

The First Day of Class

Faculty Guide

This guide offers suggestions and considerations for the first day of your in-person classes. Visit [this page](#) for a “Faculty Checklist: Preparation Before the Start of Semester.”

Time of arrival

- Arriving to class 5-10 minutes in advance gives you time to set up your digital devices, test the projector, review the class seating, and feel relaxed about starting the class.

Set-up

- Check your cables and adapters if you are connecting to the class projector and using your own laptop. If you need help with the technology during class, call the LETS hotline at 617-353-3227.

Student arrival

- Engaging with students before the official start of class helps to build classroom community. Acknowledging the students' presence in class and having some small talk could help calm everyone's nerves on the first day of class and create a comfortable atmosphere for learning.

Instructor introduction/plan for the day

- Provide an introduction and overview for the class session.

Classroom technology experimentation

- If you are introducing students to technology that may be new to them (e.g., [Blackboard](#), [Pronto](#), [Gradescope](#)), aim to set aside a few minutes to demonstrate the key technology and/or platforms you may use in class with the students. For example, if you are using Pronto as a communication method with students, ensure that all students understand how to access and use the tool.

Student introductions/ice-breakers

- Warm up the first day of class in a way that students feel welcome, included, and valued. Ice-breaker activities are a great way to build class community the first day. View our [Fostering Classroom Community Lightning Talk series recording](#) ice-breaker ideas that could be adapted to in-person classes.

Review of course

Below are a few suggestions for topics to discuss with your students on the first day:

- (N)etiquette guidelines for in-person and digital tasks.
- Course expectations, especially information on attendance, assignments, class participation, and deadlines.
- Course materials: you may want to remind students about book formats (e.g. hard copy vs. e-book), and clarify which format you expect them to use.
- The Learning Management System (e.g., Blackboard), class materials/location, and all communication channels.
- The technology students will need in your class (hardware and software)
- Office hours: You may want to review the location of your office hours, and any special guidelines you have.
- Q&A: Given that it's the first day, students may not be comfortable speaking up and asking questions. You may want to give them an opportunity to ask questions in a digital manner on a discussion board or via email.

Possible “Exit ticket” activity for the first day

- You may find that asking the following two questions would be helpful in planning the details of your course:
 - What do you hope to gain from your experience in this course?
 - Is there anything I should know that may impact your performance in the course?

Think about how students could share the more personal information with you in a private manner (e.g. through email or a Qualtrics form).

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