

FAQ's in response to Memo 19.2021

The purpose of the FAQs is to guide faculties in their planning processes for the T&L experience for staff and students as communicated in Memo 19. It is not a recipe for what faculties need to do. Instead, it is designed to enable various faculties and support divisions to anticipate possible areas for consideration as we move to 2022.

1. In the context of small group teaching, is the expectation that I need to schedule several classes with different students to engage with the same topic? (In other words, will I have to repeat classes with about 20-50 students in a session?)

The focus of the hybrid TL experience is to purposefully balance face-to-face and online teaching and learning. By no means is it expected that lectures should be repeated. On the contrary, academic staff need to ensure that all students have the opportunity to have a structured and facilitated learning environment with meaningful in person engagement (f2f or synchronously), with academic staff throughout the course of the semester. This can mean repeat classes (if there are adequate venues available for this and the module is relatively small), but it does not have to mean repeat classes: it could mean that you stagger smaller group interactions so that by the time the semester closes you will have seen the whole group spread over the weeks of the semester.

For example, small group teaching can also occur as a follow up on a live (synchronous) or pre-recorded (asynchronous) lecture (jointly in the case of an aligned module). Students will access/attend the asynchronous/synchronous lectures, after which small group interaction will occur. These small groups do not necessarily need to be weekly. Rather, they need to be purposefully integrated in the design of the module to ensure meaningful in-person engagement. These interactions can be either virtual and/or face to face, but the “bottom line” is that every module should have some f2f exposure for students with academics, which is monitored to ensure that each student “gets some contact” and that the contact offered supports the learning programme for both the academic and the student. Small group pedagogy affords students to engage with the module content, supported by the lecturer or facilitator, using active learning strategies such as discussions, Q&A sessions, tutorials, application of content (practice), reflection, peer feedback, etc.

2. I have an aligned module. How do we “team teach” effectively if there must still be a presence in the face-to-face environment on each campus?

Module teams (lecturers, assistants, tutors) should devise a strategy to engage in person (f2f + online) with students meaningfully, taking into account a cross campus aligned student learning experience without compromising equitable workload distribution amongst academic staff members.

3. How can I employ the expertise of my student assistants to support teaching and learning in the context of small group teaching?

Student assistants (including SI facilitators, mentors, tutors,) are to be appointed to enable staff workload to remain reasonable. In the context of small group teaching, assistants' expertise should be applied in an integrated manner in the online and/or f2f setting. Examples include pre-lecture engagement, engagement during the lecture/small group session, monitoring of student's engagement, marking and feedback.

4. Which discipline specific teaching development opportunities are available for student assistants?

Schools/subject groups should ensure that student assistants are equipped with discipline specific pedagogic content knowledge to support meaningful T&L in the online and f2f environments. The CTL is also available to offer opportunities to student assistants for peer support development that focuses on pedagogic content knowledge.

5. My module is taught multi-lingually. How will I ensure that the small groups are in the language of choice/translated?

Multilingual teaching approaches are possible. For example, groups can be advised to use Afrikaans, or English or a combination thereof, with multilingual pedagogy support. It is recommended that module teams

should propose the language of instruction according to the language competencies of the module teams, taking into account the affordances and expertise offered by the translation services in the institution. We are also pressing ahead with the implementation of Sesotho and Setswana resources in selected flagship modules or flagship programmes in every Faculty. Please consult your Faculty Language Plan for the details of these modules and please be in touch with the Language Directorate if you need to, and/or would like to make such provision possible within your modules. There is Faculty specific budget already available to assist, in the Language Directorate, with this. In 2022 we have SLPs in Sesotho, Setswana and Afrikaans available to you and your students. We also have the SLP in Multilingual Pedagogies available for your staff and student assistants. Please contact the Language Directorate for details about the modality of offering, the scheduling etc.

6. What can I do if I want to offer classes in a hybrid modality? (In other words, can students attend either online or f2f)?

Video conferencing hardware: CTL has tested the use of existing class technology on the Potchefstroom Campus to use in hybrid context, using a video conferencing platform, and to record the event. Similar testing on the Vaal and Mahikeng Campuses will follow. Some cabling and audio alterations need to be made in these venues to make a T&L opportunity accessible to remote students in an online mode, as well as relaying these opportunities to more than one venue on, and between campuses, whilst also making it accessible for remote students. Please find out which Covid19 Compliant Venues are equipped with the hardware and software for a hybrid modality.

If a venue does not have this technology, it is advised to use options set out below to record the learning opportunity in advance and make it available for students to access and engage with.

Lecturers can rent video conferencing cameras to temporarily set up in classes for recording of their sessions. At least 28 Aver video conferencing cameras are available, with accompanying management and recording software. CTL is in the process of procuring another 37x video conferencing and 29 document cameras to be used for this purpose. This service will be rendered by CTL's Education Technology Resource Assistants and can be requested on the CTL App on several web pages.

Alternatively, these video/ document cameras can be set up in lecturers' (remote) offices, from where they can run video conferencing sessions. Recording is done on the software and captured on memory stick/laptop, whereafter it should be uploaded to eFundi.

One Button Studios (OBS) are available on Vanderbijlpark and Mahikeng, and can be used to record lectures, short sessions, and concept videos. The recording studios on the two campuses are also available with quality equipment for podcasts, voice overs, recording of lectures.

Software for video conferencing: Currently, Zoom is in use (two-way video/audio + additional audio channels for interpreting). Panopto is also available, but communication is restricted to one-way video/audio to students, and text-based response between student and lecturer. Experimentation with the use of Teams together with Panopto is under way but is not yet considered as the fail-safe standard.

7. Will there be support and training for hybrid enabled/equipped venues.

It is anticipated that assistance will be required for the lecturer during a hybrid f2f session (in class attendance, with students also attending virtually). There will have to be assistance available in the classroom monitoring whatever system is used (e.g., Teams) to monitor student activity (questions in chats, students' raised hands, etc.) during a session. The latter could be provided by teaching assistants and arranged by the lecturer. Even with small groups managing multiple "audiences will not be a one-person job.

Real time online technical support will, however, be required to deal with connectivity glitches, audibility, etc.,. It is anticipated that student assistants need to be trained to use the equipment. IT will provide training to use such equipment in these venues, whilst CTL will train all lecturers who have rented the mobile video technologies in the use of the hardware and associated software on issuing it.

8. How can learning analytics be used to inform small group teaching?

Learning Analytics can provide information on areas that students have difficulties to understand. Such areas can then be the focus of the small group teaching. In this way, Learning Analytics can help students to develop ownership of their learning to become more self-directed. Basic analytics for academics take the form of

assessment results, the monitoring of presence and engagement in f2f engagements, or online engagement, and a range of apps exist to assist with this. From a student's point of view peer-feedback, academic feedback, responsiveness to interaction, assessment results all form part of learning analytics and technology.

9. How, and at what stage in the semester, will I classify which students need to attend in person f2f or online face sessions?

It is suggested that module teams should work closely with administrative systems such as eFundi/SALA to identify groups of students to attend staggered f2f sessions. As we learned with Covid-19 in 2020 and 2021- special attention needs to be paid to students who, for instance, do not engage/participate or have low/no assessment marks. Please monitor the f2f sessions and make these mandatory to attend in person to engage, deepen and clarify learning material with personal engagement; the "bottom line": each module should make provision for some f2f exposure for students. Online participation (presence as well as engagement) can be monitored in the ways we have developed in 2020 and 2021, for example: short MCQs on the lecture materials, or short tests on content.

10. Should attendance in f2f and online sessions for students be compulsory? How do I manage this? What happens if students do not attend?

Attendance must be monitored in order for the academic staff to know which students have not yet attended in f2f and small group sessions (f2f or online). Why is this important? We have learned in 2020 and 2021 that online presence does not equal engagement and so f2f opportunities are needed to assess and intervene with students' learning to create confidence about the levels of learning and engagement arising from the offering of online and in-person teaching.

11. From my experience in the online learning environment, my students do not have the ability to manage their time and take ownership of their learning. How can I ensure that students will take accountability for their learning?

In 2022 we are offering a fully populated timetable, but venue capacity limitations will mean that Faculties will need to arrange with students about who gets to attend which sessions, in a clear manner (remember the bottom line is that "everyone must get some"). Given the venue capacity limitations, it is clearly not possible to see all your students in a module, every week as was possible in pre-Covid times: hence staggering group contact is necessary. At the back of this organised, though limited contact with students, is eFundi on which is made available the materials, the guidance to students about to use their materials in clear ways (semester schedule, planned communication, self-paced learning activities, self-assessments, discussions, study resources, assessment plan, assessments, rubrics etc.) in order for students to engage with lecturers, the content and with other students. This will contribute to a positive, motivated, self-paced/directed learning experience.

Furthermore, academic staff should focus on the development of much more explicit/structured guidance on how to approach, for example, small group sessions/assessments (instructions, preparation, rubrics, modelling, best practice guidelines, etc.) to ensure students are supported in their tasks.

12. Will there be training/learning opportunities for academics for Hybrid TL offering as suggested in Memo 19?

Yes, the CTL will continue to offer various opportunities for staff to attend as part of the continuous professional development for online and face to face teaching and learning, both of which are a priority for the hybrid TL experience.

As questions arise we will also add to the FAQs so as to expand consensus approaches, and best-practices, to T-L for 2022.