

Senate Policy

Policy on Academic Disruption

4.1

Description:

This policy outlines academic governance provisions, including the membership and terms of reference of an Academic Disruption Response Committee, during a period of disruption to normal teaching and learning activities.

Related Policies:

Emergency Response Plan (Administrative)
Pandemic Student Attendance Policy

Approvals:

Approved by Senate Academic Policy & Planning Committee: May 2021
Approved by Senate: May 2021

Date Effective: May 2021

Approval Authority: Senate

Signature: Simone Jones

OCAD University recognizes that events such as natural disasters, pandemic health emergencies, prolonged labour disputes or major service interruptions pose a risk to the continuity of the university's core mission of teaching and learning. In such situations, it may be necessary to make alterations, either at the time or retroactively, to academic policy and procedures and the delivery of curriculum in order to safeguard the continuity of academic and research operations.

Policy:

1. Principles & Priorities

- a. **Equity:** The university recognizes that events and circumstances may have a disproportionate impact on equity-seeking groups and will make efforts to provide equal access to opportunity and/or mitigate impact. The university recognizes that its commitment to equity requires attentiveness

to the needs of both its internal community and the needs of the broader community in which it is situated.

- b. Fairness:** Students who do not participate in their studies because of a disruption will be entitled to reasonable alternative access of materials covered in their absence; to reasonable extensions of deadlines; and to such other remedies. The availability of an alternative under this policy does not guarantee students the same learning experience that they would have received in the absence of a disruption, however it will attempt to match it as closely as possible under the circumstances of the disruption.
- c. Accessibility:** The diverse learning needs of students will be prioritized in any altering of curriculum delivery or adjustments to policy and procedure during the period of disruption.
- d. Clear and timely communication:** Any adjustments to academic policy, procedure or curriculum delivery made under this policy will be communicated to stakeholders as soon as possible to facilitate planning, implementation and informed decision-making.
- e. Quality assurance:** The university is committed to maintaining the quality of all academic programs and all of its legal responsibilities. Although steps may be taken under this policy which result in changes to curriculum delivery and the educational experience of students, those changes must maintain the quality of academic programs.
- f. Academic freedom:** In this context, OCAD University recognizes that academic freedom, which is essential to teaching functions at the university and as agreed to within the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between OCAD University and the OCAD Faculty Association, must be upheld during periods of academic disruption.

2. Ensuring Continuity in the Event of an Academic Disruption

a. Short term disruption

A short-term (normally less than 5 days) academic disruption may be declared by the Vice-President, Academic & Provost after consultation with the University's Emergency Management Team.

Academic Roles & Responsibilities

- The University Registrar will consult with impacted instructors/classes and provide scheduled make-up classes as needed and as possible.
- Instructors will provide arrangements for students to make-up course work missed during the period of disruption.
- Students will inform individual instructors of the impact of the disruption on meeting expectations of the course and will complete make-up course work and/or assignments as provided by instructors.

b. Longer term disruption

A longer term (anything longer than 5 days) academic disruption may be declared by the Vice-President, Academic & Provost and the Chair of the OCAD University Senate in consultation with the Emergency Management Team.

In order to facilitate timely, informed academic decision-making during the period of disruption, academic governance is assigned to the Academic Disruption Response Committee (ADRC), a standing committee of Senate. The ADRC will be constituted at the start of each academic year to ensure its membership is in place.

Composition of the ADRC:

- Three (3) Deans of Faculty or Designates
- One (1) Dean, Graduate Studies or Designate
- Four (4) faculty Senators, one from each Faculty and Graduate Studies
- Vice-President, Academic and Provost or Designate
- Vice-Provost, Students and International or Designate
- One (1) Undergraduate student Senator
- One (1) Graduate student Senator
- Chair of the OCAD University Senate, who will serve as Chair
- Two (2) faculty members at-large, in areas of expertise, specific to the conditions of the disruption, selected at the discretion of the Chair

Members of the ADRC will receive training as it relates to the nature of the disruption. Other stakeholders from the OCAD U community will be invited to the committee as needed, specifically representatives from academic support units (Office of the Registrar, Library Services, IT Services, Facilities & Studio Services, Faculty & Curriculum Development Centre, Writing & Learning Centre, etc.) and a representative from the OCAD Student Union.

During the period of disruption, the ADRC may make the following adjustments to academic policy and planning:

- Exemptions, extensions and amendments to student policies, deadlines and academic dates may be implemented as necessary, in order to accommodate student registration.
- Modes of delivery, assessment and learning outcomes of courses may be altered, if necessary and as appropriately determined by faculty, to a mode other than that stated in the course outline, syllabus or catalogue.
- Delays or extensions of the term dates and assessment periods may be implemented.

The committee suspends activity upon declaration by the Vice-President, Academic & Provost and Chair of Senate, returning decision-making back to

regular academic governance processes. The ADRC will provide regular updates to the OCAD U community during the period of disruption and report all approved business to Senate at its first regular business meeting following the period of disruption.

Longer Term Disruption Organizational Chart

