

Academic Support Plan for Disruptions to Teaching and Learning

The Academic Support Plan provides a framework with which to work, plan and make decisions during a disruption to teaching and learning on campus. This framework is provided to assist campus leaders as they evaluate and respond to a disruption.

Included here are guidelines for the following areas:

- Academic Calendar
- Academic Services
- Student Services

Academic Calendar Guidelines

- Decisions related to the academic calendar will be made by the chancellor and the Executive Group of the campus Emergency Operations Center during an event that disrupts teaching and learning
- Definitions of semester (term) status during a disruptive event may include the following:

Completed Semester (term)	A semester will be considered complete when 12 weeks or more of instruction has occurred and grading is complete.
Suspended Semester (term)	A semester will be considered suspended when instruction is temporarily stopped. There will be the intention to resume classes when the chancellor determines the health and safety of faculty, staff and students are no longer at risk, and adequate resources are available.
Canceled Semester (term)	A semester is considered canceled when it is determined that instruction can no longer continue, and there has not been enough instruction to grade for the semester.

General Calendar Guidelines

- Final exams may be canceled or alternate methods employed during a disruption to teaching and learning. Alternatives to final exams may include final papers, open-book exams submitted online, etc.
 - Commencement ceremonies may have to be delayed or combined with the next scheduled commencement. This may or may not necessitate postponing degree posting.
- After an unscheduled break due to a disruption to teaching and learning, classes should resume as soon as practical. If a university holiday (Dec. 24, 25, 31; Jan. 1; Martin Luther King Day; Memorial Day; Independence Day; Labor Day; Thanksgiving) intervenes, the semester should resume or begin the next business day after the holiday with one exception: a semester should not resume or begin between Christmas day and New Year's day.

- Spring break could be canceled in any scenario where the normal spring semester is condensed.
- If disruption to teaching and learning occurs during the semester rather than at the beginning or end, outcomes may vary widely depending on the specific time during the semester and/or on the severity of the event. One option may be to offer a three-week session comprised of courses offered entirely online, independent study courses, research courses, etc.
- In the event that a semester needs to be canceled, the university will provide options to students for withdrawing or completing their coursework. Decisions will be made at the time of the event and will vary depending on severity and timing of the event, etc.

Fall Semester Calendar Guidelines

- If the fall semester starts one to three weeks late, the calendar is not altered. The Final Exam and grading schedule remain unchanged. Rationale: 12 weeks of instruction is completed. Because of the short duration, course content could be condensed, and students may be able to make up work or receive incomplete grades.
- If the fall semester is delayed four weeks, instruction continues into final exam week (summary period). Formal final exams are canceled; summary period activities can be incorporated into the remaining portion of the course. The grading period is extended into first full week of January.
- If the fall semester is delayed five weeks or more, the semester may be canceled. Alternatively, classes may be finished in January. Formal final exams are canceled; summary period activities can be incorporated into the remaining portion of the course. The grading period will be extended one week beyond the end of classes.
- If classes must be suspended for five or more weeks in the middle of the semester, the decision may be to either cancel the semester, or finish the fall semester in January.

Spring Semester Calendar Guidelines

- If the spring semester starts one to four weeks late, spring break is canceled. The final exam schedule remains, as well as the grading schedule. Because of the short duration, course content could be condensed, and students may be able to make up work or receive incomplete grades.
- If the spring semester starts five or six weeks late, instruction continues into final exam week. Spring break is canceled. Formal final exams are canceled; summary period activities can be incorporated into the remaining portion of the course. The grading period is extended into the first week of June.
- If the spring semester is postponed into the seventh week or beyond, or if a disruptive event occurs sometime in the middle of the semester, the decision may be to cancel the semester or extend into the summer semester.

Summer Term Guidelines

Use of Summer Term to Address Academic Year Disruptions

Depending upon the severity a disruption may have on teaching and learning during a fall/spring semester, summer offerings may be increased and enrollment may be unusually high. It is likely that summer offerings would be prioritized based on courses that were unable to be offered (e.g., due to an inability to offer online) or it was a course that was canceled or suspended during those terms. Primary consideration will be given to courses that advance student degree progression. School and college deans will collaborate with the Division of Continuing Studies to prioritize instructional offerings in the summer term.

Disruptions during Summer Term

- If a session three weeks in length or less is delayed beyond the first week, it will be canceled.
- If a session four to seven weeks in length is delayed beyond the second week, it will be canceled.
- If a session eight weeks in length or longer is delayed beyond the third week, it will be canceled.

If a course can be offered online and institutional infrastructure can support the teaching and learning of the course online, the cancellation policy does not apply.

When practical, canceled sessions can be rescheduled to begin later in the summer.

Decisions regarding these and all other summer policy and enrollment management issues will be made by the chancellor and the Executive Group in consultation with the deans, the Division of Continuing Studies and the Division of Enrollment Management.

Academic Services Guidelines

Grading Options

Depending on the duration of the disruptive event and point-in-time of the semester, decisions about grading options will be made by a group appointed by the provost and should include the registrar, dean of students and representatives of the deans of schools and colleges. These decisions may include:

- Institute a liberal policy on incompletes and makeup deadlines.
- Extend the deadline for students to choose the pass/fail option (currently the end of the fourth week). Allow the course to count toward degree credit as long as the pass is received (current policy allows pass/fail grading only in elective courses).

Extend the deadline for completing course work once a semester is over for graduating seniors (allowing them to qualify for a degree at the end of the impacted prior term). *Note that the current deadline is the day after the final exam period ends.*

Policies on Student Withdrawal

A student may withdraw anytime through the 12th week of classes in the regular semester, at the end of the second week of the three-week early summer session, or the end of the sixth week of the eight-week summer session. Withdrawal will be noted on the transcript if the withdrawal occurs after the Wednesday of the second week of classes in a regular semester.

Additional details about withdrawals can be found under Enrollment Information for each semester, located at <http://www.registrar.wisc.edu/>

The university recognizes the need for student withdrawal rules that are fair for students who feel their health and/or safety may be at risk. Students are encouraged to consult with their advisor and/or academic dean's office prior to withdrawing.

Considerations for Re-entry

For undergraduate students: In the event that the student must withdraw from school (for health, family health, or safety reasons) or the institution cancels a semester, and as long as the term has started, a re-entry application would not be necessary. This is consistent with current policy under normal circumstances. The process would be streamlined to ensure efficient processing.

Student Services Guidelines

Policies on Tuition Refunds

Depending on the time of semester, policies associated with tuition refunds may vary. Any modifications to current university refund policies (tuition, fees, housing, etc.) will be determined based on decisions regarding length of closure, cancellation of classes and/or services and granting of academic credit. Modifications of the current refund schedule would require approval of the chancellor and/or the Board of Regents.

If a student drops a course or withdraws from the university, tuition and fee refunds are dispensed following a strict schedule detailed at <http://registrar.wisc.edu/>. Modular courses and summer session courses have a shorter refund period.

International students are not allowed to drop below full-time enrollment unless they have first received authorization from International Student Services (ISS), 217 Armory and Gymnasium (Red Gym), 716 Langdon St., 608-262-2044, iss@odos.wisc.edu, iss.wisc.edu. This will ensure that students remain in compliance with Department of Homeland Security (DHS) visa regulations.

If students make a course change after the fee-refund deadlines (including audited, modular and zero-credit courses) they may be charged a fee even if their total number of credits does not change. The Bursar's Office will notify students if they owe additional fees or are entitled to a refund.

Tuition and fees information can be found at: <http://www.registrar.wisc.edu/>

Refund and “credit back” policy: <http://www.bussvc.wisc.edu/bursar/turf.html>

Fee schedule: <http://www.bussvc.wisc.edu/bursar/tuitdued.html>

Compassionate refunds are treated as an exception to the rule and handled as a recommendation from the academic dean to the registrar. It is appropriate for the university to consider some type of compassionate refund when students are unable to continue in classes due to compelling circumstances beyond their control, including a life-threatening or disabling illness/accident for an enrolled student, or death of an immediate member of the family or household of an enrolled student.

Advising

In the event of a significant disruption to the teaching and learning-mission of the institution the Office of Undergraduate Advising would take the lead in communicating with the campus advising infrastructure. Through consultation with the five, campus-wide advising committees (Academic Advising and Policy Leaders, Council on Academic Advising, Advising Architecture Review Board, Advisory Board for Advisor Training and the Orientation Advising Team), the Office of Undergraduate Advising would respond to the particular set of circumstances causing the disruption and communicate the action plan to the disparate advising units and advisors across the campus. Advisors could be deployed to communicate information directly to students.

For a disruption that reduced the ability for advisors to meet face-to-face with students, technology would be deployed to continue advising relationships. For example, advising appointments could be conducted by Skype, FaceTime or email. In the event of a complete technology blackout, most advising operations would need to cease until technology access is restored.

Student Status Considerations

As university officials make decisions leading up to or during a disruptive event, it is important to be cognizant of the following types of students and the circumstances surrounding their enrollment. Adjustments to the definition of full-time credit load/enrollment (see Glossary for definition: <https://registrar.wisc.edu/definitions>) could be considered during a disruption to teaching and learning.

International Students

Full-time enrollment is linked to a student’s visa and maintaining immigration status. To authorize a reduced course load based upon a medical condition, the student must provide medical documentation from a licensed medical doctor, doctor of osteopathy or licensed clinical psychologist. Current regulations note that if a student is forced to withdraw from courses for non-medical reasons (e.g., classes are canceled or suspended), a student’s options would include having only 14 days to transfer to another institution (unrealistic), leave the U.S. (highly likely that there could be travel restrictions) or apply for reinstatement from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

International students are currently permitted to take up to three credits of online learning each semester, in accordance with current federal policy. If UW-Madison invoked social distancing such that available courses were only being taught online, international students could technically lose their status. This would require them to apply for reinstatement. In the case of denial, the student would be required to leave the country immediately (this could, of course, conflict with national travel restrictions).

Immediate contact with federal agencies regarding these regulations would be required. For planning purposes, the university assumes that federal regulations may be adjusted during a disruptive event; the university will comply with the standard guidelines in the absence of adjusted guidelines. Additional information about requirements for international students is available through the Offices of the Dean of Students' International Student Services Office. Additional information is available at <http://www.iss.wisc.edu/index.html>.

Student-Athletes

Full-time enrollment status is required for Big Ten and NCAA eligibility.

NCAA/Big Ten certification requires that student-athletes are enrolled in 12 credits from the first day of the semester until the end of the semester. Any student-athlete who withdraws from school or drops below 12 credits becomes immediately ineligible for the entire semester. If the fall/spring semester start dates are delayed, certification of student-athletes would also be delayed. Competition schedules, both locally and nationally, will likely be affected.

For any situation that may interrupt or alter the school calendar, the academic athletic eligibility coordinators in the Office of the Registrar would work closely with the Athletic Department and Compliance Office, as well as the NCAA/Big Ten.

Students with SHIP (health coverage through UW-Madison)

Domestic undergraduate students are required to have a minimum of five UW-Madison credits and domestic graduate students must have two credits to qualify for SHIP. International students are eligible with one credit.

Students with special needs

It will be important to consider the interests of student with special needs during a disruptive event. Consultation with the McBurney Disability Resource Center will be imperative (<http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/>).

Considerations for Admissions and Recruitment

After assessing the situation, the Director of Admissions and Recruitment in consultation with the Vice Provost for Enrollment Management will make recommendations to the chancellor and the provost. These recommendations will vary depending on the time within the admissions and recruitment cycle the situation may occur.

If, for example, a situation were to occur early or mid-way through the application and admit decision season (September through March), the major impact would fall on travel for recruitment and campus visits by prospective students and families. Depending on the severity of

the disruptive event, travel for recruitment may be restricted per university recommendations. In addition, campus visits to UW-Madison by prospective students may be canceled and/or postponed. Alternate plans and communication with these prospects will be established and implemented by the Office of Admissions and Recruitment and Campus and Visitor Relations. In the event that instruction for a fall or spring semester at UW-Madison is delayed or canceled, new admits may elect to enroll at another unaffected school. Decisions will need to be made at UW-Madison related to refunds of enrollment deposits and SOAR fees, and communicating enrollment options with incoming students and applicants. In addition, SOAR activities may be adjusted or canceled based on severity of an event and to help comply with any social-distancing and/or other requirements in place.

Considerations for Financial Aid

If a number of courses — but not all — were canceled, normal rules may render particular students with particular awards ineligible for those awards or eligible for reduced amounts.

If a semester ended prematurely, normal rules would require recalculation of living costs for the new shortened academic period. That would lead to a reduction in aid eligibility.

The Department of Education's (DOE) practice during past "declared" disasters has been to hold harmless the affected institutions and students, if a state of disaster is declared by the U.S. president or governor of the state. We would contact the regional DOE office to request such relief if it affected a single institution. Relief might include continuing in-school deferment status for students with federal loans and waiving the Title IV refund requirements that normally apply if an aid recipient leaves before a term is complete.

It would be prudent for the Office of Student Financial Aid to work closely with the Offices of the Dean of Students to implement a special emergency loan fund for students who are facing a financial hardship (e.g., lose financial aid and/or employment) as a result of the pandemic or other disruptive event. In addition, the chancellor could collaborate with the UW Foundation to provide funding for students in need.