

## ACADEMIC CONTINUITY PLAN

### Policy on Academic Continuity and Emergency Grades: **Academic Continuity During a Significant Disruption to Academic Activities**

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 continue academic activities as much as possible and to mitigate the effects of a significant academic disruption, which include particularly grave academic and financial consequences for graduating students, international students, and students receiving financial aid. 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, as per this policy's rules for Instructors of Record.
- **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 during and after the conclusion of a disruption, to the greatest extent 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 academic 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 of Record:** For the purposes of this policy:

**The Instructor(s) of Record** for a course are the instructor(s) assigned by academic units to teach a course. They must be actively engaged in teaching the course and are responsible for issuing final grades. Instructors of Record shall be listed in the Registrar's course registration system (currently BANNER/Duckweb) by the beginning of the term. This listing shows who has the ability to assign and change final grades except as otherwise explained in this policy. Units shall assign Graduate Employees as Instructors of Record for courses for which they have primary teaching and grading responsibility.

Section leaders and graders may be listed in the course registration system e.g. as section leaders, but they are not Instructors of Record for that course.

**Replacement Instructors of Record:** If an Instructor of Record leaves the university permanently or is otherwise not expected to return to duty before final grades are due, the unit head or designee may remove the original Instructor of Record, and appoint a Replacement Instructor of Record to take on the full duties and responsibilities including teaching and grading.

**Additional Instructors of Record:** If an Instructor of Record takes a temporary absence from their duties and is expected to return before final grades are due, the unit head or designee may appoint an additional Instructor of Record. The original Instructor of Record retains authority for final grades unless their absence becomes or is expected to become permanent, in which case the rule regarding replacements holds.

**Significant Academic Disruption:** A significant extended impediment to academic activities that limits learning and or grading.

**Academic Continuity Plan:** A plan for maintaining learning and assigning grades during a Significant Academic Disruption.

## **PROCEDURE FOR ACTIVATING ACADEMIC CONTINUITY PLANS DURING A SIGNIFICANT ACADEMIC 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.
- **After such a declaration, the Academic Council will be convened to determine, in coordination with designees from the Office of the Provost, an appropriate Academic Continuity Plan, if needed, to manage any associated disruption of academic activity. Approval of any such plan will require a majority vote of the faculty members of the Academic Council.**
- For the purposes of this policy, after a “Campus State of Emergency” has been declared, voting faculty members of the Academic Council who are unable or unwilling to serve will be replaced by **faculty** designees from their relevant committees, selected by the respective committee. If an Academic Council member is unable or unwilling to select a replacement, the Senate President or designee with advice from the remaining members of the Academic Council shall make appointments from the statutory faculty with a preference for current or past members of the relevant committees.
- The Academic Continuity Plan shall include provisions for continuation of academic activities and awarding of grades. Because a Significant Academic Disruption may affect academic activities differently across campus, the Academic Continuity Plan may provide a range of options which maintain academic integrity, and transparency and fairness for students. These may 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.
- The Academic Council’s Academic Continuity Plan may also authorize Emergency Grades, as explained below under “Emergency Grades”.
- Academic unit heads, under the direction of their Deans, will coordinate implementation of the academic continuity plan with instructors in their units.
- After the University President declares an end to a University Emergency, the Academic Council, with input from the Office of Provost, will decide when to declare an end to the Significant Academic Disruption and will provide a plan for winding down the Academic Continuity Plan.
- Any Academic Continuity Plans and their implementation must comply with all existing collective

bargaining agreements.

## **CONTINUATION OF ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES**

The Academic Council will consider the following factors in managing a Significant Academic 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 Academic 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 Academic Disruption, unaffected Instructors of Record are expected to make reasonable efforts to continue their assigned 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 academic 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 academic 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 for their courses. 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.

## **EMERGENCY GRADES**

### **Provisions for Emergency Grades in the Event of Significant Disruption**

When a significant academic disruption is declared by the Academic Council 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 emergency grades defined below. Emergency grades may be appropriate when a significant academic disruption results in reduced instructional time, inability to complete assignments or exams, or inability to complete grading of assignments or exams.

Emergency grades may be temporary or permanent depending on circumstances. Grades and academic credit are determined by the amount and quality of academic work completed. 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 Academic Disruption. At that time, the Academic Council may declare one of the following

regarding PE, NE and IE grades:

- All emergency grades are to remain in place permanently;
- All emergency grades are to be replaced with regular grades;
- The emergency grades are to be replaced with regular grades by the Instructors of Record, where they have enough information to award regular grades. Otherwise, the PE, NE and IE grades remain in place.

**PE** Satisfactory performance under circumstance of significant academic 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 academic disruption. **The grade of PE carries academic credit.**

**NE** Less than satisfactory performance under circumstance of significant academic 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 academic disruption. **A grade of NE does not carry academic credit.** A grade of NE will require recording a last date of participation.

**IE** Incomplete due to significant academic disruption. When authorized, the grade of IE indicates that a portion of the requirements has not been fulfilled, due to a significant academic 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 academic credit and need not be resolved prior to graduation.**

**If the Academic Council determines that a Significant Academic Disruption is serious or prolonged enough, it may authorize the University Registrar to enter emergency grades into the course grading system.** Once Emergency Grades have been authorized by the Academic Council, the default grade entered by the University Registrar will be an IE. The Academic Council may authorize Instructors of Record or their replacements to issue NE or PE grades.

Emergency grades will not be included in calculations of grade point average and students with an emergency grade are exempt from the course repeat policy for that course. 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 determine 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.

Student transcripts will contain a description of any Significant Academic Disruption that occurs during the student's enrollment and is relevant to their academic progress and grades.

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