your TAs can continue to hold office hours via Virtual Meetings and they will continue to be paid for their time.

Office Hours

It is highly recommended that you hold office hours via Virtual Meetings. We recommend you set these up as one on one Virtual Meetings [scheduled outside of Canvas](#). These meetings do not need to be recorded, and signups can be handled via the [Appointment Groups](#) feature of Canvas.

Guest speakers

It is still possible to have guest speakers. They will join a Virtual Meetings session and students can interact with the speaker via the chat (and possibly with a moderator, who can be the professor). Virtual Meetings is limited to 200 persons.

Final exam

The final exam period schedule is unchanged. If you were planning to hold a final exam, you can/should continue to do so. Final exams can be administered via Canvas. Additional information regarding final exam procedures will be posted soon.

- See [this article](#) for information on managing remote exams.

FAQ

More answers can be found in the [Virtual Meetings FAQ article](#).

Will I be able to get instructional support during my class session?

Yes! We are still working out the details, but Wharton Computing will be available to support your use of Virtual Meetings and Canvas.

What happens if during my session BlueJeans “hangs” or “locks up”?

You can always reconnect to a meeting via the same device or another device.

It seems that a student’s mic is live and we are hearing distracting sounds. What should I do?

Having to set your meeting to "[Mute Participants on Entry](#)" will cut down on this. You can ask people to mute themselves by pressing the "M" key and moderators can [mute participants](#) during a meeting.

Questions?

For additional help and support:

- See our [Virtual Meetings FAQ](#)
 - Contact your [academic support representative](#)
 - Check out the [BlueJeans Knowledge Base](#)
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