



SMUFlex:

A Guide for Faculty

Preparing for the Fall 2020 Semester

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TEACHING EXCELLENCE

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SMUFlex

SMUFlex Instruction: SMU's version of HyFlex

SMUFlex is a specific type of hybrid course delivery model. During the Fall 2020 semester, SMU is employing our own "SMUFlex" variant of HyFlex instruction as we resume on-campus instruction. SMUFlex courses will be conducted in real-time with socially distanced students attending in person with others participating virtually via Zoom.

Role of Technology

SMUFlex allows virtual students to engage in meaningful ways with their coursework through Canvas, SMU's learning management system. SMU classrooms are outfitted with new hardware and tools that allow for live tele-teaching via Zoom. You will record class sessions to share with virtual students via Canvas.

Schedule

SMUFlex courses follow the schedule as published in my.SMU for the term. Students must decide before the semester whether they will be attending in person or virtually. For classes that can't have everyone attend and follow social distancing, students will be designated to "Red" and "Blue" teams that will have assigned days to attend in person.

Tests and Examinations

All tests and examinations will be delivered online whether students are attending in person or virtually.



SMUFlex is a framework for instruction-- not simply hardware

SMUFlex courses are assigned a physical classroom location where the courses will be taught simultaneously to in person students and virtual students. Some students may be fully online all term and others may rotate on Red and Blue days.

As a result, SMUFlex courses must take into account the student experience regardless of how a student is attending class. This might be as simple as streaming a lecture for both groups of students through Zoom. In other cases, group assignments and other interactions might take place through Canvas, Zoom, or other approaches.

The goal of SMUFlex is that all students will be able to experience a high quality SMU teaching and learning experience while accommodating social distancing and health concerns related to COVID-19.

Advantages of teaching in SMUFlex

Promotes social distancing and accommodates students who may be in isolation by allowing students to attend in person or virtually during the scheduled class time

Allows students who have health concerns about returning to campus to maintain their degree progress

Promotes equity by giving all SMU students a chance to attend classes in their preferred format

Should it become necessary to shift more online due to COVID-19 related concerns, SMUFlex courses will be able to shift easier than our courses in the Spring 2020 semester

Instruction will look different in SMUFlex

SMUFlex will require some adjustment from how you typically teach in the classroom.

Instructional Delivery

Simultaneously deliver course content and activities to in person and virtual students

Student Engagement

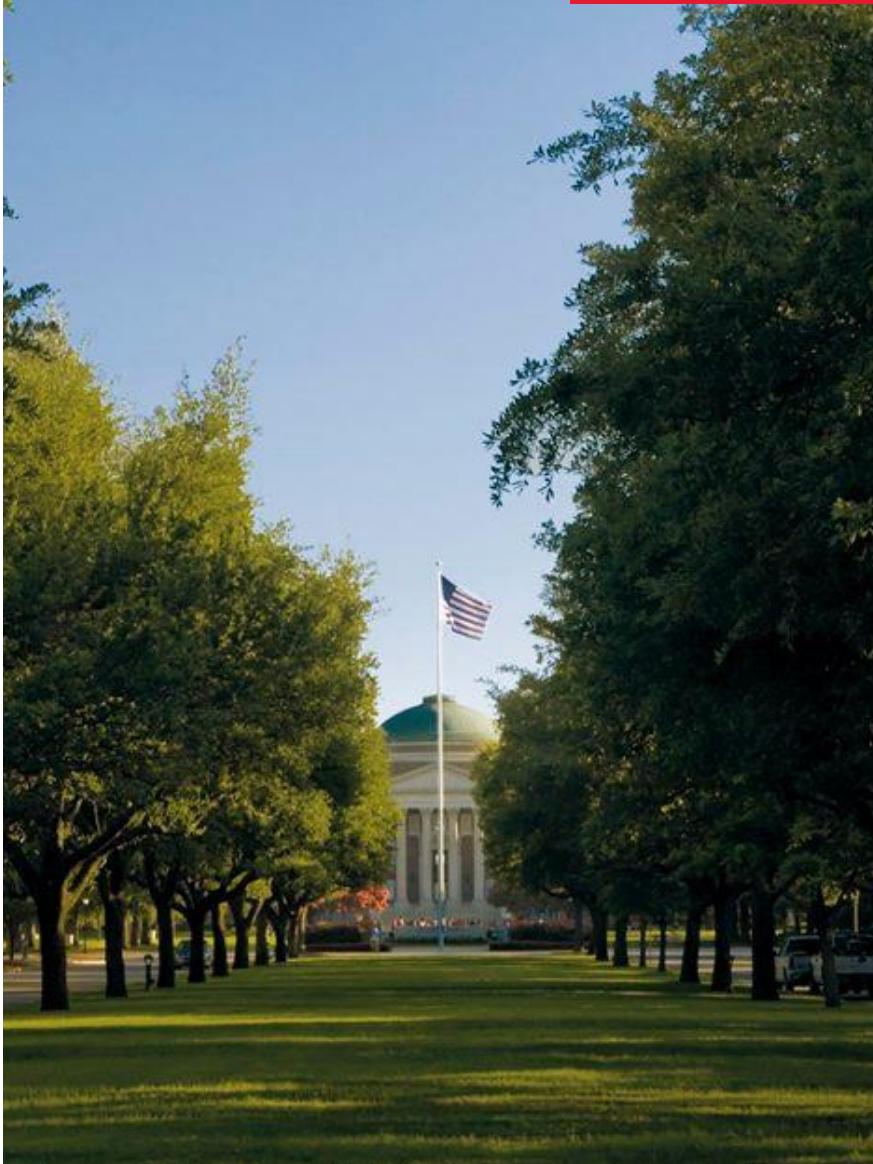
You will need to interact and promote student engagement with students attending in different modes as well as on different "Red" and "Blue" days.

Classroom Management and Communication

We want students to receive an equitable classroom experience regardless of how they are attending class. You will need to facilitate questions and communication across online and in person students. Establishing clear expectations is essential given the SMUFlex experience will be new for you and your students.

Multitasking

With students attending in two modalities, you will be managing more considerations than in a typical class. In particular, we recommend that you identify how to manage the online chat, questions, and how to make sure the online student experience is a positive one.



Strategies to Be Successful with SMUFlex

In order to prepare for teaching SMUFlex, we recommend the following specific strategies to have a successful semester.

What Do Should You Do Before Your First Day of SMUFlex?

As with every semester, there are a few logistical items we suggest doing to ensure you get off to a good start.

- Schedule a meeting with your school's Academic Technology Service Director to visit each classroom that you are teaching in so that you understand the room setup and technology.
- You may be teaching in a classroom that is unfamiliar to you or in a building you haven't been in before. Make sure you know where your classroom is and make sure you have any necessary keys, login information, or other information needed to access your classroom.
- Check your class roster in my.SMU for information regarding which students will be virtual and which ones will be in person.
- Set up a Canvas page for each of your courses that includes a syllabus including any required technology tools, course expectations, and grading and communication response times.
- Prepare a backup plan in case there are technical or connectivity issues. OIT is working hard to make sure every room is ready to go, but with technology you should always have a backup plan.
- Make sure you know who to contact with emergency classroom issues and have the necessary contact information (OIT Classroom Hotline is 214-768-8888)

Promoting Involvement and Student Engagement

Even though students will be attending in person or virtually, we want to ensure that all students feel involved and are engaged in class. Virtual students, in particular, may feel more isolated and as a passive observer of class.

- Welcome all students and acknowledge the students attending virtually.
- Encourage students attending online to participate and ask question. You can have students raise their virtual hand in Zoom or post questions in the chat. Be sure to monitor this or ask an in-person student or teaching assistant to help with this.
- Repeat questions to ensure that everyone can hear questions. Depending on your classroom, virtual students may not be able to clearly hear questions asked by in person students.
- Check in with virtual students to make sure they can see slides or material written on the white board.
- Establish clear expectations for how student attending virtually will participate in the course
- Consider recording content (i.e. lectures) and focus synchronous class sessions on reinforcing material, answering questions, and providing examples. A flipped classroom approach is particularly well suited to SMUFlex.

Techniques to Promote Student Engagement

The following techniques can be used to encourage student participation within a SMUFlex course.

Kickoff Question. Ask students to answer a brief class-related question. This could be done using live polling, Zoom chat, or by quickly calling on a few students.

Yes/No Question. Ask students a yes/no question. In person students can raise hands and students on Zoom can use the thumbs up feature.

Small Group Discussions. Even with social distancing, groups of 2-3 students are able to talk with each other without becoming too loud for others to hear. Use the breakout room feature in Zoom for virtual students.

One Minute Paper. Pause for a minute or two and allow students to reflect on a topic or question. This allows them to develop a clearer answer and allows time for all students to be prepared to respond.

Think/Pair/Share. Give students a few minutes to think about a question or issue. Put them into small groups in class or in Zoom breakout rooms to discuss. Have group share their conclusions with the class.

Fishbowl. Have one group of students (virtual or in person) discuss a topic or question related to class. The other group observes the discussion making notes regarding good points, things they disagreed with, or questions they still have which are shared with class at the end of the activity.

Examinations and testing

Delivering exams and tests are certainly more complex with students attending class in different modes. You can reach out to the Center for Teaching Excellence or your school's Academic Technology Service Director (ATSD) for consultation and personalized assistance.

- Consider, where possible, other ways of assessing students' learning. Papers, activities, and other assignments that ask students to apply course content can be effective alternatives to exams.
- Consider the use of more frequent, lower stakes assessments to monitor student comprehension.
- Given concerns about academic integrity, design exams that can be open-book and require students to synthesize or apply content rather than recalling information.
- Practice the technology (i.e. with a low stakes quiz) so that you and your students can work out any technology challenges before the high stakes examination.
- Provide clear instructions and expectations for testing expectations in your syllabus. Will students need specific tools? Can they use notes or work with a partner? Clear upfront guidelines can eliminate many later problems.
- Work with DASS to ensure that all tests and exams consider students with accommodations. Given the limited capacity of DASS for proctoring, online exams in Canvas may be a viable option for extending time or providing other accommodations.

Sample SMUFlex Syllabus Statements

These statements can be used as-is or modified as appropriate for your course(s).

If you are attending class virtually via Zoom, make sure you connect from a quiet and safe place that will allow you to devote your full attention to the class. Notify anyone sharing the space that you will be busy for the duration of class to avoid any unnecessary interruptions.

You are expected to have your camera on during class and may use a professional background if you wish. Please mute your microphone except when speaking.

The use of a headset is strongly encouraged to minimize background noise during class. To participate in discussions, press the space bar on your keyboard to unmute yourself and continue to hold it down until you are done speaking.

If you need to take a break, please turn off your video. This will signal that you are no longer in front of the computer and will minimize the distraction for other students. When you return, turn your camera back on to let me know you have returned.

Class recordings will be posted online and a link will be provided in Canvas. Recordings will be posted the day after class.

Attendance is reflected as part of your participation grade for this course. You are expected to attend in person or virtually as assigned. If you have health related concerns (i.e. possible exposure to COVID-19), contact the instructor as soon as possible to make alternate arrangements.

Additional Considerations for the Fall

Resuming teaching in the era of COVID-19 may require some additional considerations beyond SMUFlex



Creating and Maintaining Community

Given the unique nature of the fall, creating and maintaining a community of learning-- long a hallmark of a SMU education-- will be vital to ensuring student success.

Connection between students and faculty

Collect information on your students such as their preferred name, pronouns, major, previous relevant coursework, and even a "fun fact" to help build connection.

Share information about yourself. You can share your research interests, connection to the course content, or other relevant information. A short welcome video is a great way to do this especially as it can let students see you without a mask.

Connection between students

Build in opportunities early in the term for students to get to know each other (i.e. small group activities). Encourage student collaboration and even assign small study groups, if appropriate. Post a question or discussion post for students to respond online to learn and engage more with each other regardless of if they are in person or virtual.

Office Hours

Students coming into class early or staying late to ask questions will be more complex in the fall with social distancing and virtual students. As a result, we recommend coming up with a specific plan for office hours and how students can contact you.

- At the conclusion of each class session, let students know how they can contact you to ask questions or follow up on any course-related issues.
- Individually scheduled virtual office hours allow students to sign up for a specific time to meet individually with you.
- Drop-in virtual office hours allow students to join a Zoom room to meet with you individually or in small groups. You can use the waiting room function in Zoom to manage students joining if you wish.
- As a supplement to office hours, you can create a Frequently Asked Questions section on your course's Canvas page. This can be a useful forum for questions that you often receive from multiple students.

Additional Support

This guide was designed to cover many of the common questions or issues that faculty may face teaching in SMUFlex. If you have additional questions, concerns, or need more specific support for your course or students, SMU's faculty support teams are ready to assist you.

The SMU Keep Teaching website as resources for SMUFlex and other Fall 2020 related teaching issues.

The Center for Teaching Excellence provides support for faculty on teaching related questions or concerns.

The OIT Help Desk can address faculty or student technology related questions.

SMU Libraries are available to assist with course and research related materials.

Each school has an assigned Academic Technology Service Director that can assist with technology-related concerns for your teaching or research.



CONTACT US

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