



GUIDELINES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TARLAC STATE UNIVERSITY'S FLEXIBLE LEARNING PROGRAM



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A. TSU in the NEW NORMAL

The Corona Virus Disease 2019 or CoVid-19 has reshaped the educational landscape in the country and the world, and higher education institutions (HEIs) are migrating to flexible learning to ensure continued access to education. Making this leap from mortar-and-brick classroom to occupying digital space takes some time and concerted effort among all stakeholders.

The following general guidelines are issued based on Board Resolution No. 45 s 2020 approving the Tarlac State University's **Learning Continuity Plan** as we transition to flexible learning. These guideline remains in effect unless superseded by CHED and IATF issuances.

B. Flexible Learning

Flexible learning as pedagogical approach allows flexibility of time, place, pace, content and mode of learning. In recent years, although it is highly dependent on the accessibility of digital devices, internet connection and proficiency in digital literacy it has been commonly used as teaching-learning platform for distance education (*Macalde, 2020 in NSTP Implementation Webinar: CHED-approved Flexible Learning Guidelines and Introduction to Flexible Learning Training for NSTP Faculty, 06 August 2020*).

Flexible learning "ensures the continuity of inclusive and accessible education when the use of traditional modes of teaching is not feasible, as in the occurrence of national emergencies" (*36th Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Disease on 13 May 2020 in NSTP Implementation Webinar: CHED-approved Flexible Learning Guidelines and Introduction to Flexible Learning Training for NSTP Faculty, 06 August 2020*).

"Flexible learning is a broader term that focuses on the design and delivery of programs, courses, and learning interventions that address learners' unique needs in terms of pace, place, process, and products of learning. It does not necessarily require connectivity"

(Cervantes, 2020. CHED pushes for Flexible Learning for HEIs in August in <https://www.pna.gov.ph/>).

The University has already implemented online learning as part of flexible learning during the quarantine when classes were called off after the midterm of the 2nd semester AY 2019-2020, in the conduct of midyear 2020 and 3rd trimester classes in the graduate school.

In the CHED COVID ADVISORY No 7 dated 24 May 2020, the commission specifies that HEIs who will use flexible learning in their teaching – learning can start their academic year anytime in August 2020. As such, the University has undertaken the following modifications in instruction to better prepare faculty and students for flexible learning this 1st semester AY 2020-2021.

Two Modes of Flexible Learning

Online. This mode of teaching and learning is digitally based which requires robust internet connection and uses synchronous teaching-learning to deliver instruction. The University platform is the MS Teams acquired and used since 2017.

Offline. This mode does not require internet connectivity but rather learning is through self-learning modules, text messaging or digital lessons stored in devices such as USB. The utilization of this mode will be based on the needs of the students especially those without internet connectivity. However, students should also connect at one point via MS Teams for quizzes, exams, and class participation. LGUs have provided venues for connectivity.

TSU Radio Station, 87.5 Firefox Radio will also be used for flexible learning, if needed.

Colleges may use both modes as they deemed necessary. The utilization of either online or offline or both will be at the discretion of the faculty and depending on the capability of students.

Whatever is the concern encountered in reaching out to the students, in delivering flexible learning, these have to be reported to the chairpersons and the dean for appropriate action.

C. University Initiatives

In preparation for the opening of AY 2020-2021, the university has undertaken the following initiatives in response to the challenges brought by the pandemic relevant to instruction:

1. needs assessment on the capability of the University to deliver flexible learning,
2. inventory of resources, facilities, and equipment for online teaching,
3. capacity building seminar – workshops for faculty members on the use of TSU teaching-learning platform - MS Team,
4. consultative meeting with LGUs of the Congressional District of Tarlac,
5. consultative meeting with Congressman Victor Yap, Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) and the Department of Education,
6. crafting of Learning Continuity Plan,
7. preparation of instructional modules for online and offline modalities,
8. continuous conduct of capacity building for faculty members on flexible learning, and
9. availability of computer laboratories in the university for the use of faculty.

D. Curriculum

1. Same curriculum shall be followed except that some subjects may be interchanged on the semester they are offered to address students' financial concerns and more importantly the risk of exposure to CoVid-19.
2. Following revised syllabi, the modalities/strategies on how to deliver instruction shall consider:
 - 2.1.1 University Policy,
 - 2.1.2 College / Class policies agreed upon,
 - 2.1.3 Student capability,
 - 2.1.4 Assurance on the achievement of the outcome of instruction, and
 - 2.1.5 Faculty strategies to ensure encouragement of student's learning.

3. Faculty members are given flexibility on strategies to use as long as the desired outcome is achieved.

E. Orientation

Students' orientation per program/ department and college will be conducted after faculty members have met their classes during the first week of the opening of classes. Colleges initiate meet-and-greet to ascertain students' safety, health and well-being, at the same time their readiness for flexible learning.

F. Retention Policies

Retention policy is waived this 1st semester AY 2020-2021 as a result of lockdown during the 2nd Semester AY 2019-2020 but will be implemented on the 2nd semester AY 2020-2021.

G. Connection

Remote Connection. Since the traditional face-to-face is strongly discouraged at this time of the pandemic and to ensure students and faculty safety and welfare, the interaction between student and faculty will be facilitated through remote teaching – learning.

Communication will be with the university learning management system, MS Teams and internet-based mechanism such as email/fb group or other social media communication platforms such as messenger, viber among others.

Remote teaching – learning can be carried out either synchronously or asynchronously.

For faculty members with intermittent internet connection at home, the University has designated several smart classrooms / computer laboratory rooms in three campuses for faculty use during their online (synchronous) teaching. Proper scheduling must be coordinated with the dean / chairperson.

Local Government Units have started to install/ have installed Wifi Infrastructure in their Barangays and/or have developed a computer room for students for their online classes because of the TSU initiated consultation meeting with them. Faculty members are to inform students on these facilities and encourage students to coordinate with their LGUs but properly observing health protocols.

H. Course Delivery

- **Synchronous** – refers to the mode of teaching – learning that encourages simultaneous learning process by students and faculty. Students and faculty interact through a specific online medium at a specific time. This is highly recommended and encouraged when initial, critical, and significant information must be cascaded to students in a direct, specific, and clear manner by the faculty. This mode allows deeper exploration of topics, ideas, and concepts for meaningful class engagement and instructional depth; and above all the sense of belongingness in a community it foster for students which could lessen the feeling of isolation (<https://thebestschools.org/magazine/synchronous-vs-asynchronous-education/>).
- **Asynchronous** – this uses non simultaneous learning proves as guided and monitored by faculty. In this mode of teaching – learning, students will self-direct their learning experiences through the provision of reading materials/lectures and assignments to complete within a flexible time frame. This mode does not require internet connectivity. While this mode of learning puts premium on student’s responsibility, accountability and maturity for self-learning pace; procrastination is often the reason for student’s complacency, some parts of the course materials have the potential for misinterpretation without the real-time interaction and students who yearn for meaningful and interactive discussion with their classmates as a form of social interaction might feel quite isolated (<https://thebestschools.org/magazine/synchronous-vs-asynchronous-education/>).
- Syllabi, learning packet materials, worksheets/exercises and test materials will be available online through the University Learning Management System which is the MS Teams. Students can access materials from the University E-Library for their research and supplementary readings. Faculty members shall inform their students of the University E-library.
- College of Engineering and Technology Advanced Manufacturing Training Hub in 2018 with 1, 117 modules will be continuously used.
- Cloud-Based Technology Easy Solution for the College of Computer Studies shall be continuously used.

I. Flexible Assessments and Grading System

The fundamental aim of assessment for the teaching – learning process is to ascertain that students meet the basic required competency and appreciation of a certain topic and the course. The assessment for flexible learning will be the same as for onsite learning except in how the assessment processes will be administered and implemented.

1. Students must be aware of how they will be assessed and/or graded as to expected output/tasks. Assessment shall be discussed and be crafted with the students to come up with common amenable understanding how students will be assessed. The percentage allocation for each component shall be discussed; class standing (attendance), quizzes, term exams, output, and assignments. Rubrics shall be provided for all appropriate tasks. **Faculty members are also encouraged to use their respective assessment tool and the same must be reflected in the syllabi.**

Online Assessment

The following are the *suggested* time allotment for common type of exams and number of items for quizzes and term examination. Modification of such is at the discretion and prudence of faculty member.

Time allotment for each type of exam

Multiple Choice – 90 seconds per item

True/False – 60 seconds per item

Identification – 60 seconds per item

Short Answer Essay – 5 minutes per item

Number of Items

Quizzes

Multiple Choice – 25 – 40 items

True/False – 25 – 40 items

Identification – 10 – 15 items

Short Answer Essay – 3 – 5 items

Term Exam

Multiple Choice, Identification and True/False –
75 – 100 items

Short Answer Essay – 3 – 5 items

2. Students are strongly advised to log-in 15 minutes before the scheduled assessment. In case a student cannot log-in for the online assessment due to some reasons, s/he must inform the faculty member. Faculty members are advised to exercise their prudent judgment on such matter and have an alternative mode of assessment for student to access and comply with the requirement.
3. In case a student gets disconnected during the administration of online exam, s/he will be allowed to retake the exam only once which will be translated in different forms like oral virtual exam. If a student missed any online exam due to other reasons, faculty members are asked to exercise their prudence on the matter and their discretion.
4. Attendance will be extracted 15 minutes before the end of synchronous class.
5. Submission of coursework /assignment will be submitted electronically through the agreed online platform. Faculty and student must come to an agreement concerning the day and time of the submission of assignments. Teachers will mark and grade these assignments and return them with comments so as students will have feedback of their academic performance in class.
6. Before the conduct of midterm exam, faculty must have administered and graded at least three (3) quizzes.

Asynchronous tasks will be specific, creative, and flexible. While the synchronous tasks shall be considerate and mindful of the challenges students may encounter.

7. The university will maintain its institutional format (number grade) on grading system.

J. Quality Assurance Process

1. The evaluation of the student flexible learning experience comprises an integral component of the University's quality assurance processes and procedures. After the administration of the midterm exam, students will be asked to participate in an online survey to ascertain their flexible learning experience.

2. Assessment such as quizzes and term exam will be conducted purely online.
3. Faculty are obliged to give midterm grade of students two (2) week after the conduct of the midterm exam (VPAA Office Memorandum Order No. 68, s 2018).

K. For Faculty to Invite Students to an Online Class on MS Teams

1. Click on **Join or Create a Team**
2. Click on **Create Team**
3. Click on **Class**
4. Enter a **Name** for the class
5. Enter a **Description** to the Class if necessary
6. Click on **Next**
7. Add Students

Either by entering their **names or emails** or you can use the **distribution list**.

L. Minimum Educational Technology Affordances for Flexible Learning

To fully participate in the online courses this 1st semester AY 2020-2021, it is vital to consider the technology needed to have a successful course. We recommend that you meet the technical requirements below when using the learning management system (LMS) of the University which is the MS Teams.

Required Hardware	Computer (laptop/desktop) or mobile device (smartphone/tablet) Speakers/headphones/earbuds for listening to audio or videos presented in courses.
Optional Hardware	Webcam for interacting in course activities that require video feedback from students.
Required Software	Internet Browser such as Mozilla Firefox or Google Chrome and/or Adobe Acrobat Reader.
Optional Software	Microsoft Office (Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint which can be downloaded using student portal account).

Internet Connection

Stable internet connection.

Availability of Device during Designated Class Hours

Devices—whether personally owned or not—which can be used for class time should be determined of its availability during designated class hours.

M. Getting Started on MS Teams

1. MS Teams is the digital platform which will be used for online teaching – learning this 1st Semester, AY 2020-2021. Students will use Microsoft Teams for synchronous class sessions.
2. Students who do not have MS Teams installed on their computer / electronic gadget should manually download and install from: **<https://teams.microsoft.com/download>**
3. The first time MS Teams is used it will request access to your computer's camera and microphone. Additionally, it may request "Screen Recording" and "Accessibility" access.
4. Students should approve these requests and restart MS Teams when prompted. This is a one-time setup action that will not repeat once permission is granted.
5. Students should launch and sign-in to MS Teams with their school email address and password.
6. Faculty members will create a team for each class. Students will be added by the faculty to the class team.
7. Students need to click once they have accessed their MS Team class.

N. How to join scheduled MS Teams Online Class

1. Click on **Microsoft Teams icon**
2. Sign in with your **Microsoft account** and **password**
3. On your **calendar**, you will see all your classes for the day and click **join** button to attend the class.

4. Just click **allow** in case it will ask permission to record audio.
5. Click on **join now**.
6. As soon as you join the class, you will be asked to **turn on your video** and **turn off your microphone** unless you have been recognized to speak.
7. As soon as the class is over, you may click **leave the meeting**.

For information and introduction to Microsoft Teams:

<https://www.tsu.edu.ph/>

Quick Links

Introduction to Microsoft Teams

Signing into MS Teams for First Time Students tutorial available at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qx8xHpRMFHU>

A brief guide for students and parents using MS Teams for online learning. Available at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SemjM2fHV2Q>

O. **Netiquette Guidelines for Students During Online Classes**

1. **Punctuality.** Be on time for online classes. Log in 15 minutes before your scheduled class
2. **Wear proper and appropriate attire.** Learning from the comfort of your home can make it feel desirable to dress down, but we want to make sure we are looking presentable and professional for each other, just like we do at school.
3. **Choose a good location.** The most important thing is to have a clean and non-distracting background. If possible, set up your workstation with your materials ready and a neutral background. Please do not set up your workplace in your bedroom.
4. **Take down notes.** No recording or taking of pictures instead jot down notes of important information your professor is giving you.
5. **Mute yourself.** When you enter the online class, just mute yourself for the whole time, except when called on and let your instructor know by a private chat message that you would like to speak.

- 6. Video on.** Make sure your video is on (if you have camera capabilities) so your teacher and peers can see you.
- 7. Focused attention.** Give your full, undivided attention. when on an online meeting it may be tempting to use another device or engage with someone or something else in your surroundings rather than the meeting that you are a participant in.
- 8. Use proper language.** Please do not use profanity or inappropriate language, no emoticons, and/or text message language. The discussion board/chatbox is like a workplace and is meant to be professional; it is public, and a record of the chat is kept and archived.
- 9. Do ask questions.** If you are experiencing some confusion or have a question about something, it is likely that someone else has that same question.
- 10. Think before you type.** A passing comment spoken in class can be forgotten a few minutes later, but what you share in an online classroom is part of a permanent digital record.

P. Module Used

Faculty members have prepared modules to be used for flexible learning. The following shall be observed:

1. Modules can be printed at the Business Center or outside services following procurement rules, if necessary.
2. Modules can be attached / sent to students ONLINE via MS Team.
3. Modules can be sent to students OFFLINE through the chairperson / Dean. This will be coordinated with LGU for distribution.
4. TSU facilities / vehicle shall be used to distribute modules to LGU for offline students, if necessary.

Q. Monitoring Progress

Everyone is enjoined to monitor progress of the use of flexible learning. The following are to be observed:

1. Monitor students who have not joined the ONLINE classes, since the MS Teams is capable of providing list of students on board.

2. After one or two weeks, report to the Chairperson name of students not attending the classes.
3. Chairperson/Dean will verify the address and contact number, if any, from the data base. Printed modules can be prepared for them for distribution.
4. Initial contact to them shall be made by the Dean/Chairperson/Faculty with the help of guidance office.

The University recognizes the unique needs of each program in every college. Thus, faculty members are highly encouraged to use other supplementary teaching platforms which are available and accessible to them and their students other than the MS Teams. The faculty must ensure that such use of platform will enrich the teaching-learning process in their classes and will not be a problem to their students.

The new academic year is full of challenges, but the University is certain that we can face and withstand these challenges and uncertainties because we are crossing together as one community. The University calls and encourages everyone to be of help on how we can implement and improve the Flexible Learning program of our beloved TSU.

Let us be together in identifying and assessing problems that might come along the way and let us be part of the solutions. Because in TSU, we teach as ONE and we educate as ONE.

Any concerns shall be addressed the best way the University can if properly communicated.


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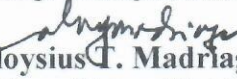

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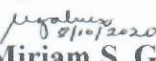

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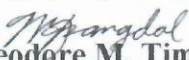

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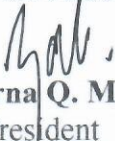

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