

Recommendations of the Faculty-Level Distance Study Committee for optimal use of distance study

As ordered by the University of Szeged leadership, to facilitate the transition to distance study, faculties must prepare an action plan during spring break. The faculty coordinator is Zsuzsanna Gécseg, deputy dean for education. She is also chair of the Faculty-level Distance Study Committee (FDSC). Members of the committee are Zoltán Dragon, László Kasik and Tamás Kőfalvi representing the staff, and Levente Varga, representing the faculty's student government. The FDSC has been established to provide teachers and students with ideas, advice and recommendations, as well as offer assistance on education problems to the extent possible and given the legal constraints. The FDSC has compiled some key information and advice below.

TRANSITION TO DISTANCE STUDY

Due to the national state of emergency announced on March 11, the University of Szeged is transitioning to distance study as of the end of the spring break, March 23, and until further notice. **The primary and official platform for distance study is Coospace (CS).** Staff must be available on CS for students during class times.

It is required that staff do the following by March 23, before the introduction of distance study:

- (1) **Consider** the goals of their remaining classes, student assignments, and forms of assessment during and at the end of the semester (if restrictions are not lifted before the examination period, examinations will have to be arranged online) and, if necessary, **update the topics for classes on CS** (updating means amending the original list of topics, not creating new topics);
- (2) **Upload the updated topics to Scene Info** on the page for each course and notify students of the change (i.e. the amended schedule of classes must be available on CS). Find **Requirements** under **Scene Info** and share information on the schedule and tools to be used, as well as the (new) requirements for completing the course; if necessary, amend the list of compulsory and

recommended readings to reflect the availability of sources to students, and save and announce the changes after completing all of the above;

- (3) **Upload materials** (literature, databases, task sheets, and films/excerpts) which students will need to complete their assignments to the Documents folder (if material is only available in print format at the library, you definitely need to ensure it is available for students).
- (4) **Create a student interface through which students can upload** their assignments.

It is appropriate to schedule your **distance teaching** the way you scheduled your face-to-face teaching. That is, staff should send materials to students on a weekly basis, at the exact time (hour and day or at least the day) of the original class. In the case of each assignment, specify the deadline (hour and day) for completing the assignment. Using the CS, it is impossible to meet the original objectives for the courses or to complete all the assignments. More likely, there will be a need to eliminate some assignments or forms of assessment.

Most likely, the greatest problem in switching to distance teaching occurs with seminars where completion of the course necessitates personal attendance (e.g. for skills development and trainings) or where assignments (e.g. documenting sources, data collection, fieldwork, and teaching practice) are to be completed at an outside location (e.g. at a school or library). In the case of all these courses, the aim is to ensure that the course requirements can be met.

- (1) **Courses requiring personal attendance:** you need to set assignments that are linked to the phenomena and situations the students would have encountered during the seminar (e.g. case studies, data analysis, film analysis, and online interviews with an expert or student).
- (2) **Teaching practice:** the university has agreed with the schools where teaching practice is carried out, so that candidates can maintain contact with mentors online, thus being able to take part in schoolwork; as a result, teaching practice and university courses linked to teaching practice can be completed through distance education.
- (3) **Fieldwork:** the head of the institute or department responsible for the course should arrange officially for students to be able to complete their assignments and gain professional experience through online work with an expert.

In the event that **distance teaching reverts to normal teaching** during the regular teaching period, the semester is to be concluded by assessing online and regular assignments together. In such an event, the remaining regular and correspondence classes must be taught. Missed correspondence classes cannot be made up for (in the case of these courses, the worst case scenario is to be observed, i.e. that distance study mode remains in place until the end of the teaching period).

UNIVERSITY SYSTEMS

CooSpace

Information on online teaching methodology and the tools available on CooSpace for online teaching, together with instructional videos on how to use those tools, is available on the CooSpace surface under Lecturers' Information Scene. The system makes it possible to share good practices and ask questions. Please take advantage of this opportunity, thereby providing assistance for our colleagues.

In addition to the advice offered in the university and faculty mailings on CooSpace, we would like to draw your attention to the **1 GB of storage available to everyone for sharing educational material**. For this reason, we have to be thoughtful with our sharing practices: relatively large video and audio files will quickly fill this quota, and so it is worth finding alternative solutions for these (please find a few recommendations below).

Quick user information: <https://www.dexter.hu/post/covid19> (in Hungarian), and we would also recommend the university CooSpace FAQ/Info page for more detailed information and instructions: <http://www.coosp.etr.u-szeged.hu/Scene-126142> (some parts in English).

The Klebelsberg Kuno Library will be closed until further notice, although online sources and solutions are available: <http://www.ek.szte.hu/tajekoztatas/?lang=en> (in English).

ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

We suggest that you use alternative technical solutions for functions that are not available through CooSpace. We suggest that you **only make use of solutions outside of CooSpace if you have established that the students' interests are not adversely affected by doing so**, and if everyone has equal access to those tools, with sufficient Internet bandwidth, and can use them over the course of the semester.

The official online platform for courses is the CooSpace closed educational system. When using any other program provided by an external publisher or provider, we must **take into account the data protection and personal rights applicable to university members**: for example, if the instructor and students all agree together that they will record the seminar, none of those involved are allowed to share this without the voluntary and explicit agreement of every party involved. Access to the recording must be provided for users through a closed platform in such a way that the instructor can control access privileges.

Webinars

Although CooSpace makes it possible to conduct a seminar online, the system will not necessarily be able to cope with the increased volume. In order to lighten the load on the system and to be able to conduct our work with as little disruption as possible, we recommend the use of **zoom.us** (<http://zoom.us>). It is enough for the instructor to register, download the application, and create a "meeting." The system will

create a link that can be opened in a browser, and the students can use this to begin work immediately. There are English-language instructional videos available here: <https://zoom.us/resources>. **The advantage of Zoom is that the seminar can be recorded**, making it possible for those who were unable to join during class time to watch it at a later time.

Google's solution, **Meet** (<http://meet.google.com>), can be used in a way that is as straightforward as Zoom's. **You do not have to download anything to use it**, since it is usable from the browser and on mobile devices. An instructor with a Google account can start a seminar using a code that is then shared with the students. Everyone can join at the appointed time using the code. Step-by-step instructions in English for the system can be found here: <https://support.google.com/a/users/answer/9282720>

Both applications (Zoom.us and Meet) can be used to share screens, make real-time presentations, and interactions. They are stable and well-balanced.

Editing documents

There are two ways to use **Google Docs** on Google Drive: **(1) text documents for real-time collaborative editing and (2) longer essay or research paper submissions**. No need for email attachments or CS upload: all you need is easily accessible, targeted sharing. **In this way, the interface can even replace Word**, and it facilitates quick, immediate collaboration and feedback. Files created in Google Docs do not use Google storage capacity, so this is quite an economical solution.

Making and sharing presentations

PowerPoint is the most popular presentation tool, which is probably used by a great number of instructors. In the light of the current situation, **a simple strategy is to prepare a voiceover for your existing slide show** and share this presentation with the students. To do this, open a presentation and select the "Record Slideshow" option on the Slideshow tab. With the click of a button you can start a recording in a pop-up window: for each individual slide, the software records the voiceover separately, and it will also synchronize the slides with the matching audio during the slide show.

Google Slides (<http://slides.google.com>) is part of Google's office suite, and **you can use it to quickly create a presentation similar to a ppt**, which can be easily shared with students. Importantly, if you create a slide show on Google Slides, it will not use up any Google storage capacity, so this can be an economical alternative to the PowerPoint version.

Screencast

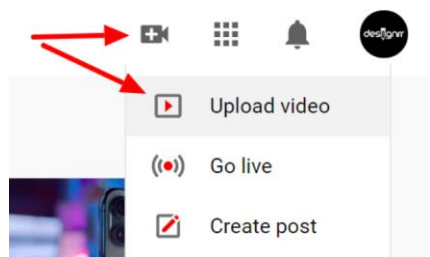
The **Open Broadcaster Software** project (<https://obsproject.com>) provides an excellent solution for making high-quality recordings free of charge. It **can be installed for Windows, Mac and Linux systems**, and is fast and easy to use. When it is first used, the installation wizard configures the required tools – you might want to check these before the first recording (Settings → Audio). Before you start recording, you need to select the resources that the program can use for recording (you can specify several sources, e.g., browsers, presentations, webcams, and drawing pad) and select a popular format when you choose the format to save the recording (File → Remux Recordings – choose the mp4 format) so you can easily

share it later. Save the recordings in a Google Drive folder or upload them to a YouTube channel so that you can easily share the link with your students.

Recording and streaming lectures

OBS offers a perfect solution for **recording lectures combined with presentations**. However, in cases when the simultaneous use of multiple sources is not required, and it is only the actual lecture which is recorded, any simple (or complex) tool will work, even a mobile phone or a digital camera. In line with CS instructions, it is best to upload the recorded material to an external platform. In this respect, YouTube or Google Drive is recommended.

YouTube is not only a video sharing platform for publicly sharing videos, but it also allows you to upload **private content** and set up private channels with the option of **limiting access**. It can be used with a Google account, offering a quick and simple solution, in that it is only the link to the uploaded material which has to be shared with students on the relevant CS scene to allow them to access it from anywhere and at any time.



On YouTube, the title of the video recording has to be specified along with some additional information. If the instructor does not wish to provide public access to their lecture, they should change the video's settings to "Unlisted" in order to prevent search engines and users without access to the video link from accessing it. If several videos are recorded, it is advisable to set up an unlisted channel to provide access to all uploaded videos in a single location.

Another solution offered by Google is Google Drive, which functions primarily as an online storage space but offers much more. **It converts all uploaded videos to the format required for playback**, with separate settings for authorizing access, downloading, or just viewing. (The system is based on YouTube's platform, which means that uploaded content can be used in the same way as on YouTube itself. The only difference is that this solution allows for more detailed access policies to be set.)

Sharing storage space and documents

Restrictions on CS storage space may necessitate the use of external services. One of the most reliable and user-friendly cloud-based solutions is Google Drive (<http://drive.google.com>), which may be used to **store and share content in practically any format**. Its authorization settings are easy to use and highly

functional. As a part of Google Suite, it is integrated with Google's office applications, and it **provides much more storage space than CS.**

As a potential alternative to Google Drive, Dropbox (<http://dropbox.com>) offers the added function of **real-time synchronization** between the user's computer and the cloud-based storage space; however, it can also be used as a simple storage space and for sharing content. Like Google Drive, **it too provides greater storage space for users than CS.** Additionally, both systems allow you to open certain types of document files, coupled with the option of editing certain types of content.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Office hours and consultations

Staff must make themselves available during the office hours and consultation times provided by them at the beginning of the semester. If these times are changed, staff should inform students via CS forum. Staff should also request, via CS forum, that students let them know (via email or CS forum) that they wish to have a consultation. Video consultations can be held on CS; however, if this is not functioning well, Zoom.us is recommended as an alternative.

Student and staff workload

Issues of student and staff workload should be carefully considered, especially in case of practicums and seminars. It is important to consider the workload from the perspective of the number of credits (1 credit equals 30 study hours) to determine how much work students should be required to do to complete the remaining weeks (and, with them, the course). If most staff require an essay or a paper of considerable length, students' workload will increase greatly – staff are thus advised to consult with each other about this at the department or institute level as well.

It is crucial that **students' online workload should not be greater and more demanding than the originally planned workload would have been** (assignments as part of online teaching should provide an opportunity for continuity of work, individual learning, problem solving and practice, as well as of cooperation). We all know that **assignments do not provide the same depth of learning as classroom classes, but in the absence of the latter we have to make do with the former.** When planning assignments, staff should also keep in mind how much time will be needed to check, comment on, and evaluate students' work.

Thesis work – and potential changes to it

It is likely that students who will be reporting on their own empirical investigations in their theses have already started to collect data. If a student is using offline means of data collection (e.g. a test or questionnaire) and cannot complete their data collection under the present circumstances, **the thesis advisor should consider whether the thesis can be completed with the amount of data collected so far, or whether the student should supplement their data with data collected online.** The same considerations should be considered for students who were planning to collect data offline in the near future. Advisors should also consider whether a thesis can be completed by the deadline if the thesis writer was to collect data via means that require their physical presence at the university or another institution. **In the event that the advisor and the thesis writer decide, for any of the above reasons, that the goals and/or implementation of the thesis require changing (resulting in a change of topic and title), such a change should be implemented, and the student is not required to submit a new form; however, the change of thesis title must be submitted via a “Dékáni kérelem” (“Request to the Dean”) form in Modulo.**

The deadline for thesis submission and uploading remains unchanged (from April 14 to 3 PM, April 30, 2020, for BA, MA, and “szakirányú továbbképzés” [“further professional training”] programs; and from April 1 to 3 PM, April 15, 2020, for teacher training programs).

Exams, thesis defenses and comprehensive final exams (“záróvizsga”)

Even though at this time we do not know how long restrictions will be in place, we need to prepare for the possibility that they will continue **through the examination period, in which case examinations can only be done in writing and online.** We recommend that examinations be implemented via means with which the students are familiar – **primarily through CS.** In case a staff member decides to use a different platform for their exam, they should make sure to familiarize students with that platform at least two weeks before the examination period.

Ways of implementing thesis defenses and comprehensive final exams (“záróvizsga”) online are still under discussion at the university level. Staff will be informed of decisions in this regard via CS and email as soon as decisions are made.