



Completion of Courses Guidelines for Remediation and Accommodation

Communication from the Executive Committee of Senate

March 26, 2015

Updated April 11, 2015 with New and Revised Information

In this document, the Executive Committee provides guidance to instructors, students and staff on the options available to complete courses. It applies to

- courses that have continued since the outset of the disruption that began on March 3, 2015
- courses that subsequently resumed
- courses that resumed when the disruption ended

It also addresses the specific circumstances of students who participated in academic activities before April 1 and students who did not or could not do so until the disruption ended.

Similar guidance and options have been made available in previous academic disruptions but in some cases have been updated to reflect circumstances of the current disruption that began on March 3. They are designed to promote flexibility while adhering to the principles of academic integrity and fairness to students, which are at the heart of Senate's **Policy on the Academic Implications of Disruptions or Cessations of University Business Due to Labour Disputes or Other Causes**. The Policy can be accessed here:

<http://secretariat-policies.info.yorku.ca/policies/academic-implications-of-disruptions-or-cessations-of-university-business-due-to-labour-disputes-or-other-causes-senate-policy-on-the/>

All of York's undergraduate and graduate students have legitimate and understandable desires to complete their courses as soon as possible. However, many are in particularly vulnerable situations or have especially urgent needs, such as international and exchange students facing the expiration of visas, those graduating this term, and those for whom term completion impacts on opportunities for further study. These guidelines have been designed to accommodate a variety of circumstances but in some cases are of particular value to students who have pressing needs.

The Meaning of Remediation

Senate policy uses the term remediation to describe "accommodations for students, modifications of normal academic regulations, and adjustments in class and examination schedules" and it states that "the completion of courses will involve a combination of such changes." Some modifications were approved and announced early on in the current disruption, such as changes to class and examination schedules. Others are always available to instructors and students, such as deferrals. The length of the disruption has necessitated the additional changes and options compiled in this document.

Remediation and Course Directors (Amended with new information March 27)

Some aspects of remediation are authorized by Senate's Executive Committee, and they provide the framework for the completion of courses. However, individual instructors continue to be in the best position to determine the impact of the disruption on their courses, and to implement remedies in conjunction with their academic units and students. Course directors are encouraged to be flexible in dealing with individual

requests from students, and must not unreasonably deny them. Students must have reasonable alternative access to course material.

Resumption of Classes and a Cushion Period for Assignments

Instructors are urged to help re-orient students to their studies and discuss options and possible changes with them before and during the first class.

There should be a cushion period before assignments are due and tests are re-set. Tests should not be held in any course (including Internet-based courses) until at least one class “meet” has been held. Similarly, there should be a reasonable cushion before assignments must be submitted, including those that might otherwise be due according to original class schedule (this does not apply to assignments or work such as laboratory exercises which are typically assigned and submitted as a regular and integral part of the laboratory session).

Changes to Class Schedules (Amended with new information March 27 and April 6)

The length of the academic terms in progress will be reduced by seven days for all courses except those that continued from the outset and Osgoode Hall Law School JD courses. This is the maximum reduction that can be authorized by Senate Executive. **The Lassonde School of Engineering will have twelve weeks of instruction. (Added April 6)**

In some cases it will be a help to instructors and students to arrange alternative scheduling of presentations, performances, practica or the equivalent (that is outside of regularly scheduled class meets). The Registrar’s Office can assist units in booking appropriate space for collaborative or individual classroom or studio work at a time convenient for instructors and students (subject to availability).

The schedule for the courses that have not yet resumed (as well as the remediation for students who elected not to attend courses that have resumed) is tentative pending future developments. It is important to note that:

- All terms in progress will be completed on their original or revised schedules.
- Summer terms will be held. **The number of class meets will be reduced for the SU term. Other summer terms will have the regular number of class meets. For details, see the revised sessional dates on the Registrar’s Office Website. (Added April 6)**
- **The Summer term for Nursing courses (including NURS electives) begin on May 4. This does not alter the schedule of courses that Nursing students may be taking through other Faculties this summer. Questions should be directed to the Nursing program. (Added April 11)**

Examination Schedules

A revised, common examination period has been developed. In some cases, this means that there will be an unusually long break between the last day of classes and the first day of examinations. That time can be used to schedule make-up classes for programs that must complete twelve weeks of instruction. For courses that resumed on, or before the week of March 23, the examination schedule will run between April 19 and April 28.

The Registrar’s Office is responsible for setting examination schedules and it will, as always, publish the start and end dates for the new examination periods as well as specific dates and times for examinations for individual courses providing timely updates over the next couple of weeks.

Options Which Students May Choose on Their Own

Last day to withdraw without a grade: Students may withdraw from courses that have resumed without receiving a final grade until April 17. This applies to all terms in

progress when the disruption began on March 3. It is not retroactive to courses and terms that ended before that date. Further updates will be provided regarding courses not yet resumed or where students elected not to attend courses that have resumed.

Pass/Fail grading: Some Faculties allow students to elect pass / fail assessment in certain courses. Normally, students must declare their intentions in the first two weeks of classes. Where this option is available, it can be elected up to the new last day to withdraw. Please note that this option is highly limited and can only be implemented by means of a formal request. Moreover, students are advised to consider this option with great care before electing it. A pass / fail notation on a course may have a negative impact on applications to graduate and professional programs. Students may revert to grades by the final day to withdraw from classes. For more information and to retrieve the necessary forms, see the Registrar's Website <http://www.yorku.ca/roweb/grades/remediation/grade-assess/>

Options Available with the Agreement of Course Directors (Amended with new information March 27)

Changes to course assignments and grading schemes: Instructors are permitted to make changes to the number, kind and weight of assignments for courses that resumed after the disruption began. Options include moving a final exam from the formal examination period into the final two weeks of classes (see below). Whenever possible, students should have the choice of completing the assignments as set out in the originally published grading scheme.

Waiver of the limit on the worth of tests in the final two weeks of classes: Senate Executive has temporarily waived the policy limiting tests in the final two weeks of classes to collectively 20 per cent of the course grades. This provides instructors with more flexibility to allow students the possibility of completing courses as quickly as possible while also ensuring that course learning objectives have been assessed.

Instructors have the option to adjust assignments and their relative weights in keeping with the Senate Executive framework for remediation and accommodation. Instructors now have the option of moving a final exam from the revised examination period to the normal class date and time in the final week of classes. For some courses, there is also a break between classes and the formal examination period that can be used for the purpose of scheduling tests and examinations. Any requirements for rooms should be coordinated with the Registrar's Office and are subject to availability.

Assessed Grades: Where course directors confirm that students will be unable to complete their courses and receive their final grades consistent with the original Fall-Winter 2014-2015 sessional dates, and have pressing needs, they will be eligible to receive an assessed grade based on work completed provided that the work comprises at least 50 per cent of the course grade in the original syllabus. Examples of pressing needs include students applying to graduate in June 2015 or with compelling personal circumstances such as:

- visa expirations
- non-refundable travel arrangements
- commitments to study or conduct research elsewhere
- firm employment start dates
- deadlines for graduate and/or professional schools
- living arrangements, financial hardships, and family matters

Students will be able to submit their requests by means of an online form accessible from the Registrar's Office Website made available in the coming days. Students requesting an assessed grade may be required to provide supporting documentation.

This option is available for both graded and ungraded (pass/fail) courses. Because of strict professional accreditation requirements, this option may not be available for courses in some Faculties (such as the Lassonde School of Engineering). For courses that have not resumed, a grade may be reported to the Registrar's Office based on

recorded assessments and/or information provided to course directors by students, but is subject to verification following the disruption.

Requests to assign a final grade based on completed work that represents less than 50 per cent of the components should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Last day to submit course work: Faculties establish their own dates for the submission of term work, which typically falls on the last day of classes. Senate Executive advises that instructors may permit students to submit assignments up to the last day of examinations. This is particularly advisable if tests worth more than 20 per cent of the overall grade are held in the final two weeks of classes.

Deferrals: Students always have the option to seek a deferral. Students must make a formal request for deferred standing, and are not automatically entitled to this relief. Senate Executive urges instructors to deal with requests generously.

Appeals, Petitions and Concerns

Normal appeal and petitions procedures remain in place.

Students who have concerns about any aspect of course remediation should take them up with their instructors in the first instance. If they are unable to connect with instructors or are hesitant to do so, or if they are not satisfied with an outcome, they should, as always, communicate their concerns to the applicable department or Faculty office.

Senate Policy on the Student Evaluation of Teaching (New)

Senate Executive confirms that the Senate Policy on the Student Evaluation of Teaching continues to apply and that surveys should be conducted for all courses to ensure that students can provide faculty members with important feedback. However, the results of the evaluations conducted from March to May 2015 are to be used at the discretion of individual instructors. **(Added April 6)**

Accommodations on Religious Grounds or for Students with Disabilities

All normal accommodations for persons with disabilities and for religious reasons remain in place and must be respected.