

Contingency Plan and Continuity of Instruction Best Practices

Reviewed by DELT Feb. 27, 2020

This document contains Best Practice strategies and items for consideration when planning for your course Contingency Plan and Continuity of Instruction.

A contingency plan involves anticipating and planning for an alternate delivery of course material and communication with students when technology is not available. A contingency plan should appear on your course syllabus to ensure that students know their responsibilities, the timelines, and alternative means to meet requirements during a downtime situation.

A **regional catastrophic** event may result in either the official suspension of all instruction at the institution or suspension of campus-based activities including face-to-face classes on the ECU campus. Information about the suspension of all instruction at the institution can be found in *Interim PRR - REG02.07.10. Making Up Missed Instructional Time due to Suspension of Instruction*. Suspension of campus-based activities may activate a **Continuity of Instruction Plan**.

DE Contingency Plan

When planning your course, it is important to think about student and instructor expectations and activities in the unlikely event that one or more of the course technologies you use are not available. Your course syllabus should communicate this information to your students.

To prepare for potential problems and/or downtime, we advise all instructors using ECU's Learning Management System (LMS), lecture capture, web conferencing, or other online technologies, to have a Contingency Plan in place that will be used when the technology is not available. Define situations that would trigger the Contingency Plan to action. Will your DE Contingency Plan be implemented if your online course or technologies are down a few hours, 24 hours, or even longer? Assure your students that they will hear from you if the course downtime is 24 hours or greater.

Class activities that may be affected by course downtime.

- Access to Course Content
- Online Exams
- Web Conferencing/Synchronous Meetings
- Assignment Submissions

Consider the Following Before Creating Your Contingency Plan:

- If the LMS or other learning platforms are not available during a scheduled synchronous session, how long should students attempt to log in (number of minutes)?
- How and when will you contact your students after such a situation occurs?
- Do you want students to contact you if they are not able to access a scheduled online exam, synchronous session, assignment tool, or course content?
- How will this downtime affect the course due dates? When can students expect to receive new due dates?

- If the LMS is not available, will you ask students to submit an assignment via ECU email? Will this down time affect the due date? What if email is not available?
- How will any of the situations discussed here affect your student's grades? They may need reassurance that unexpected and verified downtime will not affect their grade.
- What do you expect from your students when their online course materials, assessments, synchronous meetings, or multimedia materials are not fully accessible or completely available?
- How will you communicate with your students? If the LMS is not available, you can email your students outside of LMS using the Email Class feature within Self Service Banner. You can use this feature to update students on prolonged outages and course assignments and requirement status.

Getting Started with your Contingency Plan for your Syllabus:

- Have your syllabus, timeline, and course content available to email students.
- Encourage students to download and save relevant course information.
- Create a file of course content organized in a format that can be shared via your Office 365 OneDrive and/or emailed to students.
- Inform your students of any additional office hours you may be available during an extended technology downtime.
- How will any of the situations above alter your semester course schedule? Will you have to delete a lesson or unit? For example, if a class chat is scheduled to begin at 12 noon, you must try to log into the chat until (12:15). If you are not able to log into the chat session after the stated time, then...(How will they know when the chat will be rescheduled? How and when will you contact them after such a situation occurs?)

Syllabus Example:

As with any technology online tools have the potential for technical downtime or performance issues. To prepare for course downtime or a performance issue that makes the system unusable, you are encouraged to:

1. Save and/or print a copy of the syllabus, assignment schedule, and course material available.
2. Save my email address so that you can contact me.
3. Save names of fellow classmates, so that you may contact each other through ECU email or other third-party email.
4. Determine that the problem is with an ECU supported learning platform and not your Internet Service Provider.

If we experience Internet or downtime with any ECU learning platforms, you can expect me to... (Describe your responsibilities as the instructor, such as email communication).

Contact Information:

- Phone number
- Email address
- Office hours
- Alternate office hours during Internet course downtime

Information Technology and Computing Services (ITCS) personnel monitor ECU supported tools and send ITCS Notifications to share downtime information with the campus. To report problems please notify the ECU Help Desk at: <https://ecu.teamdynamix.com/TDClient/Home/>

Planning Resources

The following list of tools and resources are included to promote thought and provide options.

- Canvas face-to-face and online training opportunities are offered throughout the semester. Visit [Canvas Resources](#) or register for training in [Cornerstone](#).
- Visit [WebEx for Faculty and Students](#) or register for training in [Cornerstone](#).
- Mediasite Desktop Recorder (MDR) training is offered throughout the semester. Visit the [Mediasite Enterprise Video](#) or register for training in [Cornerstone](#).
- Lynda.com delivers an online library of instructional videos teaching the latest software tools and skills. Login to [LinkedIn Learning at ECU](#) to get started.
- Listen to how two ECU faculty have prepared.
 - Interview with [Tim Kelley](https://blog.ecu.edu/sites/h1n1/kelley/) <https://blog.ecu.edu/sites/h1n1/kelley/>
 - Interview with [Mark Weitzel](https://blog.ecu.edu/sites/h1n1/weitzel/) <https://blog.ecu.edu/sites/h1n1/weitzel/>

Glossary

Adverse Weather & Emergency Event Policy: (<https://alertinfo.ecu.edu/adverse-weather-emergency-event-policy/>)

Catastrophic Event: Any event or force of nature that has catastrophic consequences, often with regional impacts which are considered extremely harmful or disastrous. These events impact power/water/internet systems or may require social distancing.

Emergency Information will be available at the ECU homepage <http://www.ecu.edu>.

Epidemic/Pandemic: Global outbreak of human communicable disease which can spread easily and quickly from person to person and from city to city.

Communicable disease: An infectious disease transmissible (as from person to person) by direct or indirect contact with an affected individual or the individual's bodily fluids or by indirect means (as by a vector).

Social Distancing: Limiting contact and activities with others to slow down the spread of a communicable disease.