

**From:** VPACADEMIC

**Sent:** March 15, 2020 10:04 PM

**Subject:** Updates for Instructors Related to COVID-19 Emergency Academic Plan

To all instructors:

As announced on Friday, March 13, 2020, ALL undergraduate and graduate classes, regardless of delivery mode, are cancelled Monday, March 16, Tuesday, March 17, and Wednesday, March 18. This period will provide instructors with time to determine how best to deliver the remainder of their courses through other forms of remote delivery. As of March 19, 2020, ALL undergraduate and graduate classes will resume in some form of alternative remote delivery. The last day of instruction continues to be April 3, 2020.

To assist with this need to restructure courses and course delivery, Senate unanimously approved a [COVID-19 Emergency Academic Plan](#) on Friday, March 13, 2020, which amended the regulations outlined in Bylaws 54 and 55 on a temporary basis. This allows for more flexibility with regard to changes to courses and course outlines. Specifically, the following may be altered:

1. the mode of delivery;
2. splitting or adding evaluations and re-weighting of evaluations;
3. the type and delivery format of remaining evaluations, including the final exam; and
4. submission deadlines

We are all finding our way forward during the period as best we can. We are writing to provide you with as much information as we can right now: you will be receiving regular communications from the provost's office as events unfold and as we identify strategies and solutions for moving forward. For the moment:

#### **Changes to Course Delivery**

- It is expected that all assessments scheduled for or due March 16-18 will be rescheduled.
- In consultation with your head, director, associate dean, dean, or designate, please work to re-design the last three weeks of your course so that it can be taught in a non-face-to-face manner.
- Remote delivery of courses can be accomplished through a variety of methods, including pre-recording and posting links to content in Blackboard, assigning readings, sharing class notes, and if there is a clear pedagogical need, live online classes. The Centre for Teaching and Learning, the Office of Open Learning, and IT Services have all extended their hours to ensure they have staff available to assist instructors as they work through how best to do this. They will also be available at [faculty locations across campus on a scheduled basis](#). We are building [web resources and materials](#) to support you as quickly as possible: more to follow soon.
- Please communicate the plan for the next few weeks to your students as soon as possible, and by March 18. Some additional information to communicate:
  - The Voluntary Withdrawal period has been extended to Friday, April 3, should students wish to withdraw from a course following review of the revised course outline.

- The link to the student-oriented [Frequently Asked Questions](#) page. The Office of Student Experience plans to launch regular communications direct to students in the days to come as well.

- You may receive invitations to access a number of educational technology applications from third-party providers in the coming weeks: please be aware that these tools can have complicated implications for use in institutional settings and that your intellectual property may not be secure in some cases. We strongly recommend contacting CTL/OOL for advice about simple-to-use applications that are already supported on campus. That being said, you may find content-related open source materials very helpful.

### **Office Hours and Meetings with Students**

- When at all possible, face-to-face contact should be minimized. If it is possible to communicate electronically -- by email, chat, or videoconference -- please do so. If it is necessary to meet face-to-face, then practice social distancing (at least 1 metre [3 feet] between yourself and anyone else), and explicitly encourage standard hygienic procedures that health practitioners have recommended. Washing down spaces between individuals is recommended as well.

### **Adjustments to Evaluation Methods**

- Students will be understandably anxious to know about changes to evaluation methods as soon as possible. Alternative assessments such as written assignments, take-home tests and flexible online exams are all possibilities to consider. If you are able to shift your courses to an online format such as a take-home test or written assignment, we urge you to consider doing so as part of the plan for the next three weeks, and to provide students with a revised course outline, in consultation with your head, director, associate dean, dean or designate by March 18. Students appear to be mostly concerned to know that they will not have to come to campus to sit exams, but this is an evolving situation. As at universities across North America, we are working to address the challenges of remote evaluation as best we can.

- If a plan for alternative assessment will not be ready by March 18 due to the nature of your course, please contact your head, director, associate dean, dean or designate as soon as possible to discuss the matter. The Centre for Teaching and Learning and the Office of Open Learning can meet with you and provide resources to explore a viable solution.

- Instructors have the option to re-weight previous assignments in order to lessen the significance of the final assessment as part of their approach. While granting aegrotat (exceptional granting of credit for a course based on term work) is an option, please note that students receive an AEG notation on their transcript if they pass or an NP if they fail. There is no grade associated with aegrotat standing. For these reasons we encourage the shifting of evaluation weighting rather than the assignment of an aegrotat if possible, but we understand that these issues will need to be dealt with on a case by case basis with your head, director, associate dean, dean or designate.

It would be very difficult to suggest an approach to reweighting that might not ultimately disadvantage some students: we recommend taking an approach that allows students to choose an option that is in their best interests, from among a small number of weighting options, if that is at all possible. The academic continuity team would be happy to help you think through that if that is of assistance.

Further information about assessment matters will be forthcoming later in the week.

- A revised course outline should be provided once changes to evaluations and weightings have been completed in consultation with your head, director, associate dean, dean or designate.

As instructors prepare their revised course outlines, the following principles still apply for undergraduate courses, excluding Education and Law:

1. No evaluation shall be worth more than 50% of the final grade
2. The last four calendar days prior to, and including, the last day of classes in each period of instruction of twelve (or greater) weeks in duration must be free from any procedures for which a mark will be assigned, including the submission of assignments such as essays, term papers, and take home examinations. Courses that are presented by a specialized teaching method, where the testing procedures are an integral part of the instructional process, shall be exempt from this regulation subject to approval of the dean of the Faculty in which the course is given.

### **More Information Coming Soon**

We know you have many questions, and we are working with the deans and senior leadership to identify solutions as quickly as possible given this rapidly changing situation. We will follow up shortly on the following:

- Student medical notes
- More information on approaches to assessment and evaluation
- SET implementation this year
- Best practices for Blackboard during this heavy-use period.

Thank you all very much for your patience during this challenging period, and for all the work and time we know you are putting into meeting your students' needs. We know that the students are anxious. We appreciate the relationships you have with them and the help you provide to alleviate their concerns and provide them with information.

Hoping you are keeping well,

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