



**EMERGENCY PLAN FOR TEACHING CONTINUITY  
IN LIGHT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC  
30 MARCH 2020**

**Preamble**

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the consequent restrictions on movement of people in South Africa, and uncertainty about when face-to-face teaching will resume, we need a strategy to guide our efforts to ensure continued teaching and learning at Wits. In our Learning and Teaching Plan 2020-2024, one of the focus areas is “increasing flexible and life-long learning opportunities”. We had planned to increase the use of blended and online learning over the next five years. But, in common with much of the world, we have been thrown into a situation where we have to work quickly to ensure that the academic programme can continue in some form. We therefore need to execute what Educause calls “Emergency Remote Teaching” (<https://er.educause.edu/articles/2020/3/the-difference-between-emergency-remote-teaching-and-online-learning>). Under the present circumstances, it is clearly impossible to spend the time needed to carefully design high quality online programmes and develop the associated learning resources. However, we can and we must find ways to deliver emergency remote teaching.

Currently, Wits has 6698 courses (including Masters courses) on the Wits-e platform, which are integrated with the Student Management System (SIMS). This number excludes the Health Sciences courses and some Law courses that are on the Moodle Learning Management System). Of these, only 37% (1028) of the courses have been published on Wits-e. This means that the lecturers responsible for these courses have uploaded some course content and are using some tools. The level of student interaction or engagement is yet to be determined. A lot of work has to be done to assist lecturers in designing their courses for online delivery. This is the focus of the Wits COVID-19 Teaching Continuity Emergency Plan.

At a minimum, for teaching to continue we need to ensure that:

1. Every course offered in the second teaching block has an active Sakai site (or Moodle in the case of some courses).
2. Lecturers are available online during scheduled class times and beyond these times if required.
3. Academic support for students who need it is available.
4. Approaches to addressing the needs of students with disabilities are implemented.
5. Options for students who are not able to access Sakai are formulated.

The last point relates to students who do not have smart phones, laptops and/or access to data. At an institutional level, Wits is working with mobile service providers to zero-rate Wits' learning sites. However, we do need to find ways to support students who may not have the requisite devices needed to access online resources.

The Centre for Learning, Teaching and Development (CLTD) has a number of resources, in the form of experienced staff and online documents and videos that are available to support academics.

Wits ICT also has a number of online resources available via <https://wits-e.wits.ac.za/portal>.

The CLTD has created a joinable site on Wits-e (Sakai) called "Dealing with Disruption", which includes links to webinars, resources, and a forum for people to raise questions and share ideas. Academics are encouraged to join this site.

## **Introduction**

This document provides information on a number of approaches to support teaching and learning remotely. They have been prepared based on three sources of input, in addition to the resources already available from the CLTD and Wits ICT:

- Discussions held during a virtual workshop on the topic collaboratively run by the Centre for Learning, Teaching and Development (CLTD), Wits ICT and the Assistant Deans: Teaching and Learning and other representatives from all faculties on 25 March 2020,
- Follow-up suggestions provided by the attendees, and
- Selected online resources from other institutions.

It is important to remember that preparing to teach courses remotely for short periods of campus closure is different from designing fully online courses. There is no time for re-designing the courses completely. However, most of the tools and teaching strategies used online will be the same – with allowances for adoption based on contextual and disciplinary differences, as well as variations in students' learning needs.

In addition, each faculty has developed its own teaching continuity plan, and some have created joinable sites on Sakai. Efforts will be made to share resources across the institution, particularly

through the Dealing with Disruption Sakai site and the Online Resources link from the Teaching and Learning site on the Wits website: <http://www.wits.ac.za/teaching-and-learning/online-resources/>.

## **Introducing an inclusive pedagogical framework to guide emergency remote teaching**

In order to help academics make the transition from contact to online teaching smoothly and quickly, the CLTD has developed an emergency remote teaching framework to provide guidance.

The framework consists of six areas as outlined below:

### **1 Welcoming students and creating a social presence**

Creating an online orientation and welcoming video designed to calm your students and share your intent to support them during the course. You can include schedules, a tour of your course and additional support materials that can help them take responsibility to study online. The CLTD can support you with using your webcam and smartphone to record your videos, and support you in using simple editing software, such as Screencast-O-matic.

### **2 Structuring your content and learning activities**

This is where you organise your content from the student point of view and provide a course/module road map, making it easy for the student to navigate the course/ module. It is also important to establish a predictable pattern or weekly pace to help students manage their time and for you as the academic to manage your tasks.

### **3 Facilitating learning and engaging your students**

This is the stage where you plan and record engaging micro lectures and create engaging assignments with accountability, where students are given active, meaningful tasks, encouraged to engage in readings, and given skeletal outlines and clear guidelines of the tasks they are expected to carry out.

### **4 Using appropriate formative assessment and feedback tools**

In this area there is less reliance on summative, written exam-based types of assessment and encouragement of more formative and authentic types of assessment.

### **5 Managing and evaluating your course**

This is the leg where you identify and adopt simple online strategies that can effectively be managed within this time period, and you avoid overloading the students and overworking yourself.

### **6 Accessibility**

At the outset, it is important to work with the Wits Disability Rights Unit to identify students who may have difficulty accessing online materials due to hearing, visual or other disabilities. We can help ensure that material in these courses is accessible (via transcripts, text-only versions, etc.)

A number of online resources are available to assist academics in implementing each component of the framework.

In addition, to support academics needing to make a quick transition to teaching in an online environment, the CLTD offers resources and recommendations that can be put to use immediately to support student learning. These resources are divided into six key focus areas for teaching remotely:

#### 1. GUIDELINES FOR TEACHING REMOTELY

*Ideas to keep in mind when teaching remotely while considering the pedagogical aspects of learning and teaching.*

#### 2. TOOLS FOR TEACHING REMOTELY

*Ways of transforming face-to-face teaching and learning activities to ones that can be completed remotely.*

#### 3. USING WITS-E TO FACILITATE, SUPPORT AND ASSESS STUDENT LEARNING

*Wits-e is your hub for teaching your course online and remotely.*

#### 4. PREPARING ONLINE CLASSES AND SEMINARS / MEETINGS USING MS TEAMS & ZOOM

*Find out how to use MS TEAMS and ZOOM for remote teaching and group work.*

#### 5. RECORDING MICRO LECTURES AND SHORT VIDEOS

*Find out more about how to record micro lectures and short videos to support your remote teaching.*

#### 6. TRAINING FOR TEACHING REMOTELY

*We are running online training sessions in preparation for our move to remote teaching. Find out the schedules for these training sessions.*

CLTD is offering an increasing number of workshops in an online format. For more information, visit the CLTD website at: <http://www.wits.ac.za/cltd/>.

## **Assessment**

The CLTD can offer guidance and tools for supporting a range of different forms of online assessment.

### Assignments

- There are number of Wits-e tools, which can support the creation of assignments, online submission, marking and feedback.
- Turnitin can be used for similarity checking and will assist lecturers in decreasing ‘copying’, and be used as a developmental tool for students.

### Tests and Quizzes

- Wits –e includes tools that can be used to support formative and summative tests and quizzes.

### Peer Assessment

- Tools to develop habits of peer assessment among the students, prior to the lecturer’s final mark.

### Digital Portfolios

- Wits-e does not have a digital portfolio tool. Google Apps can be used to create interactive ePortfolios. WordPress is another tool used in the academic space. Google has tools to support reflection and to collate evidence of learner progress.

## Accessing support from CLTD

The CLTD staff are available for consultations, and for technical support for academics who are using Sakai, Microsoft Teams and Zoom. Educational Developers (EDs) and Instructional Designers (IDs) have been assigned to each faculty to offer consultations and support. You can contact the relevant colleagues as follows:

### Educational Developers

Faculty	Name of Educational Consultant	Mobile phone number and times available for consultation
ENGINEERING AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT	Renee Koch <a href="mailto:Renee.koch@wits.ac.za">Renee.koch@wits.ac.za</a>	0834544791 Mon, Tue, Wed (from 13:00); Thurs, Fri (08:00 – 15:00)
HUMANITIES	Najma Aghardien <a href="mailto:najma.aghardien@wits.ac.za">najma.aghardien@wits.ac.za</a>	0823388899 Mon, Tue, Wed, Fri 08:00 – 15:00
HEALTH SCIENCES	Nazira Hoosen <a href="mailto:Nazira.hoosen@wits.ac.za">Nazira.hoosen@wits.ac.za</a>	0810105146 Mon, Tue, Wed, Fri 08:30-15:00

SCIENCE	Sipho Hlabane <a href="mailto:Sipho.hlabane@wits.ac.za">Sipho.hlabane@wits.ac.za</a>	0767281079 Mon-Friday 8:30-15:00
CLM	Rieta Ganas <a href="mailto:Rieta.ganas@wits.ac.za">Rieta.ganas@wits.ac.za</a>	0832885482 Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri 8:30 – 15:00

All the instructional designers are available for support via the email below:  
[IDSupport.clttd@wits.ac.za](mailto:IDSupport.clttd@wits.ac.za) from 8h30-15h00, Monday – Friday.

**For further assistance, contact:**

Rita Kizito: Director, CLTD. Mobile number: 0823547458 or e-mail [rita.kizito@wits.ac.za](mailto:rita.kizito@wits.ac.za);  
 Gerrit Wissing: Deputy Director, CLTD. E-mail: [gerrit.wissing@wits.ac.za](mailto:gerrit.wissing@wits.ac.za)

**Additional reading:**



Chronical of Higher Education, Article Collection.  
 Available at: [https://connect.chronicle.com/CS-WC-2020-CoronavirusFreeReport\\_LP-SocialTraffic.html?cid=FEATUREDNAV](https://connect.chronicle.com/CS-WC-2020-CoronavirusFreeReport_LP-SocialTraffic.html?cid=FEATUREDNAV)