



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

The following is information about online classes for the undergraduate programs that begin on May 4, 2020.

Q. How will the material that would normally be taught on campus in labs be taught in online classes?

A. Nearly all programs are developing innovative demonstrations, simulations and work-at-home kits for students. Some programs will be offering additional hands-on labs when we are able to return to campus. Please check with the department chair of your program for specifics. (A list of the department chairs and their email addresses appears on the Student Website in the Academics tab.)

Q. Will faculty be patient with students as the students learn to take classes online, especially since this will be new to some and some will have additional demands, to include having to assist their own children who are also taking their classes online at home?

A. Yes, faculty will be flexible and understand that this is new to many students. In the first few weeks of classes, faculty will survey students to get their feedback on how the online delivery of the courses is going. It is important that students provide all of their feedback, so that faculty can respond effectively.

Note: students will be required to complete all assignments, tests, quizzes, etc. Online education is new to most of our students, so it is imperative that faculty and students work closely together to make this work.

Q. What do students do if they don't have a computer? Can they come to campus to use the computers at NEIT?

A. Students who do not have a computer, webcam, microphone or access to the internet should speak with their student advisor as soon as possible.

Q. The following are questions pertaining to the technology/equipment needed to take online classes:

- **If students don't have a webcam (a camera on their electronic device), is there anything else they can use?**
A. Most laptops and many desktop computers have cameras and microphones with speakers. Students whose laptops or desktops do not have these can use their iPhone/Android cell phone or a tablet (iPad, Chromebook, etc.) to participate in ZOOM sessions, but will need a computer to submit their assignments in Canvas.
- **Can cell phones be used when cameras and microphones are needed?**
A. Yes, see answer above.
- **Can iPads and Chromebooks be used to do the coursework?**
A. Yes, however submitting assignments in Canvas requires a computer/laptop.
- **What internet speed is required, especially in homes with several family members/roommates using their computers at the same times?**
A. Most consumer broadband and fiber Internet services will be sufficient for distance learning, though some, such as DSL, low speed broadband and dial-up may experience decreased performance. The performance and

reliability of your distance learning will depend on a number of factors beyond Internet speed. If you experience issues, try the tips below:

- Limit or cease large traffic consuming actions. Game downloads and streaming can have the biggest impact.
- Reduce the number of devices sharing your Internet connection at one time. Disconnect or shutdown gaming consoles, smart speakers, Smart TVs, etc.
- If using wireless, move closer to the router or consider connecting with a wired cable if available.
- Verizon, Charter, Cox, Comcast and AT&T have publicly stated that they are confident they can meet the demands placed on their home internet services, which includes cable broadband like Verizon FIOS, mobile LTE services (4G / 5G) from Verizon and COX, and Wi-Fi hot spots. Cox has stated that they are taking measures to help people who are working and learning from home; announcing several weeks ago that they would automatically upgrade users of its basic broadband internet package, with speeds of 30 megabits per second, to a package with 50 megabits per second. This could help people deal with a rise in internet use and apps that require faster speeds and more bandwidth. Lastly, along with compatibility and web standards, Canvas has been designed to accommodate low bandwidth environments

- **How powerful do the students' computers need to be?**

A. Most of our students already have the equipment required to take online classes with no problems, but it's important to know if what you currently possess will work. A computer that was manufactured recently will be able to handle any online NEIT course. A computer with the following basic specs will be sufficient for Canvas and online distance learning:

- 80 GB hard drive or higher
- 1 GB RAM or higher
- 2.4 GHz Intel or AMD processor
- Windows 7 or later/ OS 10.10 or later / Linux chromeOS
- Soundcard
- MS Office 2007 or later, Office 2008 (for MAC) or later. We offer Office O365: <https://portal.office.com>
- Internet Explorer 8.0 or later, Firefox 3.6 or later, Google Chrome 7.0 or later
- Safari 5.0 or later
- Adobe Acrobat Reader 9.0 or later
- Anti-virus program (updated regularly) we offer Cylance: <https://dots.neit.edu/cylance-smart-antivirus/>
- Computer mic and speakers / or any mobile device with camera and mic
- High-speed wired or wireless (Wi-Fi) network connection

Q. Do students need program specific software? For example, do students from the engineering technology programs need the same software on their computers that is on the computers on campus?

A. Students will have access to the software required for each course. NEIT's Department of Technical Services (DoTS) has been working very closely with each department to make this happen. The details of how to access the required software will be explained by your faculty member.

Q. How can students have individual contact with their faculty? Will faculty "office hours" be available?

A. Yes, faculty will have office hours and will utilize ZOOM or MS Teams. The best way to contact your faculty member will be through the Canvas or email to setup a one-on-one meeting.

Q. What can students who may be new to taking online classes do to feel more comfortable about remote learning as they think about starting the spring term?

A. Practice using Zoom at home with family and friends. The ability to communicate with your professor and other students is very important. It is much better to practice now than try to use it for the first time during the first week of classes.

Q. Can students receive the syllabus for each of their classes in advance of the start of the term?

A. Yes, students will be given access to their online courses on or about April 15th. Check your NEIT email for a message from your professor announcing that the class is available.

Q. How will the Academic Skills Center provide tutoring when all classes are online?

A. The ASC is working hard to train our tutors to support students online. They will be available via ZOOM or a like tool to meet one-on-one or in small groups with students needing tutoring in math, science or writing. In addition, check with your professor to determine if there are tutors for your major courses.

Q. How will clinicals and fieldwork experiences be handled for the health sciences majors?

A. Departments will use various methods like live clinical sessions, case studies, virtual simulations, home filming with family members as patient clients, etc. Please check with the department chair of your program for specifics, as program accreditation requirements may impact the methods that are acceptable for use.

Q. How will student group work be done with online classes?

A. Just like on-ground courses, students can be broken into groups to work on a variety of projects and assignments. So, communication with your professor and other students is important. There are a multitude of technologies like Zoom, Teams, Skype, etc., that make remote/group work easy. (It happens in the real-world every day!)

Q. How will tests and quizzes be administered?

A. All tests and quizzes will be delivered online through Canvas. Online proctoring services will be used for midterms, finals and other major assessments.

Q. Will the online classes take place at the times indicated on the course schedule that was used by students to register for classes?

A. In many cases they will be. However, some classes may be delivered in an asynchronous format, meaning there will be no set class time; you'll be able to take the class at the time you chose. Your professors will be reaching out to you soon about your classes.

Q. There has been information shared by the media about security issues with Zoom. Has Zoom taken measures to correct this?

A. Zoom has released a statement (<https://blog.zoom.us/wordpress/2020/04/01/a-message-to-our-users/>) in regards to the action it is taking to address security issues. Zoom is working to mitigate these risks, as is NEIT's Department of Technical Services (DoTS). We are in the process of integrating ZOOM into our Single Sign On services, which will provide better account security. NEIT has implemented the following security settings to protect our community:

- All meetings require a password.
- Waiting rooms are enforced for all meetings.
- Participants are muted on entry. Hosts can control the ability of participants to unmute.
- Local recording is now disabled. Hosts can still perform cloud-based recordings of meetings. Participants will not be able to records meetings.
- By default, only hosts can share their screen.
- By default, participant names will no longer be shown in recordings.

NEIT continues to monitor ZOOM efforts and several Cyber-Security communities' information pertaining to ZOOM vulnerabilities. NEIT recommends that students using the Zoom client install updates as soon as possible.

Q. Will there be tuition and lab fees discounts since students cannot physically be in the labs?

A. The faculty have been working diligently to ensure that our online classes are of the highest quality. Tuition will remain at the current rates. Your lab fees for the spring term will be reduced by 50% at the beginning of the term. The remaining 50% of the lab fee will cover the cost of lab simulations, proctoring and testing.

For example, if the lab fee for your major is \$475 per term, your fee at the beginning of the term would be reduced to \$237.50 (50%).

Q. If classes can resume on campus during the spring term, will any remain as only online classes?

A. Yes. Most math, English and humanities classes will remain online. Some classes in your major may remain online. Please ask your professor for specifics.

Q. If classes are resumed on campus during the spring term, can the resident students and students whose leases ended at apartments in the area move into the residence hall?

A. When we know that classes can resume on campus, NEIT will follow the coronavirus guidance provided by the RI Department of Health and the Governor of Rhode Island to determine if students can return to live in the residence hall during the spring term. Information will be provided to students at that time.

Q. Can students receive a pass/fail grade, rather than a letter grade, for their online classes?

A. Pass/fail grades are not an option for a variety of reasons, including grade progression policies in some of the programs and specialized program accreditation requirements.

Q. What are some online study tips?

A. Because you will not physically come to campus, keeping up with your coursework requires an additional level of self-discipline. Make sure you frequently check your course Canvas site, attend any online class meetings with Zoom or Teams, and stay in contact with your professor throughout the week if you have any questions.

Utilize your faculty live office hours to meet with the faculty frequently, and the following will also be helpful:

1. Treat an online course like a course on campus.

When it comes to online classes, you need to have the discipline to sit down and say, “I am going to work on this,” as well as the dedication to follow through. Though you can be flexible as to *when* you choose to complete your work during the week, you can’t put it off indefinitely.

One of the easiest ways to ensure follow-through is to remember you must “show up” as you would in a traditional, in-person class if you’re going to get real value out of your class. Treat your online classes the same way you would a face-to-face class—or, better yet, a job—and you’ll be off to the right start.

2. Hold yourself accountable

Set goals at the beginning of the term and check in with yourself weekly. In a traditional classroom setting, you’ll often receive verbal or visual reminders of an assignment’s upcoming due date. But without a professor actively reminding you, it’s up to you to make sure you’ve allotted enough time to complete the work so you’re not starting an assignment the day before it’s due.

If you’re having trouble holding yourself responsible, pair up with a fellow classmate, or enlist the help of a friend or family member as an accountability partner. By being organized, proactive, and self-aware, you can get the most from your online class even when life outside of school becomes chaotic.

3. Practice time management.

The flexibility to create your own schedule is often one of the biggest appeals of taking online classes. But that freedom can also be detrimental if you do not have solid time management skills. Without them, you might easily find yourself cramming before classes or handing in subpar assignments.

Though how you manage your time will depend on your schedule, learning style, and personality, here are some universally valuable tips to help you practice and improve your time management skills:

Look at the syllabus at the start of the term and **make note of major assignments**. Mark them on a calendar you check regularly so you know what workload is coming in the weeks ahead. Don't forget to factor in prior commitments that may interfere with your regular study schedule, so you can give yourself enough extra time to complete assignments.

Create a weekly schedule that you follow, designating certain hours each week to reading, watching lectures, completing assignments, studying, and participating in forums. Commit to making your online coursework part of your weekly routine and set reminders for yourself to complete these tasks.

When working on your assignments, try time-blocking, allotting yourself a certain amount of time for each task before moving on to the next one and setting a timer to keep you accountable.

Check in periodically throughout the term and look at how you're spending your time. Ask yourself: *How much time am I dedicating to course reading and assignments? Am I regularly underestimating the time it's taking me to get things done, forcing me to cram the nights before the exams?* A little self-reflection and adjustment can go a long way.

4. Create a regular study space and stay organized.

Set up a dedicated learning environment for studying. By completing your work there repeatedly, you'll begin to establish a routine. Knowing exactly where important dates, files, forms, syllabi, books, and assignments live will help keep you on track towards hitting your goals. When setting up your study space, make sure you:

- Have a high-speed internet connection
- Have the required books, materials, and software for the course
- Have headphones for listening to lectures or discussions (especially important in shared spaces)
- Camera (you can use your phone to participate in ZOOM meetings)

5. Eliminate distractions.

From Netflix to social media to dishes piling up in the sink, you'll be faced with many distractions that can easily derail your studies. The best online students know how to lessen these distractions and set aside time to focus.

Regardless of where you choose to work, consider turning your cell phone off to avoid losing focus every time a text message or notification pops up.

6. Figure Out How You Learn Best

Once you've established where you'll learn, think about when and how you accomplish your best work. If you're a morning person, make time to study first thing. More of a night owl? Set aside an hour or two after dinner to cozy up to your computer. Brew your usual cup of coffee, put on your go-to playlist, and do whatever you need to get into the zone and down to business.

Not everyone learns the same way, so think about what types of information help you best grasp new concepts and employ relevant study strategies. Make sure to build time into your schedule to play and replay all audio- and video-based course content.

7. Actively participate.

Participate in the course's online forum to help you better understand course materials and engage with fellow classmates. This might involve commenting on a classmate's paper on a discussion board or posting a question about a project you're working on. Read what other students and your professor are saying, and if you have a question, ask for clarification.

Make sure you are checking in as often as you can, too. The flexibility of online learning means that if you have 30

minutes before dinner, you can squeeze in a discussion response around your schedule. Set a goal to check in on the class discussion threads every day.

And if you do feel yourself falling behind, speak up. Don't wait until an assignment is almost due to ask questions or report issues. Email your professor or student advisor to be proactive in asking for help.

8. Leverage your network.

Online classes may sometimes make you feel like you are learning on your own, but this couldn't be further from the truth. Most online courses are built around the concept of collaboration, with professors actively encouraging that students work together to complete assignments and discuss lessons.

Build relationships with other students by introducing yourself and engaging in online discussion boards. Your peers can be a valuable resource when preparing for exams or asking for feedback on assignments. Don't be afraid to turn to them to create a virtual study group. Chances are good that they will appreciate it just as much as you will.