

On March 9, the University asked instructors to make contingency plans in case on-campus classes or exams must be cancelled. That memo required the University's normal practice that changes to course requirements, as articulated in course outlines, are to be made with the consensus of all students registered in the course. In light of the current extraordinary circumstances I, as the Vice President, Academic, advise instructors of the following change to our practices that shall be effective immediately.

When motivated by public health concerns, and when the changes proposed do not systematically disadvantage students, the University will no longer require consensus of students to deviate from the original course outline.

To ensure that the conditions of these changes are met, the University requires that Instructors:

1. Communicate the proposed changes to the course outline (in particular changes in the weighting of assessments, methods of assessment, meet patterns, and the like) to all students registered in the course. We urge instructors to do this as soon as practicable, and not later than Wednesday, March 18.
2. Invite responses, within 48 hours, from students about the proposed changes.
3. Make a good faith attempt to appropriately mitigate substantive difficulties caused by the changes to particular students

In cases where students perceive the proposed changes and the attempted mitigation strategies as insufficient or inappropriate, the students are being encouraged to seek an immediate remedy from the Chair or Director (or delegate) from the program in which the course is offered. Chairs are being made aware that such requests may be forthcoming.

In instances where Chairs are unable to resolve the issue in a timely way, students will be directed to engage in the revised academic activities, with the option to have their concerns addressed subsequent to the term under Policy 70.

This change in process is effective immediately. The change will be revisited and a subsequent communication will be issued not later than the beginning of the Spring Term, May 4, 2020.

Information for instructors on strategies to continue teaching successfully when in person meetings or exams are not possible can be found here: <https://uwaterloo.ca/keep-learning/>.

I strongly urge instructors to produce contingency plans that do not require sitting for a final exam. I also urge that the plans avoid, to the extent possible, creating large numbers of incompletes. For example, instructors should consider:

- Whether an in-person exam could be replaced by an take home exam, an alternative assignment, or an online exam
- Whether, if in-person exams are cancelled, a final exam worth, for instance, 25% of the final mark could be cancelled and the final mark be based on the other work completed in the course

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