



ACADEMIC CONTINUITY PLAN

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this plan is to provide guidance to LSU faculty and academic administration on the continuation of the university's academic mission during campus closures when classes are in session. Similarly, guidance is given to faculty teaching online when they may have students in other parts of the world affected by a widespread emergency situation. This plan describes communication about campus closures and suggests a wide variety of options faculty have to deliver their course content and continue their research. An important objective is to avoid the necessity for make-up classes on weekends or during planned breaks.

B. BACKGROUND

LSU Policy Statement 45 (PS 45) defines the expected amount of engaged learning time required for awarding course credit. Should there be an interruption to the Academic Calendar due to unavoidable circumstances, guidelines provided in LSU Policy Statement 117 (PS 117) outline the make-up solution. A single day of interruption per semester requires no action. However, additional days of interruption require LSU to make up all of the missed days via Saturday classes or cancel all or parts of Spring or Fall break.

With the availability and sophistication of instructional technology, along with the possibility of meaningful independent work that could be completed outside of class, this plan provides flexibility for LSU to pivot to alternative forms of instruction rather than cancel classes and schedule make-up classes on weekends or during breaks.

C. POTENTIAL INCIDENTS THAT COULD LEAD TO CAMPUS CLOSURE

The following incidents are a list of possibilities that could result in a campus-wide or partial campus closure. This is not an exhaustive list, and some of these incidents may not result in campus-wide closure. Every potential closure of campus is determined on a case-by-case basis by university leadership, who will consider the possible risks for all faculty, staff, and students as well as impacts to campus before deciding on whether a closure will occur.

1. Impending inclement weather, for example:
 - a. Hurricane or other tropical weather
 - b. Freezing temperatures or severe winter weather
2. Power outages on campus
3. Building closure or maintenance

D. COMMUNICATIONS

LSU will communicate campus closures with as much advanced notice as possible. The decision to close the university is made by the LSU President with input from the two Executive Vice Presidents, the Associate Vice President for Campus Safety, Preparedness & Emergency Response, and other appropriate unit leaders. Among other considerations, the decision is made on the likely timing and severity of the event itself, State Department closures, K-12 school closures, potential for power outages, and other information that suggests the level of impact on the campus and safety of our community of employees and students.

Communications to the campus community before, during, and after these events will be led by the Office of Marketing and Communications. Instructions will be sent via broadcast emergency text messages and e-mail, social media, and on the LSU home page.

The Office of Academic Affairs (OAA) will utilize email to communicate with faculty about moving to alternative formats of instruction. When possible, OAA will give advance warning that contingency plans may be needed in order to give faculty adequate time to prepare. However, faculty should make remote instruction contingency plans in advance of each semester. The fundamentals of contingency plans for alternative instruction – e.g., where to get information on alternative instruction – should be provided in the class syllabus. Faculty are responsible for communicating the course continuity plan to their students and teaching assistants before, during, and after closure.

E. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INSTRUCTIONAL CONTINUITY

For emergency preparedness purposes, instructors of record are responsible for ensuring continuity of instruction prior to and following campus closures. All course syllabi should include language on emergency preparedness. Please see below for a template syllabus statement that may be used:

"In the event of a campus-wide closure, this course may transition to an alternative form of instruction. I will notify you by [e-mail, Moodle announcement] as soon as possible of the format our course will take. For example, the class may be held via Zoom and recorded for those unable to attend, or I will provide a lesson online that you can do asynchronously, or we may cover content at a different pace or schedule. If the emergency closure impacts scheduled tests, I will make alternative arrangements as soon as possible. If alternative formats are not available due to widespread loss of power and/or internet or other extenuating circumstances, the University may schedule makeup days per Policy Statement 117."

In the case that labs, performances, events, and/or exhibits linked to courses are canceled, individual colleges will implement their own makeup policies. In the event of a major storm with sufficient notice, OAA will remind faculty of the options available to ensure instructional continuity.

Teaching assistants (TA) should be briefed on their responsibilities for individual courses in the event of an emergency. Faculty can request assistance from their TA but must accommodate the TA should they have difficulties due to incident-related reasons.

F. STUDENT ABSENCES

[LSU Policy Statement 22](#) (PS 22) addresses student absences, which includes hazardous weather conditions or effects, as a valid reason for absence. Faculty should exercise reasonable flexibility in accommodating students who choose to evacuate earlier for a tropical storm or hurricane that has been projected to threaten Baton Rouge, regardless of the timelines and decisions made by the City of Baton Rouge or Louisiana State University, by providing opportunities for makeup/alternative assignments or class meetings. The same reasonable flexibility needs to be extended to students' return to campus following an event's (i.e., hurricane) impact.

Faculty teaching courses through LSU Online may find the need to be flexible with deadlines for students in their class who are in other parts of the world involved in weather or emergency events. Students are also expected to exercise reasonable flexibility with faculty both pre-event and post-event, as some might evacuate earlier and/or return more slowly than others.

G. ALTERNATE FORMS FOR COURSE MANAGEMENT

Faculty have the discretion to choose the best method to deliver content in an alternate format. In consultation with their department chair, faculty should choose what will be pedagogically most successful for the alternative instruction for their class, including holding the regularly scheduled class sessions via Zoom and/or making learning materials available in Moodle. Faculty should follow college guidelines for labs and special events. Please note that any costs associated with the selected technology options will be the responsibility of the department (e.g., webcam, microphone, software).

1. Have alternative assignments prepared in advance
2. Prepare detailed outlines, lecture notes, or presentations for dissemination
3. Consider ways in which your curriculum could be adjusted
4. Test technology from home in advance
5. Keep in mind that power outages or internet interruptions on campus and elsewhere may impact you and your students' ability to engage online

Please see below for a non-exhaustive list of instructional continuity options:

1. ASSIGN A NEW INDEPENDENT ASSIGNMENT

- a. Create an independent assignment, reading, or activity relevant to the class that can be completed asynchronously and off campus
- b. Notify students of the change and update the syllabus
- c. It is recommended students be given ample time (e.g. 2 - 3 weeks) to complete the assignment.

2. OFFER AN ASYNCHRONOUS CLASS SESSION

- a. Record a class lecture on Zoom for students to watch asynchronously
- b. Class lecture could be a video of the faculty member giving the lecture, a PowerPoint aid for the lecture with a voice-over by the faculty member, or a combination of the two
- c. A link to this recording can be sent to students for future viewing
- d. It is recommended students be given ample time (e.g. 2-3 weeks) to complete the assignment of watching the lecture

3. USE AN LSU VIRTUAL PLATFORM TO HOLD CLASSES

- a. This option should be selected only in cases where widespread power and network outages are not anticipated
- b. Classes can be held synchronously during the normal class time period. Students and faculty will need access to a device with Wi-Fi, the Zoom app, a microphone, and a camera
- c. When this option is used, the class should be recorded

4. ASSIGN INCOMPLETES

- a. Campus closures or severe weather impacting online students in other parts of the country may happen at a time in the semester that will make it difficult to make up work or take an exam before the last date of the course.
- b. Faculty members have the option of assigning an incomplete to affected students
- c. See General Catalog for instructions

5. ADJUST DUE DATES

- a. Reorganize material, pace of instruction, and/or adjust assignments and due dates to accommodate for lost class time
- b. Revise the syllabus

H. ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATIONS

An abrupt change of modality can have a disparate impact on anyone (faculty, staff, or student) who experiences barriers and limitations due to a disability. Please keep the following considerations in mind when planning for a potential shift to alternative forms of instruction:

1. FACULTY

- a. Ensure that all content or activities utilized or held remotely are presented in an accessible format. Moodle includes an accessibility checker (Ally) that can assist with content posted within the LMS. For assistance using Ally, please contact the [Faculty Technology Center](#). The Microsoft suite of products also includes built-in accessibility checkers.
- b. Automated machine captioning is enabled by default in both Zoom and Teams. Please note that machine captioning does not meet the threshold for accessibility compliance. For live (synchronous) meetings, there may be need for live captioning or ASL interpreter (based upon student accommodation needs). For recorded lectures, the captions/transcripts should be checked for errors and corrected prior to dissemination.
- c. If the emergency closure impacts scheduled tests, and if those tests are to be delivered remotely, instructors may need to coordinate with the [Office of Disability Services](#) to arrange alternative options for students in need of accommodations.
- d. Faculty who may experience a barrier due to a disability in the event of a change of modality should contact [LSU ADA Coordinator](#) to discuss options for assistance and/or accommodations.

2. STUDENTS

- a. Students who may need accommodations in the event of a change of modality should be encouraged (both in the syllabus and verbally) to proactively register with the [Office of Disability Services](#) and provide any afforded accommodation notices to the course instructor. Waiting until a closure occurs could result in a delay rendering necessary accommodations.

I. RESEARCH CONTINUITY

Under most circumstances, when the university is closed, faculty and graduate students should not come to campus. However, there are certain research projects that may need attention during a campus closure. In those instances, faculty should e-mail the [LSU Emergency Operations Center](#). If approved, the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) will notify the LSU Police Department and college administration of faculty presence. This information is crucial to protect the life and safety of individuals on campus during a campus closure.

If the power is out, faculty should visit the EOC headquarters (140 Coates Hall) before they visit any other campus location.