

MARCH 16, 2020

Update from Immigration Services for Faculty & Scholars (ISFS) re: COVID-19:

- For ALL initial J-1 exchange visitors (i.e. those who were approved by our office and received an initial DS-2019) with a March, April, and May pending arrival in the US: we will delay their program/visit start date to June 1, 2020 and issue and mail them a new initial DS-2019. Our office has already emailed the exchange visitors who were supposed to begin their program in March and April. We will email the ones with a May start date.
- We are suspending the processing and issuance of DS-2019s for all new J-1 invitation requests. Let me know if you submitted one to our office and would like to know the status.
- If you are working on new J-1 invitation packets, the start date of your visitor needs to be beyond at least June 1, 2020.
- J-1 extension requests will be reviewed and processed as normal.

Please contact Virginie Blum at vblum@tamu.edu if you have any additional questions.

COVID-19 Updates & Resources



Greetings all,

As you know, the situation with how we need to deal with the COVID-19 is constantly changing. You have received multiple emails from the University/Provost and the college, in addition to the department. Unfortunately, this often tends to create more questions than answers, which many of us on the department leadership team have been addressing. The intent of this update is simply to provide frequent (hopefully daily) updates on what we know.

I want to assure you all that we are in constant contact with administration and our department leadership as new directives arise.

I ask that faculty, staff, and graduate students who are at greater risk of getting ill from COVID-19 to self-isolate and stay at home and work remotely until receiving additional directives from the department. Based on CDC guidance, those at greater risk are: a) older adults (usually over 60 years of age); b) People who have serious chronic medical conditions like heart disease, diabetes, or lung disease; or c) people who have compromised immune systems.

Included in this 'Update' are answers to some of the questions that faculty, staff and students may have regarding COVID-19. As the situation with the Covid-19 virus continues to evolve, there will be challenges to carrying out our various land-grant missions. Listed below are four important links that provide Up-To-Date information:

COALS: <https://aglifesciences.tamu.edu/covid19/>

University: <https://www.tamu.edu/coronavirus/>

Vice President for Research: <https://vpr.tamu.edu/covid-19>

TAMU FAQ page: <https://www.tamu.edu/coronavirus/#FAQ>

Academic Updates

Considerations for Transitioning to Online Course Delivery TAMU Department of Animal Science

As mandated by University and System officials, all TAMU courses are required to be delivered online for the rest of the Spring 2020 semester (beginning on March 23 through April 28). The university has a website with the available technological resources: <https://provost.tamu.edu/keep-teaching> and our office will be working individually with everyone who would like assistance in making this transition. A “frequently asked questions” page will be added to the departmental intranet by end of day Tuesday, March 17 and the link will be sent to all faculty and graduate students.

While this will be a challenging task, especially for hands-on labs and graded assignments, below are several considerations to help make this transition effective for our students and minimize inconveniences for faculty and students.

Communicating with Students

The upheaval that we are presently facing is likely minimal to that of our students. Maintaining and/or increasing communication with students will be essential to help manage this transition.

- Prior to Wednesday March 18, email students and inform them that classes have been cancelled until the 20th and will be moving online as of the 23rd.
- Consider recording a brief video that can be posted to your eCampus course web page in which you are discussing the overall approach to the remainder of the semester. This will provide students an opportunity to familiarize themselves with accessing content via eCampus. Assistance in recording and/or posting a video can be provided by contacting Jack Frizzell (jackf@tamu.edu).
- Post an updated syllabus to Howdy by March 23rd.
- Once the semester is underway, plan to email your students when course content is available and when assessments are due.
- Provide an expected response time to email and/or telephone calls (i.e. 24-48 hours) as well as times in which you will be available for virtual office hours via zoom and/or are accessible on the course discussion boards in eCampus.
- On campus office hours are not to be conducted. While students may be on campus, all course related communication needs to be conducted online.

Use of eCampus

Every course taught every semester by default has an eCampus course web page. Online course resources through eCampus are currently used by ANSC faculty to various degrees.

- It is recommended that course announcements, grades, and links to content and assignments be presented via eCampus.
- This is a time in which we will all need to rely upon each other to help facilitate the success of our classes. If you are a faculty member who is comfortable using eCampus and would be willing to serve as a resource for your office suite or working group, it would be appreciated.

Course materials

- *Pacing for the remainder of the course.* The loss of class time for the week of March 16-20 will require alteration to the course calendar and syllabus. While an updated syllabus needs to be available to your students by March 23, the content for the remaining 6 weeks of the semester does not. Content can be added on a week by week basis. After outlining the critical content and making necessary changes to projects and assessments (including homework, assignments, quizzes and exams) focus on composing course materials on a week by week basis. This will also allow for time to make adjustments to materials and/or delivery as we move forward.

- *Consider asynchronous (as opposed to synchronous) delivery of materials.* This will allow you to post 1 weeks' worth of course content (i.e. material, homework, assessments) at a time. The asynchronous approach allows the students time flexibility during the week on when they read/view the information. This flexibility is necessary as it is likely that our students may not have access to a reliable internet connection during the scheduled class time. It is also likely that the systems being used to delivery course content may become overloaded, thereby this will provide more time for addressing any technical difficulties.
- *Remain present in the delivery of the course content.* Please consider making videos for students as opposed to just uploading power points or notes. This can be done by (1) recording the voice narration over PowerPoint presentations, (2) use of a document camera with voice narration where you write notes on a piece of paper like you would on chalk/white board, and/or markup hard copies of printed handouts. If you have students with accessibility requirements, there are recording tools such as Camtasia that will help in that area. *Camtasia is best for recording of PowerPoint videos and video editing in general.*
- *Lab activities.* Every faculty member will have to decide how best to handle information and "activities" from their labs. Although not as interactive as in-person labs, videos of procedures, animals, scenarios, etc. can provide a reasonable substitute during these unique circumstances. For classes with multiple sections, it is advised to capture one lab recording and share across the sections. If you are planning to record any content at the ANSC facilities or include any animals in your recordings, please let Debbie Perry (dperry@tamu.edu) know.

Graded course assignments and exams

This will be the most challenging aspect for online course delivery for most courses. Although there are many options for assessments through eCampus, the following considerations are likely the easiest to implement.

- *Homework assignments.* Have students submit homework assignments as pdf documents. An assessment link in eCampus allows students to upload files. The pdf file can be printed off and then graded by hand as with paper hard copy submissions; this option also allows a rubric for the assignment to be loaded where the grade and missed points/comments can be added directly to the student's pdf file electronically.
- *Exams.* Consider having students complete an "open-note" exam or project in lieu of the exam. There is no way to guard against cheating without use of a proctor and the available proctor services are experiencing high volumes of users under the present situation. If a timed exam must be given, there are mechanisms to do so in eCampus. The challenge will be to have acceptable alternate scenarios for students who are not able to access a reliable internet connection or experience technical difficulties during the exam time. We are going to need to rely on the Aggie Code of Honor and impress that upon our students.

Use of Zoom

It is recommended that Zoom be utilized for live interactions with student groups. These sessions can be recorded and then made available to all students.

- The University has provided resources regarding Zoom training: <https://provost.tamu.edu/keep-teaching>

If you have questions regarding the use of Zoom, please **contact** Jack Frizzell at 979.458.6509 or at his zoom link: <https://tamu.zoom.us/my/jackf>

Graduate Courses

- Graduate courses are advised to follow the same recommendations as undergraduate courses
- Graduate students cannot be required to be on campus
- Graduate course content must be available online
- Graduate courses are not to be taught face to face

Advising Updates:

We know this has been a stressful and confusing time. The advising office would like to provide you all with some clear guidance on how you can still receive all the assistance and advising you need while still keeping in line with the recommended isolation precautions. We have tried to be as concise as possible, but please read the following email in detail to ensure you have all the information you need to be successful this semester.

All advising will move virtual or electronic for the rest of the term. Students should **not** come in to the advising office in person.

Q Drops

As of right now, the Q drop deadline remains the same: April 14th at 5pm. We will be accepting **Q drop forms electronically**. You must send in the signed form (a photo or scanned copy is fine). If you are certain you want to drop the course, you may send the form to cbeamon92@tamu.edu (**Graduate Students**) or anscadvisor@tamu.edu (**Undergraduate Students**). If you have questions about dropping the course prior to executing the drop, please make an appointment per the instructions below. The withdrawal deadline is also April 14th at 5pm. You start the process for withdrawal through your Howdy Portal in the My Records Tab.

Zoom Advising Appointments

If you want or need “face to face” advising, we will be moving our advising appointments to the Zoom platform. All currently scheduled and future appointments in Navigate will move to Zoom for the rest of the semester. There will be no Walk-In Advising for the spring semester. We have extended our appointments in Navigate to accommodate all students. Once your appointment is scheduled (or prior to the day of the appointment, if you have already scheduled it) you will receive an email to you @tamu email with instructions on how to access your Zoom meeting, which can be done by phone, tablet, or computer. Please familiarize yourself with Zoom by visiting tamu.zoom.us. You may still continue to schedule appointments in Navigate, but be aware they will be solely conducted virtually via Zoom. If you have already scheduled an appointment in Navigate, it does not need to be cancelled, but it will only be conducted virtually. If you do not want a virtual appointment and would prefer just to receive email advising, please cancel your Navigate appointment and see below for email advising instructions.

Email Advising

If you don't want a real-time appointment, you are welcome to email your advisor for email advising. Please keep in mind we will be receiving an extremely high volume of email traffic. We will do our best to get back to every student as quickly as possible, especially with preregistration approaching. If advisors set automatic replies with important information, please be sure to read those messages carefully. Those autoreplies will often contain the answers to common questions, and we set them in order to get you critical information as quickly as possible.

We are working diligently to ensure your advising needs are still met in a way that keeps our community safe and healthy. If you have questions, please feel free to email your advisor directly, or to email anscadvisor@tamu.edu. Please refrain from calling our office, as phone lines will likely not be routinely monitored over the next several weeks.

Below is a list of all advisors and their contact information.

Donna Witt d-witt@tamu.edu

Amber Salvato amber.salvato@tamu.edu

Jennifer Rhinesmith-Carranza jrcarranza@tamu.edu

Carissa Beamon cbeamon92@tamu.edu

Considerations for Graduate Students

In an effort to consolidate communication regarding graduate student expectations during this time period. The department will be operating under the following principles:

1. Graduate students are not required to be on campus.
2. Graduate students may continue to conduct research if it can be done in a way that minimizes student interaction and allows for social distancing.
3. Graduate students are encouraged to focus on aspects of projects that can be conducted remotely.
4. Graduate student courses are to be delivered online.
5. Graduate student courses are not to be presented in a face to face format.
6. Graduate students serving as teaching assistants for undergraduate courses are expected to work with the course instructor and perform their duties as assigned.

Additional Departmental Updates:

- In light of current events, and the transition to online classes for the remainder of this semester, the Kleberg door schedule has been modified. The main doors will be open Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 5:30 pm. After hours activities – including weekend events – will be cancelled; any individual/group who previously requested building access for those events will be notified of the cancellation.
- Care and maintenance of our animals and facilities remains a priority. If possible, please use available student workers to meet any animal care and/or facility obligations. New hires will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. To minimize traffic in and out of the business office, please work with me PRIOR to sending any new students in for processing.