SMC Emergency Remote Teaching Guide

Introduction

At Santa Monica College, we know that emergencies don't wait for a convenient time. Whether it's a wildfire, earthquake, public health crisis, or another unexpected event, the reality is that things can change quickly — and when they do, our students still need connection, consistency, and compassion.

This guide is here to support you in those moments. It's designed to provide *just-in-time help* as well as *preparation tips ahead of time*, so you're not scrambling when a disruption happens. Think of it as a living toolkit: something you can lean on when you're transitioning your class online in a hurry or when you're building a backup plan just in case.

You'll find practical advice on:

- Teaching remotely using Canvas and other tools
- Adjusting in-person activities for remote settings
- Communicating with students during an emergency
- Taking care of yourself while supporting your class
- Understanding what counts as "remote teaching equivalency"

Whether you're new to online teaching or you've done this before, our goal is to meet you where you are. You don't have to figure it all out alone.

Teaching through disruption isn't easy, but you don't have to be perfect. You just need to stay connected, be flexible, and know where to turn when you need a little help. We hope this site can be one of those places.

Support for Canvas and Academic Tech Tools

Plan Ahead

Emergencies are, by nature, unpredictable — but your response doesn't have to be. A little planning at the start of the semester can go a long way in helping you (and your students) stay steady if you ever need to quickly shift your class online.

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This section outlines simple, doable steps you can take before anything happens. You don't have to do it all at once — just start with what's most important for your class and build from there.

Make Sure Everyone Has What They Need

- Check in with your students during the first week: Do they have reliable internet, a computer, and a webcam? If not, refer them to GPS for technology loaner programs.
- Do a quick self-check, too. Is your own home setup (Wi-Fi, computer, webcam) working well? Now's the time to troubleshoot or request help.

Keep Your Canvas Shell Ready

Even if you teach in person, having a basic, organized Canvas course gives you a solid starting point if you ever need to shift online. All on-ground courses have a companion Canvas shell available for use.

- Upload your syllabus, handouts, and class schedule.
- Create weekly Modules with at least some materials and instructions.
- Post regular announcements or updates to get students used to checking in online.

Record a Few Key Lectures (Over Time!)

You don't need to record everything at once — but having a few short videos ready can really help.

- Aim to record just 25% of your lectures or mini lessons each semester using Zoom, Canvas Studio, or another tool.
- Add captions and/or transcripts to support accessibility.
- Store the recordings in your Canvas course or a Google Drive folder that you can share.

Move Your Exams & Quizzes Online (Now, Not Later)

Having your assessments ready in Canvas can prevent a lot of stress if the campus suddenly closes.

- Convert your exams into Canvas Quizzes so they're ready to go.
- If you are a STEM instructor and may need to use online proctoring services, you will need to complete the campus training in advance. See your department chair for more information.
- Spread out assessment due dates, if possible, to reduce backlog and support student pacing.

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Digitize Homework & Practice Assignments

Look at your current assignments and ask: "Could this live in Canvas?"

- Upload written assignments using the Canvas Assignments tool.
- Explore publisher platforms (like Pearson, McGraw Hill, etc.) that may offer digital versions of your textbook's practice modules, quizzes, or labs.

✏️ **Bonus Tip: Include an Emergency Plan in Your Syllabus**

Let students know what to expect if there's a disruption. A short note like:

> *"If campus closes, we'll continue our class through Canvas. Check your email and Canvas Announcements regularly for updates."*

...can go a long way in setting expectations and easing anxiety if things change.

These steps aren't just about being prepared for a crisis — they also make your class more flexible and accessible for students from the start. You don't have to be perfect. Just start somewhere.

Publish Your Course in Canvas

The resources below are designed to walk you through the basics, from setting up your course shell to uploading your syllabus and publishing your course so students can access it. You'll also find short video guides, step-by-step tutorials, and optional templates to make the process even easier.

You don't have to build the "perfect" course to get started. Just focus on getting the essentials in place. The goal is to have a course that's clear, accessible, and ready to go — especially if you ever need to shift online quickly.

Using Canvas for the First Time

- [Quick Start Video Guide for Canvas](#)
- [Canvas Global Navigation Tutorial Videos](#)
- [Canvas Course Navigation and Basic Course Design Tutorial Videos](#)

Setting Up Your Canvas Course

- [Creating Your Course in an Hour – Canvas Quick Start](#)

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- [Canvas Course Templates](#)

Step-by-Step Guides

- [Uploading your course syllabus](#)
- [Adding course assignments and activities](#)
- [Publishing your course for student access](#)

Canvas Training and Professional Development

- [Teaching Online with Canvas – Professional Development Resources](#)

Keep Your Students Updated

Communicate with Your Students

When things feel uncertain or routines change, clear and consistent communication makes all the difference. Whether you're teaching in person, online, or somewhere in between, students need to know how to reach you — and where to find the latest info about your class.

This section gives you quick guides for staying connected with your students through Canvas tools like Announcements, Inbox, and Chat, as well as how to hold remote office hours using Zoom. These small habits can help students feel supported and stay on track, especially during a disruption.

Pick one or two methods that feel comfortable for you and stick with them — consistency is key.

Step-by-Step Guides

- [Sending Course Announcements to your class](#)
- [Using Canvas Inbox to message students](#)
- [Using Zoom to hold remote office hours](#)
- [Using Chat in Canvas](#)

Share Course Content Using Canvas

Once your course is published, you'll want to start adding the materials your students need — like readings, handouts, videos, or lecture recordings to pages on Canvas. Canvas

makes it simple to share all kinds of content in one place, so students don't have to hunt through emails or multiple platforms to find what they need.

This section shows you how to upload files, link to outside resources, and add pre-recorded lectures or videos directly to your course. Whether you're sharing a quick PDF or a full recorded lecture, these tools help keep your course organized and easy to follow — especially if you need to shift online on short notice.

You don't need to do it all at once — just start with what's most useful for your class.

Adding content to your Canvas Course

- [Upload files (documents, photos, videos, etc.)](#)
- [Link to external videos or readings with a URL](#)

Pre-recorded lectures and videos for students

- [Using Canvas Studio to record lectures](#)
- [Uploading video files from iPhone or upload from Android](#)
- [Find and view lectures via Zoom recordings](#)

Create Assignments in Canvas

Canvas makes it easy to create, collect, and grade assignments all in one place — no printing, emailing, or juggling different tools. Whether you're teaching in person or online, having your assignments set up on Canvas can help keep things running smoothly, especially during unexpected disruptions.

In this section, you'll find quick guides to help you build assignments, set due dates, and use Canvas SpeedGrader to give feedback and assign grades. Once you've got the basics down, you can use these tools every semester to save time and stay organized.

Step-by-step Guides

- [Create an assignment in Canvas](#)
- [Grading assignments using SpeedGrader](#)

Share Student Grades in Canvas

Keeping students in the loop about their progress can make a big difference — especially if you're teaching remotely or during a disruption. Canvas has a built-in Gradebook that makes it easy to manage grades and let students see where they stand at any time.

This section will show you how to use the Canvas Gradebook to enter scores, calculate totals, and give students timely feedback. No more spreadsheets or wondering if students saw their grades — it's all right there in one place.

Step-by-step Guides

- [Using Canvas Gradebook to manage grades](#)

Facilitate Assessments in Canvas

Need to give a quiz, test, or exam online? Canvas has built-in tools to help you create and manage assessments, whether you're teaching fully online or just need a backup plan in case of an emergency.

This section takes you through how to build quizzes and exams directly in Canvas and how to use **Respondus** if you want to upload a bunch of questions quickly. These tools can help you keep assessments consistent, flexible, and easy for students to access — even if you're not meeting in person.

Step-by-step Guides

- [Create online exams, quizzes, or tests in Canvas](#)
- [Use Respondus to create or upload quiz questions to Canvas](#)

Use Zoom

Whether you're holding class remotely, meeting one-on-one with students, or hosting office hours during an emergency, Zoom is a reliable way to stay connected face-to-face — even when you're not on campus.

This section includes step-by-step guides for using **SMC Zoom**, plus a few helpful tips and tricks to make your Zoom sessions smoother and more engaging. From screen sharing to

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breakout rooms, these resources will help you feel more confident using Zoom as part of your teaching toolkit.

Step-by-step Guides

- [Using SMC Zoom](#)
- [Comprehensive Guide to Educating Through Zoom](#)
- [Tips and Tricks for Teachers Educating Through Zoom](#)

Getting Tech Support

You don't have to troubleshoot tech issues on your own. Whether you're stuck in Canvas, have a question about a tool, or just need help figuring out what button to click — support is just a call, email, or link away.

This section points you to the best places to get help fast, including the 24/7 Canvas Help Desk, SMC's own Distance Ed team, and the **Canvas Central** faculty resource hub. Save this info somewhere handy so it's easy to find when you need it.

- Call (833) 462-8716 or chat with the Canvas Help Desk through the Help & Academic Resources button within Canvas
- Email: distance_ed_inquiry@smc.edu
- [Canvas Instructor Guide](#)
- [Contact Canvas Support For Faculty](#)
- [SMC Canvas Central (Faculty Resource Hub for Online Teaching)](#)

Remote Teaching Tools

If you ever need to quickly pivot your class online, it can be tough to figure out how in-person activities translate to a remote setting. This table is here to make that process easier.

Below, you'll find common course components — like lectures, discussions, or assignments — and remote-friendly options using tools supported at SMC. Each option includes links to step-by-step guides or tutorials, so you can click straight through to learn how to use that tool if you're unfamiliar with it.

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You don't need to reinvent your whole class — just find the remote version of what you already do and adapt as needed. This chart is a great starting point to make sure your course stays active, connected, and aligned with your original plan, even if you're suddenly online.

Course Component	Equivalent Remote Option
Announcement and updates	• Send email via Canvas Inbox • Send a Canvas announcement • Send email via mProfessor
Course Syllabus	• Send the syllabus to students via Canvas Inbox • Upload the syllabus to Canvas • Share your syllabus in OneDrive
Student Grades	• Use Canvas Gradebook to share confidentially (Note: email does not meet FERPA compliance for confidentiality)
Lecture	• Share lecture notes via email • Upload slides/lectures notes to Canvas • Embed videos on a Canvas page • Use Canvas Studio for screen recordings • Record and share lectures via Zoom/3C Media/Canvas Studio
Attendance	• Use Canvas Attendance • Switch to participation through using low stakes surveys
Discussions	• Use Canvas Discussion • Hold class discussions via Zoom • Consider some alternative Online Discussion Prompts
Collect Assignments	• Collect assignments via email or Microsoft OneDrive • Use Canvas assignments • Collect Turnitin assignments in Canvas
Guest Speakers	• Host a remote speaker via Zoom (can be recorded and posted in Canvas)
Presentations	• Have students send presentations via email • Collect presentation assignments on Canvas • Have students present via Zoom
Office Hours	• Use Zoom for remote office hours
Quizzes and Exams	• Give online quizzes or exams in Canvas

Additional Resources to Consider

Need a little extra support? This section includes tools, guides, and services that can help you prepare for or respond to unexpected shifts in your teaching. Whether you're looking for ways to support students, improve your remote teaching skills, or take care of yourself during stressful times, there's something here for you.

Remember: you don't have to navigate disruption alone — and you don't have to be perfect to be effective. These resources are here to help you stay connected, stay flexible, and stay grounded

Technology and Tools

- [SMC Guide for Online Training and Professional Development](#) -- Whether you are just getting started in Canvas or have been teaching remotely for a while, you will find tons of useful trainings and resources linked in this professional development hub.
- [Canvas Instructor Guides](#) – Step-by-step tutorials for all Canvas tools.
- [Zoom Help Center](#) – How-to articles, video tutorials, and tips for using Zoom effectively.
- [SMC IT Help Desk](#) – General tech support for faculty and staff.

Teaching and Course Design

- [Accessibility and Distance Education](#) – Accessibility basics and resources.
- [CVC-OEI Course Design Rubric](#) – A great framework for designing high-quality online learning environments.
- [Humanizing Online Teaching Toolkit](#) – Practical strategies for building connection and community in remote learning environments
- [SMC Distance Education](#) – Email support for course design, Canvas, and other remote teaching supports

Communication & Student Support

- [SMC Direct Connect](#) – Central hub for student access to food, mental health, tech loans, housing, and more. Great to share with students.
- [GPS (Guided Pathways for Success)](#) - Helps students stay on track during a disruption – includes counseling, technology help, and academic support.

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- [Basic Needs at SMC](#) – Food security, housing resources, and emergency help for students in crisis
- [Counseling Services](#) - Find General Counseling, special programs, and how to connect with a Counselor.

Well-Being & Self Care

- [SMC Center for Wellness & Wellbeing](#) – Counseling and wellness resources for faculty and students.
- [SMC EASE Program](#) – Free, confidential services for managing stress, anxiety, grief, and more.
- [UCLA Mindful](#) -- Free guided meditations to help you reset during high-stress times.