

Academic Continuity During a Significant Disruption to Academic Activity
Approved, Academic Council, 20 February 2019

The purpose of this document is to provide a framework to guide planning and decision-making in the event that a significant disruption to campus operations impedes academic activity. The goal is to mitigate the effects of a significant disruption and continue academic activities as much as possible. Students rely on the university to provide the best possible opportunities to learn and the efforts to respond to disruption should keep student learning as the central priority.

PRINCIPLES

- **Academic integrity:** standards of evaluation should not be diluted due to a significant disruption, and reductions in instruction and student support should be minimized. Instructors of record shall retain primary authority over how to manage their courses, assignments, instruction and grades, subject to modifications approved by the Academic Council in the academic continuity plan.
- **Transparency for students, instructors and staff:** Students, instructors and staff shall be informed in a timely manner of changed requirements, changes to academic activities, and procedures in effect at conclusion of disruption as is reasonable given the circumstances of the disruption.
- **Fairness for students:** Students who are unable to participate in academic activities or complete academic requirements due to a significant disruption shall not be penalized for lack of participation or completion of requirements, shall have reasonable alternative access to materials covered in their absence, shall have reasonable extensions of deadlines and access to such other remedies as deemed necessary by the Academic Council consistent with the principle of academic integrity.

DEFINITIONS

Academic Activity: Any work subject to evaluation or necessary for a student to meet the learning objectives and requirements of a course or program of study , and the evaluation and grading of such work by instructors of record.

Academic Council: The UO Constitution and section 6 of the [Senate bylaws](#) establish the Academic Council and its membership (see <https://senate.uoregon.edu/committees/committees-a-z/>)

Emergency Grades: Grades issued after a Significant Academic Disruption results in reduced instructional time, inability to complete all assignments or exams, or inability to complete grading of assignments or exams by Instructors of Record.

“Instructor”: refers to “instructors of record” as defined in university policy found here: <https://registrar.uoregon.edu/faculty-staff/academic-scheduling/instructors-of-record>. In this document, “instructor” does not refer to a particular employee classification or rank.

Significant Disruption: refers to a significant impediment to academic activities.

PROCEDURE FOR ACTIVATING ACADEMIC CONTINUITY PLANS DURING A SIGNIFICANT DISRUPTION

- As per policies established by the Office of Safety and Risk Services for the purpose of emergency management and continuity, the President of the University, or designee, can

declare a “Campus State of Emergency.” Such a declaration activates the UO Emergency Operations Plan and Incident Command System, of which Academic Continuity is one part.

- **The Academic Council will be convened to determine an appropriate academic continuity plan, if needed, to manage any associated disruption of academic activity.**
- When a Campus State of Emergency is declared, the Academic Council, in coordination with designees from the Office of the Provost, will develop and implement an academic continuity plan as part of the University’s Incident Response Team.
- For the purposes of this policy, after a “Campus State of Emergency” has been declared, Academic Council voting faculty members who are unable or unwilling to serve will be replaced by voting faculty committee member designees.
- The academic continuity plan shall include provisions for continuation of academic activities and awarding of grades. Because a significant disruption will affect academic activities differently across campus, the academic continuity plan shall provide a range of options which maintain academic integrity, transparency for students, and fairness for students as described above. These might include alternative instructional times and methods, use of online technology for instruction and assignments, modified assignments, extended deadlines, exceptions to prerequisites and grade requirements, etc.
- Department heads, under the direction of their Dean, will coordinate implementation of the academic continuity plan with instructors in their unit.
- Any academic continuity plans and implementation approaches must comply with all existing collective bargaining agreements.

CONTINUATION OF ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

The Academic Council will consider the following factors in managing a significant disruption:

- Duration and point in the academic term of the disruption
- Availability of physical and instructional resources
- Impact on attendance of students, instructors and other necessary personnel
- Impact of timing and sequence of evaluations such as exams, practica, assignments, presentations, etc.
- The academic continuity plan shall include provisions for continuation of academic activities and awarding of grades. Because a significant disruption will affect academic activities differently across campus, the academic continuity plan shall provide a range of options which maintain academic integrity, transparency for students, and fairness for students as described above. These might include alternative instructional times and methods, use of online technology for instruction and assignments, modified assignments, extended deadlines, exceptions to prerequisites and grade requirements, etc.
- Department heads, under the direction of their Dean, will coordinate implementation of the academic continuity plan with instructors in their unit.

During a significant disruption, unaffected instructors of record are expected to make reasonable efforts to continue academic activities in their courses by modifying instructional modality, assignments, exams, due dates and grading. As a matter of best instructional practice, instructors should use the official university learning management system (LMS) to post syllabi, assignments, grades, and course materials for all courses each term. In addition to advantages for student success, use of the LMS and planning course activities two to three weeks out will aid in responding to a sudden significant disruption. In the

event of a disruption of the LMS, the Academic Council will advise on alternative methods of continuing academic activities outside the LMS if alternatives are available.

Should a significant disruption prevent physical access to campus for students and instructors, such as during a pandemic, every reasonable effort should be made to continue academic activity online using the university LMS. Instructors should strive to maintain contact hours, workload expectations for students and record progress and grades in the LMS. This may include:

- Online instruction using recorded lectures, slide shows with voice over, live discussions, or other interactive sessions;
- Self-paced module assignments;
- Online quizzes;
- Office hours using chat function.

GRADES

Provisions for Alternate Grades in the Event of Significant Disruption

When a significant disruption is declared by the President or designee, and the disruption occurs at a time that may interfere with calculating and recording final grades in the student information system, the Academic Council may authorize the use of the grades defined below and establish the conditions for their use. These grades may be appropriate when a significant disruption results in reduced instructional time, inability to complete all assignments or exams, or inability to complete grading of assignments or exams.

These grades may be temporary or permanent depending on circumstances. The Academic Council, in consultation with the University Registrar, the Office of Financial Aid, and the President and Provost or their designees, will make that determination at the conclusion of a significant disruption. At that time, the Academic Council may declare one of the following regarding PE, NE and IE grades:

- The grades are to remain in place;
- The grades are to be replaced with regular grades;
- The grades are to be replaced with regular grades where there is enough information to award regular grades. Otherwise, the PE, NE and IE grades remain in place.

In the event that instructors of record are unable to submit grades in the student information system, the President or designee in consultation with the Academic Council, may authorize administrative access to the university LMS for the purpose of extracting existing grade and participation information so that grades can be recorded in the student information system.

PE Satisfactory performance under circumstance of significant disruption. When authorized, the grade of PE indicates performance of C- or above for undergraduate work, and B- or above for graduate work under the circumstance of a significant disruption. The grade of PE carries credit.

NE Less than satisfactory performance under circumstance of significant disruption. When authorized, the grade of NE indicates performance of D+ or lower for undergraduate work, and C+ or lower for graduate work under the circumstance of a significant disruption. A grade of NE does not carry credit. A grade of NE will require recording a last date of participation.

IE Incomplete due to significant disruption. When authorized, the grade of IE indicates that a portion of the requirements has not been fulfilled, due to a significant disruption of the University's academic

activities. A letter grade may be assigned if the work is subsequently completed. To receive a letter grade, the work must be completed prior to a date set by Academic Council. If the work is not completed prior to the established completion date, the grade will remain an IE on the transcript but may be petitioned to be changed. A grade of IE does not carry credit and need not be resolved prior to graduation.

The use of the grades PE, NE, and IE is reserved for situations in which the performance of a student is substantively impacted by a period of significant disruption.

The grades PE, NE, and IE will not be included in calculations of grade point average.

The grades PE, NE, and IE are exempt from the course repeat policy.

When used as the final grade for a course, the PE grade is treated the same as the P* grade in determining total credits and minimum required UO credits under the university's bachelor's degree requirements.

Academic units will need to include in their academic continuity plans how they will handle grades of PE, NE and IE in courses that serve as prerequisites for other courses, required courses, and for courses that have a minimum grade requirement or contribute to an overall GPA requirement.

The transcript of a student's record will contain a description of any significant disruption of the University's academic activities that occurs during the student's enrollment.

This legislation will be effective immediately with technical implementation of the new grades as soon as practical.