

Moving to Virtual Instruction in Inclement Weather Guidelines for Faculty December 2023

Per the revised Severe Weather policy, we now have the option of switching to remote instruction rather than an across-the-board class cancellation.

The new policy:

An announcement about a switch to remote instruction for a specific time period would be released by 5 p.m. on the day prior to the impacted classes. In other circumstances (i.e., when severe weather conditions may set in more quickly), the campus can still cancel classes if needed, following our past procedures. If classes are canceled because of more sudden weather conditions, we will make announcements about any changes by 6 a.m. prior to morning classes, or by noon for afternoon classes.

As a residential campus, SUNY Potsdam tries to maintain classes and services as fully operational as possible. Members of the campus community should always assume that scheduled classes and events are continuing, unless you hear otherwise. In the event of a switch to remote instruction or a class cancellation, please remember that not all campus activities may be affected—so you should still check on specific events or services.

Implementation of the new policy:

The new Severe Weather policy is meant to provide options to faculty and continuity to classroom learning for students.

- Given the range of activities that occur in classes, it is not appropriate to mandate the switch to virtual learning for all classes. For example, a lab exercise or instrument lesson may be impossible to do virtually; on the other hand, a synchronous lecture or small group discussion on Teams could mirror the classroom experience. It is up to you to decide which option—virtual or cancellation—will work best with your course material and your students.
- Notify your students as soon as possible after the announcement about whether you are switching to remote instruction or cancelling class. The best way to do this is through email or on Brightspace.
- Notify your department chair of your decision to go virtual or cancel, in case students reach out to them.
- Speak with your students at the start of the semester about how you expect that the Severe Weather policy (and the switch to virtual learning and/or class cancellation) is likely to impact your class meetings. Consider including specific information in the syllabus.
- Many academic services such as the Writers' Block or libraries may also be impacted by severe weather; if making alternate assignments for students, be mindful of potentially limited access.
- We will undoubtedly have winter weather and switch classes to remote instruction at some point this year. Please be prepared! While it will be very difficult to get hardware (such as cameras) during an extreme weather event, the Center for Creative Instruction has resources and training modules that can help you prepare in advance to pivot to virtual, if necessary and appropriate for your class.

If you have any questions, please contact your dean or the provost's office.