

University of Guelph
Continuity of Education Plan
2021/22

Preamble

The Continuity of Education Plan (CEP) is meant to protect and support students, faculty, and staff and to establish appropriate measures for the continuity of teaching and learning in the event of an emergency such as the COVID-19 pandemic. On July 16, 2021, the Ministry of Colleges and Universities (MCU) issued a memo directing publicly assisted colleges and universities to have CEPs in place and publicly available.

1.0 Emergency Response Protocols

It is the responsibility of the University of Guelph to ensure that the safety and well-being of its students, staff, faculty, and visitors are safeguarded while on campus. To ensure that this goal is met the University developed an [Emergency Management Plan \(EMP\)](#). Its primary purpose is to preserve the health, wellness, and safety of the campus community and to conserve the University's assets, environment and reputation during emergency situations.

Examples of emergencies may include:

- Extreme weather/natural disasters;
- Critical infrastructure failure;
- Building fire/explosion;
- Hazardous material leak;
- Public health influenza/pandemic;
- Essential services failure (flood, fuel, IT, labour disruption); and
- Active Intruder/Shooter.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the EMP is to provide provisions for extraordinary arrangements and measures that may need to be established to protect the health, wellness, safety and property of the students, staff, faculty, and visitors to University of Guelph during an emergency.

The EMP outlines a controlled and coordinated response to emergencies that occur on and off campus and is consistent with the legislated requirements of the [Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act of Ontario](#).

The EMP has been developed to ensure effective action from the University and its stakeholders during emergency situations by:

- Assigning stakeholder roles and responsibilities;
- Identifying priorities and emergency management goals;
- Detailing methods and procedures for managing and responding to emergencies;
- Providing a framework for stakeholders to mitigate risk through education, training, and annual exercises; and
- Outlining the Province of Ontario's Incident Management System (IMS).

The University's EMP will complement municipal, provincial, and federal emergency plans when any one or all those plans are simultaneously in effect.

1.2 COVID-19 Context

In conjunction with the requirements outlined in the EMP for declared emergencies, the University continues to adhere to directives contained within our [Pandemic Plan](#) to: strengthen pandemic preparedness; minimize the risk of transmission and spread of the virus; communicate

clearly the status of cases on campus; and take action to minimize the impact of the pandemic on the University community.

In addition to maintaining strict compliance with provincial regulations governing business operations during the pandemic, U of G continues to implement and enforce several health and safety protocols in alignment with local and provincial public health guidance and directives. Examples of protocols implemented at some point during or for the duration of the pandemic as directed by public health or government directives and best practices include:

- Mandating an institutional vaccination policy;
- Enforcing two-metres physical distancing;
- Wearing of masks indoors and when physical distance cannot be maintained between individuals residing in different households while outdoors;
- Wearing of additional personal protective equipment (PPE) such as face shields, gloves or safety glasses during teaching and learning activities when two-metres physical distance cannot be maintained;
- Installing signage to direct traffic flows and maintain distance when lining up to load or unload an instructional space;
- Adopting a classroom [Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning \(HVAC\) strategy](#) and adjusting mechanical systems (ventilation) to ensure they operate to high quality standards
- Installing sanitization stations across campus to ensure availability of appropriate hand hygiene products as recommended;
- Adjusting cleaning protocols to reflect evolving recommendations throughout the duration of the pandemic;
- Testing wastewater: U of G researchers continually sample (seven days a week) wastewater from campus residences to provide information before people become symptomatic so we can respond appropriately;
- Requiring the completion of COVID-19 safety training modules to ensure the campus community understands how to keep themselves and others safe;
- Establishing a COVID-19 Call Centre to help provide important information about the virus and support those who test positive; and
- Providing rapid testing to asymptomatic students, staff, and faculty

In addition to the implementation and enforcement of health and safety protocols, U of G established a comprehensive Protocol for Managing COVID-19 Positive Cases and Outbreaks. Key parameters and considerations of the positive cases and outbreak protocol include the following.

- U of G's Student Wellness and Occupational Health and Wellness office will co-ordinate with Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health to manage and respond to COVID-19 cases on U of G campus or University-managed facilities and research stations.
- Public health may declare an outbreak when there are two or more connected cases of COVID-19 in a workplace setting, or there is one positive case of COVID-19 involving either a student or staff member living in our campus residences. In close collaboration with Public Health, the University's Outbreak Response Team is responsible for directing the University's management of and response to an outbreak.

- A larger outbreak may require the closing of building floors, entire buildings, or the cessation of operations in certain sections of the University.
- General management responses, including assessment, testing, surveillance, and control measures, have been created for the following scenarios: positive case among staff or faculty, positive case in student not living in residence, and positive case/outbreak in residence or family housing.
- U of G will provide appropriate communications regarding positive cases and outbreaks across several channels to the University community and general public, including the [Case Reporting website](#).

In the event of an equivalent public health emergency or other qualified emergency defined by the EMP, U of G will similarly engage with designated authorities to identify required health and safety protocols to protect the health and well-being of our campus community.

2.0 Academic Continuity

The University of Guelph is committed to the highest standards of pedagogy and to a curriculum that fosters creativity, skill development, critical inquiry, and active learning. U of G focuses on developing the “whole student” to shape global citizens. Our interdisciplinary approach to education and research allows our students and faculty to address complex challenges facing our world now and into the future.

The establishment of [University Policy 2.2 – Policy on Academic Continuity](#) ensures that U of G can preserve its academic mission and maintain its commitments to teaching and research excellence and to student success even in the most emergent circumstances. In the event of a threat to academic continuity, the University will do everything it can to maximize support for student learning and achievement of established learning outcomes.

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of Policy 2.2 is to provide a framework that will guide the University to fulfill its academic mission in the face of potential threats to academic continuity. It outlines how U of G will make decisions and communicate with the campus community when academic programming is disrupted – as in the case of the COVID-19 pandemic. Further, Policy 2.2 identifies the responsibilities of our community members, including the institution as a whole, academic units, administrators, instructors, and students.

The following principles guide the University in its preparation and planning for academic continuity and in its response to any potential academic disruption or emergency.

- Academic integrity.
- Fairness to students (equity).
- Timely information.

2.2 Scope

This Policy applies to academic governance and decision-making as related to academic programming in the event of an academic disruption. A state of disruption or emergency may be

declared and affect one or more programs, departments or colleges, one or more campuses, or the whole University. In the event of an academic disruption or emergency, the provisions articulated in this Policy and related [Procedures](#) may supersede regulations and procedures outlined in the [academic calendars](#).

2.3 Procedures

Policy 2.2 clearly identifies approved processes in the event of examination and short- and long-term disruptions as well as for academic consideration and appeals occurring during a disruption.

Short Disruptions

In the case of brief academic disruptions of seven or fewer days, individual course instructors and faculty are expected to determine the extent to which their courses, seminars, graduate supervision, labs, practica, etc. are affected by the academic disruption and what curricular adjustment, if any, is required.

Where an individual class is differentially affected by an academic disruption (e.g., in cases where a three-hour class is disrupted), course instructors and faculty should consult with Chairs/Directors and deans regarding appropriate curricular adjustment.

If after consultation with the course instructor or faculty member, the Chair or Director deems that rescheduling is required to preserve course integrity, they shall take actions consistent with the principles articulated in the Policy, in consultation with the Registrar and/or the Assistant Vice-President, Graduate Studies.

Long Disruptions

In the case of an academic disruption of lasting more than seven days, the Provost & Vice-President (Academic) shall receive reports from the deans on the impact of the academic disruption.

In the case of an academic disruption lasting more than 14 days, Senate shall receive modifications to the Schedule of Dates with any related changes in examination scheduling.

In cases where substantial amounts of instructional time have been lost due to academic disruption, the Provost & Vice-President (Academic) shall call a meeting of the Deans, who shall oversee the process of directing and implementing the necessary curricular adjustments, and in doing so shall:

- Have authority to extend a term and to authorize the rescheduling of examinations, in order to preserve academic integrity. The length of the term may not be extended more than seven days. Implementation of changes to the academic term will be organized centrally. Appropriate central offices, such as the Office of the Registrar, will be consulted prior to the decision and asked to assist in any rescheduling.
- Resolve conflicts between the principles of academic integrity and fairness to students as articulated in the Policy.

Tests and mid-term examinations for all courses will not be rescheduled until the class has met at least once, or, in the case of distance education courses or hybrid courses, no sooner than three days after the academic disruption has ended.

Assignments due during the academic disruption need not be submitted until the class as met at least once, or, in the case of distance education courses or hybrid courses, no sooner than three days after the academic disruption has ended.

If required, provisions will be made for alternative scheduling of presentations, performances, practica, etc. so that collaborative classroom or studio work may take place at a time convenient for course instructors and students.

If an academic disruption continues to a point where no feasible remedy consistent with the principle of academic integrity is available, the Provost & Vice-President (Academic), in consultation with the Deans, shall recommend to Senate that credit not be given for a given course or courses.

Examination Disruptions

In the case of academic disruptions during the examination period, the Provost & Vice-President (Academic) or designate shall oversee the process of directing and implementing the necessary remedial action.

Academic Consideration and Appeals

Normal academic consideration and appeals procedures shall apply to deal with academic issues arising from an academic disruption that lasts longer than seven days. Where an academic disruption occurred for more than seven days, the Senate Petitions Committee, the Committee on Admissions and Progress, and Academic Review Subcommittees shall monitor requests for academic consideration to ensure fairness and reasonable consistency of outcomes.

2.4 COVID-19 Context

Due to the dynamic nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, U of G is holding continual consultations with a multiple government and other regulatory bodies to ensure swift and appropriate action is taken to provide academic continuity in a safe teaching and learning environment.

Maintaining our academic mission while navigating the complexities of COVID-19 requires U of G to make many critical and difficult decisions. These decisions are grounded in [principles of academic continuity](#) in the COVID-19 context, as developed through consultation with Senate in May 2020, and prioritize the student experience and the health, wellness, and safety of our campus community. Per the University's EMP, all decisions are underpinned by guidance provided by our local and provincial public health units.

From the beginning of COVID-19 pandemic, marked by the suspension of in-person teaching and learning on March 13, 2020, the University has [acted swiftly to ensure the fulfillment of its academic mission](#). Actions undertaken to ensure continuity of education are approved under the

invocation of U of G's Senate-approved Policy 2.2 – Policy on Academic Continuity or appropriate approval-granting authority.

Disruptions to academic continuity include:

- Provincial declaration of a State of Emergency;
- Provincial lockdown or stay-at-home order;
- differential impacts to student, staff, and faculty health, wellness, and safety due to the spread and transmission of COVID-19; and
- Implementation of and changes to local and/or provincial health and safety directives such as physical distancing or capacity restrictions

Solutions adopted to ensure academic continuity include:

- Reduced densities to accommodate in-person teaching in compliance with public health and safety protocols;
- Enrolment caps for in-person course sections;
- hybrid models of delivery that include some in-person and remote components;
- Remote synchronous (e.g., zoom lectures) or remote asynchronous (e.g., pre-recorded lectures or instructional videos); and
- Fully online learning through Distance Education

Recognizing that some disruptions occur at an individual level while others impact the institution as a whole, U of G has ensured that those with authority to make decisions are well-positioned to take swift and decisive action. This has been made possible by the identification of scenarios (via U of G's screening tool and call centre) that are subject to immediate public health and safety guidance (e.g., symptomatic and must self-isolate) and the steps that are to be taken if the individual disruption affects course delivery (e.g., instructor contracts COVID-19 and is unable to teach in-person or remotely). In the case of an individual disruption to instructors, most scenarios are managed by instructors and their department Chairs or Directors in consultation with college administration. In instances like a province-wide stay-at-home order, University administration has adapted and will continue to adapt campus operations to comply with public health and government directives and develop parameters that will guide decision making across our colleges and departments.

The University of Guelph is committed to its mission as a learner-centred University, which includes a commitment to the highest standards of pedagogy and meeting the needs of all learners. In the case of a future similar or other declared emergency or academic disruption, the University will continue to rely upon established policies and procedures and respond accordingly to safeguard academic continuity.

3.0 Links to Useful Resources in the Event of an Emergency

- [Emergency Management Plan](#)
- [Pandemic Plan](#)
- [Be Prepared Website](#)
- [How to get Help on Campus](#)
- [Emergency Phone Locations on Campus](#)
- [University Risk Management Policy](#)
- [U of G Alert Emergency Notification System](#)
- [Ridgetown U of G Alert Emergency Notification System](#)
- [Safe Gryphon App](#)
- [COVID-19 Information](#)
- [Protocols for Managing Positive COVID-19 Cases Within the University Community and Outbreaks on Campus](#)
- [Policy 512 Hazardous Weather / Emergency Closing Procedures](#)
- [Emergency contacts for Guelph students abroad](#)