

# Spring 2021

# Establishing Student Expectations in Virtual Learning Environments

# Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide information and assistance to faculty, staff or other individuals facilitating programs in a virtual setting.

## General Considerations

- Remember that students, staff, and faculty are experiencing changes at CSUSM at the same time, but the expectations from students are that staff and faculty have solutions
- It is okay to not always have answers at the moment but to let the student know you will research the info. If there is no info at the time, it is okay to let the student know but attempt to quell their anxieties
- Give students clarity where you can
- Lean on your colleagues and work together even more so to approach solutions that involve and support students
- Promote feelings of inclusion when working with students
- When working with students, provide information promptly. It will make the difference, especially if you are their only interaction in that week
- The virtual learning environment provides a new opportunity to reestablish trust and collaboration
- Be open to communicating with students using multiple channels
- Demonstrate a culture of care - a campus culture that values how we care for each other and our students
- Develop processes that encourage accountability and commitment between you and the student
- Take the time to get to know your students and build a community in your class(es)

# An Equity Minded Virtual Environment

It is imperative to be equity-minded when working with our students, especially during times of great change and transition. We must acknowledge that our students are not all the same. They come to us with sometimes vastly different experiences, and those experiences are often tied to their social identities (i.e., race, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, first-gen status, disability, etc.). Keep in mind that some of our students may have been or will be directly impacted by COVID-19, or they may be providing care for a sick family member. Students in these circumstances may reach out to you for flexibility with class requirements.

In the virtual environment, and at this moment, there are several ways that you can meaningfully acknowledge and integrate these into your course:

- Address microaggressions and concerning language in discussion boards, chats, and other places where students interact
- Integrate culturally relevant materials and know that the Office of Inclusive Excellence is happy to be in consultation
- Be aware of variation in students' capacity to manage remote learning
- Be aware of how the current situation is impacting different communities
- Not all students left campus and went to the safest home
- Many students are their most authentic versions of self while on our campus, and being off-campus/at home could lead to a shift in their behavior
- Not all students have access to the same technology that we offer on campus, and it is possible that some may not be able to engage online fully (e.g., students without access to a computer, camera, stable internet, smartphone)
- Implement content-neutral policies related to the use of zoom backgrounds, clothing, etc

Helpful Campus Contact: [Office of Inclusive Excellence](#)

Referenced material:

<https://diversity.gwu.edu/maintaining-equity-and-inclusion-virtual-learning-environments-guidance-gw-faculty>

# Accessibility

There are three aspects of accessibility that are key here – accessibility for students with physical impairments that may create challenges for reading/seeing/hearing digital files and content, accessibility for students with psychological and/or learning differences that require certain accommodations such as extra time to process materials or additional exam time, and accessibility for students with limited access to technology or stable internet service.

Taking the following steps will ensure an accessible virtual learning environment:

- All online content must be accessible (i.e., video, youtube, presentations, etc. must be captioned)
- Provide approved accommodations for students who present accommodation letters from the Disability Support Services office. Any questions related to an accommodation request should be routed to DSS directly
- Confirm that content is mobile-friendly
- Consider variation in students' access to technology and stable internet service

Resources for creating an accessible online classroom environment:

[Accessible Teaching in the Time of COVID-19](#)

[Ten Steps Toward Universal Design of Online Courses](#)

**Campus Resources:**  
[Disability Support Services](#)  
[Accessible Technology](#)

# Academic Integrity

## CSUSM Academic Honesty Policy

Each student shall maintain academic honesty in the conduct of their studies and other learning activities at CSUSM. The integrity of this academic institution, and the quality of the education provided in its degree programs, are based on academic honesty.

The maintenance of academic integrity and quality education is the responsibility of each student within this university and the California State University system. Cheating and plagiarism in connection with an academic program at a campus are listed in Section 41301, Title 5, California Code of Regulations, as an offense for which a student may be expelled, suspended, put on probation, or given a less severe disciplinary sanction.

- Establish guidelines around how much collaboration is appropriate, including group messaging apps, especially if this differs from homework assignments, papers to exams
- Students must submit original work
- Be clear on the tools that students can and cannot use when taking exams (open book, closed book, internet, consult with classmates, etc.). Directly address online resources that are not permitted during exams
- Don't post assessments or answer keys on easily found and accessed websites. If you can find these documents with a simple web search, students can, too.
- Refer students to Student Conduct & Ethical Development
- Read: Prevent Cheating in an Online Course

### Campus Resources:

Student Conduct & Ethical Development

Academic Honesty Policy

Reporting Academic Dishonesty

Cougar Courses Guidance

# Student Expectations

Before and throughout the semester, it is important to establish clear guidelines and expectations for your students. Review your current syllabus and ensure that your expectations are clearly defined. Your expectations for a disruption-free and civil classroom can still be upheld online and need to be directly shared and articulated to your students at the start of the semester.

## Civility

Students are expected to uphold and demonstrate a civil exchange of ideas. Students should exercise their right to Free Speech without personally attacking anyone, and of course – staying respectful of every individual that makes up our community. CSUSM's [Free Speech](#) website has been created to guide the entire campus community and reinforce the campus's values.

## Cyberbullying

CA Senate Bill 366, the first bill to address cyberbullying in higher education, was approved in 2019. SB 366 mandates the CSU system provide, as a part of established campus orientations, educational and preventive information about cyberbullying to students at all campuses of their respective segments. Learn more about [SB 366](#). Students who are found to have participated in cyberbullying toward another member of the CSUSM community should be referred to the Dean of Students Office. Students who have been victims of cyberbullying should be referred to the Cougar Care Network for support.

Students should avoid any behaviors or actions that could be deemed disruptive to the learning environment. [Recommendations for Students in Virtual Learning Environments](#) has been produced to supplement this resource guide. Faculty are encouraged to attach the students' resource guide to their course syllabus and/or add to Cougar Courses.

# Student Expectations

In this continued time of uncertainty, students are seeking structure and normalcy. Establishing norms early on around communication, participation, and overall engagement will provide students with the information they need to succeed in your course.

## Accountability

Establish guidelines regarding students' responsibility for the information within the syllabus, Cougar Courses, Academic Honesty Policy, communicated via email, in-class, etc. It is up to you how to manage to answer questions related to information included in these forums. You should specify your preferred communication method (teams, email, text) along with sharing your time frame to respond. Make sure your students are aware of what to expect from you, as well.

## Syllabus - Questions to Consider

### Communication

- How will you communicate any updates or changes to the syllabus?
- Will you answer students' emails immediately? Every couple of days?

### Classroom Engagement

- How will students be expected to engage and participate in your class?
- How will you moderate and manage questions or discussions?

### Attendance

- What is your attendance policy?
- What is your philosophy about punctuality or logging off early?

### Disruption

- How will you handle disruptions in your class?
- Will you remove a student? What is your threshold?

# Faculty Considerations

The following section provides faculty with items to consider adding to syllabus language and policies. This information and advice have been gathered based on conversations with both faculty and students.

- Be accessible (see the section on clarifying time frame to respond to student emails)
- Set clear behavioral expectations and follow them
- Get to know your students
- Extend compassion and grace where you can
- Let your students know what they need to do to be a successful online learner
  - In addition to turning in honest and complete work, students should know your day-to-day expectations. To start, make sure all your students know the following:
    - How many days per week they'll be expected to log in to their course(s)? How many hours each day or week should they expect to work?
    - How long will students have to complete assignments/exams, and what happens if they do not meet the deadline(s)?
    - What are the passing thresholds, and how many re-takes will be allowed for assignments/exams?
    - What is your process for requesting extensions?
- Name it. This continues to be a challenging situation. Share, within your comfort, what you are managing during this difficult time. We have found that the more transparent faculty are with their students, the more open students are to express their challenges. Plus – it is a good way to remind your students that you are human
- Refer students for support and notify them you will do this when and if they disclose any challenges

# Setting Boundaries

No matter the position one may hold, the role of caring for students has become an institutional wide commitment and priority. However, one of the most important things anyone can do is establish healthy boundaries to ensure students are listened to and referred appropriately when the need arises.

The following resources have been gathered to assist in establishing healthy boundaries with students. Remember, boundaries do not indicate a lack of willingness to listen and support. If anything, it indicates an awareness of the scope of an individuals' role and the responsibility of referring to appropriate intervention resources.

## Articles:

[Setting Boundaries When It Comes To Students' Emotional Disclosures](#) by Kerry Ann Rockquemore, Ph.D. (Inside Higher Ed)

[What You're Forgetting When You Set Boundaries with Students](#) by Jonathan Higgins | December 18, 2018 (Presence)

[Tips For Maintaining Emotional Boundaries While Teaching](#) by Andrea Eidingen

## Campus Resources:

[FACES \(Faculty Advocacy, Care, Engagement, and Support\)](#)

[Employee Assistance Program](#)

[Faculty Center](#)

[You@CSUSM](#)

# Frequently Asked Questions

**I have concerns about zoom security. How do I ensure that nothing will happen?**

Faculty and staff facilitating synchronous classes and events are encouraged to take advantage of training and resources made available through Instructional and Information Technology Services (IITS). Faculty and staff should take proactive steps to set up a secure virtual learning environment.

**Tips:**

- Utilize the waiting room feature
- Require students to sign in to Zoom using their CSUSM account
- Tell students to not share the Zoom link for your class
- Set up security measures ahead of time (restrict annotation, screen sharing, the ability for participants to unmute themselves, etc)

**Can I require students to use a camera?**

Faculty may require students to use cameras during their course. However, students should be notified of this requirement prior to the start of the semester. Not all students will be able to create an environment conducive to remote testing or learning. For this reason, faculty are encouraged to review plans for virtual course offerings with the goal of thoroughly addressing the following four issues related to the assessment of student learning:

- Alternate Assessments
- Equity
- Privacy
- Disability Accommodation

Specific guidance related to the assessment of student learning and remote proctoring services can be found [here](#).

# Who can I contact?

The following is not an exhaustive list of resources available to faculty. Any questions related to this document can be directed to the Dean of Students Office at 760-750-4935 or [www.csusm.edu/dos](http://www.csusm.edu/dos).

## Faculty training and resources:

- [Faculty Center](#)

Zoom security issues ("zoombombing", sharing images of a sexual nature, racist language or images, severe disruption involving direct threats):

- [Information Security](#)
- [University Police Department](#)

## For classroom disruptions/student concerns:

- [Dean of Students Office](#)
- [Submit a CCN Referral](#)
- [Reporting Student Conduct](#)

## For concerns related to alleged Academic Dishonesty:

- [Student Conduct](#)
- [Reporting Academic Dishonesty](#)

## For concerns related to Bias/Equity/Discrimination (including Title IX):

- [Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation](#)
- [Office of Inclusive Excellence](#)
- [Dean of Students Office](#)

# Supplemental Resources

Additional documents and resources have been created to supplement the content provided in this guide.

[Campus Assessment, Response, and Education \(CARE\) Team](#)

[Pre-Semester Instruction Checklist](#)

[COVID Resources & Updates](#)

[CSU Red Folder](#)

[CSU Virtual Learning and Privacy Rights Guide](#)

[CSUSM Emergency Information for Faculty and Instructors](#)

[CSUSM As One Website](#)

[Free Speech](#)

[Recommendations for Students in Virtual Learning Environments](#)

[Securing Zoom Meetings](#)

[Student Communication Guidance and Templates](#)

[Working with Distressed Students](#)

# Helpful Reading

[Ways to Be More Inclusive in a Virtual Classroom](#)

[Building Community in an Online Classroom](#)

[Prevent Online Cheating](#)

[Addressing Implicit Bias and Microaggressions in the Classroom](#)