FAQs: Local Campus Course Transition Due to COVID-19

Q. I have already established a routine where I prefer to be in the campus environment when I attend courses. Would it be ok if I go to the campus to attend/facilitate my course and use the wireless internet connection at that location?
A. Providing the campus location remains open, students and faculty may access the virtual classroom at a campus location and use the institution's wireless internet to do so. Students and faculty will still have to access the Blackboard Collaborate Course Room to go to class and gain attendance during this time frame, but students and faculty are able to use the campus facilities if this better fits their lives, busy schedules and routines. However, we ask that all faculty, students, and staff coming to the campus use their best judgment and only come to the campus if they need to and are feeling well. In addition, please use recommended precautions including social distancing, washing your hands frequently, and covering coughs and sneezes.

Q. I don't have an internet connection at home, what do I do?
A. Blackboard Collaborate can also be accessed through a mobile device using either mobile web (recommended) or the Blackboard App for users with better cellular connections as compared to their internet access. If a student does not have a wi fi connection at home it may be viable to use your cellular device with data to connect to the internet. Some of our students have recently made us aware their cellular provider has informed them they are - for a limited time - taking measures to assist their customers during these challenging times, to include providing unlimited data, waiving certain fees, etc. We encourage each student to speak with their specific service provider to obtain the specifics, but these measures, if offered by your provider, could also provide you with another method of accessing the internet. By enabling your phone as a mobile hotspot on your cellular device, you can create a way for you to connect other devices (laptop, tablet, etc.) to the internet, via your mobile phone's hot spot. If - after speaking with your service provider - you need assistance in the steps to set up a hotspot for your mobile device, an **article** has been added to the student Knowledge Base (KB), or you can contact our Technical Assistance Center at **877-832-4867**. If none of these options are feasible, students should contact their assigned Academic Counselor for further information and options.

Q. I am having technical difficulties accessing or using Collaborate. Who should I contact?
A. For technical questions regarding Blackboard Collaborate, contact the technical support team at 877-832-4867 or review **Collaborate Session Help for Participants**. *Collaborate usage recommendations:*
- Users should take advantage of the **most current version of an internet browser** (Chrome, Edge, etc.), in order for Collaborate to function properly.
- If a user is experiencing issues with audio or video, please limit the number of additional streaming requests on your network (ex: home network with multiple streaming devices, while also using audio/video with Collaborate).
- If there is an echo on the line please ask users that may be using a dial in addition to their PC audio to mute on of these sources. An echo is generally caused by having to active audio sources connected to the Blackboard Collaborate environment
- For assistance in reviewing your internet browser version, or troubleshooting, please contact technical support.

Q. As a student I don't have access to share my screen or materials upon logging in, but my instructor does. Why is this?
A. Students upon login into the Blackboard Collaborate Course Room are placed in the *Participant* role automatically and have limitations as to what they can share in that role as a participant for lecture-style class purposes. However, an instructor has the ability to place a student in the *Presenter* or *Moderator* role during the session if they would like students to present materials or collaboratively share resources during the class meeting.

Q. Do I have to login to the Blackboard Collaborate Course Room directly, or can I just use a phone number to dial in and listen to my course session?
A. Although users may utilize the option of the dial in conference line for sound purposes to augment their Collaborate sessions, in order to meet attendance students must be logged into the Blackboard Collaborate Course Room directly. In order to fully engage in the course, it is important that students are logged into the Collaborate environment directly to see materials and access features like whiteboards, chat, and breakout rooms. Please refer to the instructions and information related to logging in and taking attendance for more details on this.

Q. How will attendance be determined during the Collaborate session?
A. During the local campus to online transition, positive attendance will be recorded for all local campus students who access the online Blackboard Collaborate session during the scheduled class time, as confirmed by session access records recorded in Blackboard for each student.
As with all emergency scenarios, if this prescribed process is not successful due to technical challenges in a session, we will honor an alternative method for recording attendance, via a manual roster or email from the faculty member.

Q. I noticed that the Blackboard Collaborate Course Room option is always there when I login to Blackboard Ultra, could I use this to synchronously connect with my fellow students at any time?
A. Yes, students and faculty can always log into the Blackboard Collaborate Course Room once they are logged into the Blackboard Ultra LMS and accessing their class. If another user is actively in the course room a purple border will appear around the Collaborate icon. Students and faculty can use this tool outside of normal course meeting times to conduct group work or hold synchronous office hours.
If your course has learning team assignments, each learning team will also have their own dedicated Collaborate Room, which is available within the learning team conversation area of these learning team assignments.

Q. With the temporary transition to this virtual environment I may need accommodations or assistance because of a medical diagnosis or disability. Who should I contact?
A. If you need accommodations during this transition, please complete the **request for accommodations form** (also located in the books and tools section of your course) or call the disability services office at (480) 557-1157 and speak with an available disability services advisor.

Q. If I want more information about the University's response to COVID-19 during this time where should I go?
A. For the latest information concerning the University's response to COVID-19 please visit our microsite at **www.phoenix.edu/COVID19**.

Q. If there are any changes to how the University is handling me as a campus-based student or faculty member, how will I know?
A. During this time the primary form of communication will be email. Depending on the scenario the University may also post alerts on ecampus or reach out to students directly, but for any material changes to this temporary transition students will receive updates sent directly to their email address on file.

Q. If I become ill and am not able to attend a virtual class session, will there be excused absences and what is the process?
A. Circumstances may arise which prevent a student from attending class. The University's unexcused absence policy allows unexcused absence(s) to be granted based on the number of workshops within a course. An unexcused absence may affect the final course grade due to the missed opportunity to earn participation points. In the event the allowable absences in a course are exceeded, students may request one excused absence in a course for an extreme serious illness or hospitalization of the student or family member with supporting documentation. Documentation can include a note from the doctor or release from the hospital. The documentation does not need to contain specifics of the medical condition and/or injury, etc. In addition, students in a degree or certificate program receive an excused absence without providing any supporting documentation one time per program, and non-degree students are permitted one excused absence without supporting documentation one time. The University provides this one-time exception, in addition to allowed absences as outlined in the unexcused absences policy, to provide further support to students. It accounts for a variety of circumstances that could prevent students from attending class, but which are not covered by the excused absence policy. Students should still provide documentation for excused absences outside of this one-time exception. Students requesting an excused absence should contact their Academic Counselor for assistance.

Q. If I need to take a break from my program for an extended period of time, how do I submit a Leave of Absence Request?
A. Any student wishing to request a Leave of Absence (LOA) should contact his or her academic counselor to discuss available options. The Leave of Absence request form can be completed by accessing the student website.   Refer to the University's Academic Leave of Absence Policy found in the University's Academic Catalog for further information. You may also refer to the Leave of Absence Policy found in the appendix of the **Consumer Information Guide**. This policy addresses the impact to Title IV recipients when there is an approved temporary interruption in a student's program of study.

Q. Do we have an expected end date for this mode of attending class?
A. Currently (as of 3/13/2020), the university is planning for virtual class sessions until **April 3, 2020.** We will continue to monitor the situation and will adjust as needed based on recommendations from the CDC, WHO, and any state/local authorities. Should we need to extend past 4/3/2020, additional communication will be sent.

Q. Do I need additional equipment (camera, microphone, etc.) in order to participate in a Blackboard Collaborate session? Will there be a chat feature available?
A. Students and Faculty can use a computer or the mobile app on a smartphone or tablet to access the classroom. When using a computer, the computer speakers and microphone should suffice. If you have a headset available, you may also use it. If the computer you are using captures video, then you can use this feature within the classroom, but it is not necessary for attending the session.

There is a chat feature available within the Collaborate classroom. You will be able to interact through text or voice.

Q. If there is an assignment that requires presenting, how will this occur?
A. Any individual listed as a "moderator" in the classroom can present to the class. Faculty can move students in and out of this moderator designation as needed. Additionally, students can send their presentations to the faculty to present during the class session. Please refer to the Collaborate resources for more information.

Q. Do students need to be in attendance from 6PM-10PM to receive positive attendance?
A. The attendance policy for local campus courses requires the student to attend the workshop meeting during the scheduled class and sign the roster. **During the local campus to online transition, positive attendance will be recorded for all local campus students who access the online Blackboard Collaborate session during the instructor-led class time, as confirmed by session access records recorded in Blackboard for each student**

Q. What resources are available to me as a student to learn more about the Blackboard Collaborate Course Room?
A. To learn more about the Blackboard Collaborate Course Room please watch this brief **overview video** and **tutorial video**. Also students can reference the Collaborate Course Room Resource Guide located **here** for more information.

***As always, if you have questions about your schedule, future course attendance, or your financial options, please contact your assigned Academic Counselor.**