

To: EPICS Students, Teaching Assistants, and Advisors  
From: Andrew Pierce, Academic Administrator  
Date: March 12, 2020  
Subject: Temporary Restrictions in Response to Covid-19

Courses Affected: EPCS 101, 102, 111, 121, 201, 202, 301, 302, 401, 402, 411, 412, and 490  
Effective: March 14 - until further notice

In accordance with President Daniels' email earlier this week, as a proactive effort to reduce the potential for the spread of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) on the Purdue West Lafayette campus, the EPICS courses are implementing restrictions to group work and to the use of lab and classroom facilities. There is no cause for panic, but student health and safety are always our priority, and appropriate steps toward prevention are in the best interest of everyone in the community. Coursework will continue in accordance with the [EPICS syllabus](#); however, we will be implementing remote team meetings and limited lab work, beginning March 14 and extending until the University issues further guidance. The situation will be monitored, and updates will be communicated through email as needed. These policies are contingent on the university implementing further restrictions. Any guidance from the University will supersede the guidance outlined in this memo, and EPICS will always defer to new rules implemented at the University level. Methods and expectations for remote work are outlined below:

### Weekly Lab Meetings

Lab meetings will be conducted at the usual time over WebEx, GoToMeeting, or comparable technology, similar to what we have always done for the remote Design Reviews. GoToMeeting is the preferred technology for lab meetings at this time. All team members are expected to log in remotely and participate, and attendance will be taken. Students should not report to their EPICS meeting rooms. If a student anticipates limitations on their access to the internet or to a device (computer, smartphone, tablet, etc.) capable of connecting to remote conferencing software, they should contact their TA and advisor promptly to negotiate an appropriate alternative. Project managers and Design Leads should prepare team progress, issues, and goals reports as usual. Design Leads should establish communication methods for small group meetings to take place at the conclusion of the overall team's progress reports.

### Professional Development Hours (PDHs)

All in-person PDHs during this period will either be postponed, canceled, or converted to distance-learning sessions. Monitor the Learning Activities section on [MyEPICS](#) for details on a session-by-session basis.

### Team Communications

Teams with strong existing electronic communication channels should continue to use those means for communications. Teams that do not have solutions in place should promptly implement Slack, GroupMe, or other real-time communication services to facilitate team work through this restricted period. All teams should communicate their preferred communication methods with their TA and advisor(s) and include them in those channels, as appropriate.

### Documentation

Individual documentation will be more critical than ever, as advisors will have less observation of team members to use as a basis for evaluation of the course outcomes. Students should explicitly document and comment on their achievements in the five outcomes, as described in the [Individual Evaluation Rubric](#), in their OneNote notebooks. There should continue to be regular entries in the Work and Accomplishments and Reflection sections of the OneNote notebook. Project managers and design leaders should create summaries of the team meetings, including explicitly listing action items for team members and distribute them to the teams.

### Community Partner Visits and Deliveries

Teams should analyze the impact of working remotely on their projects and partnerships. If community partner interactions can be conducted remotely, that is preferred and recommended. If interaction in-person, including on-site construction or fabrication, is deemed necessary by the team leadership and approved by the advisor, contact Jorge Martinez, Lab Manager, for further instructions. All in-person partner visits and deliveries are suspended during this period. Teams should continue to communicate and engage partners through web conferencing, phone, and email. Any requests for exceptions require approval by the team advisor and Pam Brown, University Coordinator.

## Lab Facilities

The EPICS labs and computer lab will be limited to high priority work only during this period. If it is possible to complete tasks remotely without using lab facilities, that is advised. The doors and card swipe systems will be locked and can only be opened by approved staff. Access will only be permitted during staffed hours, 8am – 5pm Monday through Friday, or as otherwise arranged. To gain access, students will need approval from their team advisor and must be approved by Jorge Martinez ([mart1419@purdue.edu](mailto:mart1419@purdue.edu)). Monitor communications from EPICS and the University, as a complete closure of labs is possible as the situation progresses.

Any students granted permission to use the lab facilities should practice social distancing, avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth, and should practice routine handwashing in accordance with [CDC recommendations](#). For safety, students should never work alone in the labs, but group size should be minimized to limit exposure. If the lab meeting rooms are needed for a face-to-face activity, follow similar precautions and use the same procedure to obtain advisor approval and contact Jorge Martinez. Graduate TA office hours will also be suspended through this period.

## Design Reviews

The design reviews will be moved to all-remote conferencing. Plan to use the GoToMeeting accounts outlined in this document. The reviews will continue to take place during the lab period. All teams should prepare ahead for potential disruptions in the web-conferencing technology. One way to prepare for such disruptions would be to include upload a copy of your slides to the Sharepoint site where you upload your Design Documents.

## Suggested Team Activities

Recognizing that each EPICS team is unique and that each team is in a different phase of design, each team will need to communicate with their advisor and develop a plan for how this remote time can best be used to advance their projects. Some common activities that can be done remotely for most teams include, but are not limited to:

- Benchmarking
  - Benchmarking, or competitive analysis, can be performed early in the design process, or revisited late in the process to confirm that the partners needs are being met and that existing solutions do not already fulfil those needs.
  - Benchmarking can be performed by starting with the list of User Needs and researching commercial products or services that fulfil some or all of the User Needs, and identifying what shortcomings those solutions have that your project can address. Be sure to document your findings.
- Risk Assessment
  - Teams can conduct a DFMEA any time after specifications are developed to predict and mitigate the risks of their projects. Guidance on the DFMEA can be found in the [Design Process Document](#) or [American Society for Quality](#).
  - A remote PDH session on Risk Assessment and DFMEA may be offered to facilitate teams addressing the risks in their projects. Monitor MyEPICS for details.
- Outsourcing Research
  - Teams in detailed design or near delivery phase may want to reevaluate their fabrication plans. This may include rethinking your approach to fabricating in house, or considering whether outsourcing some or all of the fabrication may be appropriate. Be sure to document your decision making process and findings.
- Needs Assessment and Project Scoping
  - Teams that are expecting their projects to finish soon and are stuck waiting on final fabrication may consider initiating the Project Identification phase for the following semester. This may include holding remote conferences with the community partner to understand their needs and formulate a new project for the coming year. Your findings should be documented through a project need statement and User Needs list at minimum.

## Suggested Resources

- [GoToMeeting](#)
  - EPICS holds three GoToMeeting licenses, which correspond to the three classrooms. All teams should use these accounts to meet during their regularly scheduled lab time.
  - Reservations for these accounts can be made outside of class hours through the [Sharepoint](#) calendars. Reservations should not be made during other team's class periods.
  - GoToMeeting can be accessed through modern browsers or through a mobile app.
    - ARMS 1098B – Meeting ID: 728-093-765
    - ARMS 1098C – Meeting ID: 189-368-741
    - ARMS 1101 - Meeting ID: 796-116-189
- [WebEx](#)
  - All Purdue students, staff, and faculty have access to WebEx, a remote meeting tool that can be used for live-group meetings.
  - To the best of our current knowledge, student accounts are limited to meetings of eight (8) users. If your project team exceeds eight members, plan to reserve and use the appropriate GoToMeeting ID for your project meeting.
- [Sharepoint](#)
  - Continue to upload any documents to Sharepoint and utilize your team's OneNote notebook to record your progress.
- [Slack](#)
  - EPICS has an existing Slack with dedicated channels for each team.
  - Slack is available through modern browsers, or as a mobile or desktop application.
  - Team members can join using <https://join.slack.com/t/epicspurdue/signup>.
- Texting Apps
  - GroupMe, WhatsApp, and similar mobile group texting apps are commonly used by teams.
  - Consider whether these tools are appropriate for communications with team advisors, TAs, and project partners, especially if the team has a culture of using them in a very informal manner.

Any questions or comments are welcomed, and should be sent to me directly. Contact information for all staff are included in the syllabus. Please keep an eye out for further communications from EPICS and from the University, as this guidance is likely to evolve. Thank you for your cooperation and patience as we make the most of this situation

Best regards,



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