

## Schedule of Dates

October 2, 2007

(Senate-approved changes to the formula to determine the Academic Schedule of Dates)

### The Issue

The University semester is 12 weeks long, with classes normally comprised of 36 hours of lectures. However, currently any instructor teaching on a Monday in the fall semester loses lecture time due to the Thanksgiving Monday holiday. For a faculty member teaching a three hour course on a Monday, this results in the loss of one full week of class time.

While some faculty may be able to design their course in a flexible manner to address this shortfall of class time, others may need this time to meet course requirements. Unfortunately, given the tightness of classroom space, some classes will always need to be assigned to a Monday time slot.

Accordingly the Schedule of Dates was changed to add one additional class day at the end of the Fall semester to ensure that all classes have the opportunity to meet for the full 36 hours per semester of class time. While the solution is obvious, the implementation proved more complicated. In some years, where Labour Day starts late, adding a Monday class at the end of the semester, and then providing for the usual time to study for examinations and complete marking, results in an inability to process the final fall grades in time for the start of the winter semester. Given the semestered nature of our programs, students must have the results of their course outcomes prior to the start of the Winter semester, as they may then need to make changes to their course selection (e.g. re-take prerequisite courses, drop courses, etc.).

Consequently the proposed schedule (below) meets all the Schedule of Dates principles, and provides for a full 60 days of classes in the semester as well as an additional day for students to study for finals.

Since the majority of upper year students return to campus on the Labour Day weekend, the earlier start of classes will allow them to engage sooner in their studies and establish the academic focus and priorities of the year more quickly. The new schedule will provide first year students with the opportunity to settle into their studies sooner, and provide the opportunity to meet as necessary with course instructors (who are teaching and therefore more likely to be available in the first week). Orientation activities would continue, but scheduled around classes. Shortening the “return” period, along with shortening Orientation Week— by starting classes sooner—will signal the University’s intention that the engagement of students in academic activities is the primary purpose and focus of the university year.

These changes became effective for Fall 2008.

Fall classes to begin on the Thursday after the Labour Day Monday (rather than the following Monday).

1. Use these two additional days as follows:
  - a. Add a make-up day for the missed Thanksgiving Monday at the end of the last week of Classes (on the Thursday).
  - b. Add an additional day for students to study for examinations.

APPROVED CHANGE, effective Fall 2008

<p>First Year Students arrive the Saturday or Sunday before Labour Day<sup>1</sup></p> <p>Classes start on the Thursday the same week as Labour Day</p> <p>Regular classes end on the Wednesday of the current final week of the semester</p> <p>The Thursday of the final week of instruction is a make-up day for the Monday that had been “lost” to Thanksgiving</p> <p>The Friday of the final week of instruction is a Reading Day</p> <p>Exams begin Monday</p>	<p>SEPTEMBER</p> <p>S – Orientation</p> <p>M – Labour Day (Orientation)</p> <p>T – Orientation</p> <p>W – Orientation</p> <p>R – Classes</p> <p>F – Classes</p>	<p>OCTOBER</p> <p>M – Thanksgiving, no classes</p> <p>DECEMBER</p> <p>W – Regular schedule of classes ends</p> <p>R – Thanksgiving Day make-up classes</p> <p>F – Study/Reading Day</p> <p>M – Exams begin</p>
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**On April 10, 2001, Senate approved the following Principles and Goals for the Academic Schedule of Dates:**

Principles and Goals

The working group began deliberation by establishing certain basic principles of scheduling:

- We must provide sufficient time for faculty to mark exams
- We must continue to provide final grades to students before the beginning of the next semester
- We must allow for time to counsel students in academic difficulty
- We must maintain the number of teaching days at 59 for Fall, 59-60 for Winter, and 60 for Summer

Input from stakeholder groups—Program Committees, Program Counsellors, ECC, and VPAC - had identified a number of basic changes that were broadly desired, and informed the final principles:

- Begin Fall semester after Labour Day
- No classes on Saturday
- Eliminate Special Schedule classes

<sup>1</sup> Move in date for new students would be decided after approval of the Schedule of Dates, and will involve broad consultation of the numerous stakeholders.

- Begin classes and exam periods on Mondays—a ‘work-week-oriented’ schedule  
*[note: the revisions approved by Senate on October 2, 2007 adjusted this principle.]*
- Allow at least a calendar week (7 days) for marking
- Discontinue RTW at the end of Fall
- Consolidate Summer into one six week and one twelve week session.