

## **Fall 2023 Academic Disruption**

### Academic Council Recommendations

Date: October 9, 2023

The Academic Council was met on Sept. 27, Oct. 4, and Oct. 9 2023 to discuss academic continuity should there be a Presidential declaration of emergency in the case of a GTFF strike following the procedures described in the [Academic Continuity Policy](#). The policy provides “a framework to guide planning and decision-making in the event that a significant disruption to campus operations impedes academic activity. The goal is to continue academic activities as much as possible and to mitigate the effects of a significant academic disruption, which include particularly grave academic and financial consequences for graduating students, international students, and students receiving financial aid.”. The policy balances the principles of academic integrity; transparency for students, instructors, and staff; and fairness for students.

The Academic Council will vote to approve the following guidelines for units in the event of a strike of the GTFF once the President or designee declares an emergency. These guidelines apply to courses where GEs are absent from their role as Instructor of Record (IOR), as lab or discussion leader, or as grading support. These guidelines should be followed by course instructors of record in consultation with academic leadership in their unit. The Academic Continuity Policy is clear that IORs shall retain primary authority over how to manage their courses, assignments, instruction, and grades. IORs are defined in [university policy](#). Academic units are authorized to determine the qualifications of IORs and assign IORs to courses as necessary. Assigned IORs have the authority defined in the IOR policy.

### **Academic principles to be followed**

Academic credit, and grades awarded to students for that credit, are based on delivery of course content in accordance with the learning objectives of the course and the assessment of the quality of student work in that course. As stated in the Academic Continuity Policy, as in any disruption, instructors of record should endeavor to mitigate the effects of a significant academic disruption to ensure that the approved course content is delivered, and the appropriate assessment of student performance is undertaken. The IOR listed in banner at any given time is authorized to determine whether learning outcomes have been met and credit should be granted.

The Academic Continuity plan allows for changes in the way that course content is delivered, and the learning outcomes are achieved. If the IOR determines that the learning outcomes can be met with adjustments to the organization of the course, including modifications to the delivery, the IOR should make these changes under this emergency.

Course changes should align with discipline-specific pedagogical practices as much as possible. Instructors of record should confirm changes with their unit heads for guidance. If a unit head is unavailable, the associate dean for that area will be the point of contact. If the IOR, in consultation with the unit head, reasonably determines that the learning outcomes cannot be met even with such adjustments or that such adjustments would lead to an unreasonable amount of work, then the completion of the course may be delayed until the missing instructional or grading work is completed.

Changes might include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Modifying course by postponing, abbreviating, or omitting non-critical elements of course, and revising lesson plans and grading rubrics accordingly

- Modifying lab/discussion sections or replacing sections with other work
- Using online instructional assets where available (e.g. from labs created during pandemic; lecture videos; automated quizzes/modules) to help cover for missing instruction
- Shifting to less labor-intensive assessments for assignments and exams (e.g. multiple choice instead of essay)
- Creating online Canvas shells for multi-section courses that contain automated assignments, modules, quizzes, etc. and combine sections into one online course.

Courses or sections that have not been affected by the disruption should be delivered as scheduled unless otherwise approved. For instance, IORs or lab/discussion leaders shall not switch an in-person course or section to fully online instruction without approval. Any changes to modality or location of an entire course from what is on the course schedule must be approved by the dean through the department head. Shifting a course to synchronous online requires additional approval from the Office of the Provost. Requests for changes to synchronous online should be sent from the dean to Ron Bramhall in OTP – [rcb@uoregon.edu](mailto:rcb@uoregon.edu).

Typically, a 4-credit class expects 12 hours a week of student engagement. For an in-person course, this usually includes 4 hours of lecture including discussion section or lab time for a lower-level class and at least 3 hours for an upper-level class. The remaining time is taken with other coursework such as readings and assignments. During a disruption, instructors should modify the ways students engage with course material without significant increase or decrease in workload while striving to ensure that the approved course content is delivered, and the appropriate assessment of student performance is undertaken. Instructors of record may, for instance, reduce the number of assessed assignments by increasing work needed per assignment if they can still ensure sufficient assessment of learning outcomes. Instructors of record may also replace class time with out-of-class assignments that can meet the same learning outcomes. Finally, it may be possible to fully assess learning outcomes by altering other assignments to include the missed class time or work even if some class time and assignments have been missed.

In the case of a GTF strike, courses may be impacted differently depending on whether the course has a GE as an IOR or faculty member as IOR and GE or GEs in charge of either face-to face instruction (as in discussion sections, labs, studios, etc.) or in grading or other activities.

#### **GEs as IOR**

If a GE IOR goes on strike, unit heads may appoint a replacement IOR who will continue to deliver course content and follow the course structure as laid out in the syllabus and other resources such as Canvas.

The replacement IOR will follow the established syllabus to meet the learning objectives of the course and assessments that fall within the timeline of the course. The replacement IOR will not require additional work of the enrolled students beyond the level specified in the syllabus.

If the original IOR does not return before the end of the course, the replacement Instructor of Record will complete the course and submit grades based on submitted and graded assignments and exams.

Should the original IOR return before the end of the term, the unit head, in consultation with the dean's office and the Office of the Provost, will develop a transition plan to minimize disruption for students in the course. This transition plan will address how to conclude the course if necessary, how to complete any outstanding grading, and how to determine students' final grades.

### **Faculty Instructors of Record with GEs that lead labs or discussions or support through grading**

The impact of loss of GEs from labs, discussions or grading will vary with the number of GEs, the amount of GE FTE, and duties of those GEs. Instructors of record may be able to complete a course with minor losses of GE support, but it is expected that major losses of GE support will require some form of replacement. The amount of loss of GE support will be reflected in the total FTE and associated total of hours of work lost.

The Academic Council authorizes faculty IORs impacted by the strike through the loss of GEs who lead discussion sections, labs, etc., to modify delivery of the course content, activities, and assessments that are required to meet the learning outcomes and goals of the course. For instance, it is good pedagogical practice to maintain a set of alternative assignments that can be used as “make-ups” if students miss class. These make-up assignments may be an acceptable method of delivering course material in accordance with course outcomes that can be deployed if planned course activities cannot be completed for any reason.

The assessment of any assignments used to replace planned course activity should be roughly equivalent to the originally planned assessment for the missing activity. For example, a discussion section normally run by a GE could be replaced with a worksheet if the GE is on strike. This worksheet covers the same material and the grading of that worksheet should be equivalent to the grading of the discussion section exercise. Graded assignments should not generally be replaced by non-graded assignments unless completion of an assignment can be seen as having learning value. For instance, students might be asked to complete a module in Canvas that automatically records a completion grade as a replacement for attending a discussion section.

In some cases, it won't be possible to provide sufficient replacement activities for discussion sections or labs. In those cases, adjustments to the overall grading scheme in the course can be modified, with every effort to ensure such modifications do not disadvantage students and that learning outcomes are met.

Instructors should consult with their unit heads for guidance. If assignments need to be graded, this must be done by a qualified person, following all applicable labor laws and negotiated contracts. If GEs are unavailable to hold labs or sections, students should be held harmless so that any student credit for attendance to labs or sections should be waived.

Instructors of record with GEs should, as a matter of good practice, provide clear and consistent expectations of course graders for timely grading and assessment of materials and recording of grades to the Canvas gradebook for students to see. In the case of a striking GE, IORs should provide clear, consistent, and specific communication to students about any modifications to the course and changes to assignments and deadlines. Academic Council requires the use of the course Canvas site for this communication.

### **Grades**

In the case that a course has not been completed because all submitted assignments or exams have not been graded yet, emergency grades, or incompletes if appropriate, may be used until such time as the course can be completed. The instructional work required to complete the course will be conducted and compensated according to appropriate labor agreements and requirements. Upon completion, students will then receive regular (non-emergency) grades.

### **Personnel considerations**

Additional IORs must be qualified to teach the course. Departments should follow their criteria for level qualification to teach classes, such as in replacement teaching pools. Departments should also follow their normal criteria for graduate students to be instructors of record, such as advancement to candidacy or seniority, etc. Work associated with a course that does not involve any instruction or assessment, such as taking attendance, proctoring exams, distributing materials, supervising room occupancy, etc., may be done by individuals not qualified to instruct and following all applicable labor laws and negotiated contracts.

Unit Heads must consider whether the workload required to meet the course learning outcomes is reasonable with respect to the job description of replacement IORs and their other obligations.

### **Academic policies for all Instructors of Record important for academic continuity**

A reminder of the following policies, which always apply to all undergraduate courses.

- **CANVAS** – Each course shall have a published Canvas site by the first day of class. Ideally, the Canvas site would be published at least a few days before classes start. (<https://provost.uoregon.edu/canvas-use-policy>).
- **SYLLABUS** – Each course shall have a syllabus available to students on Canvas by the first day of class. Ideally, the syllabus would be available at least a few days before classes start. The syllabus must, at a minimum, contain the information listed in the Syllabus Requirement policy (<https://provost.uoregon.edu/syllabus-requirement-policy>). This policy requires university-approved statements, including a generic statement on academic disruption. *Do not include statements specific to a potential GE strike on the syllabus.*
- **STUDENT PROGRESS UPDATES** – Instructors of record are to provide up-to-date student progress information on Canvas, such as grades recorded on Canvas for assignments, quizzes, etc., by at least two points in the term:
  - By the end of week 6
  - Prior to the final exam

This should be done in all courses where progress is not communicated individually to students through other means. For most courses, the easiest method to do this will be to record grades in Canvas. (<https://provost.uoregon.edu/canvas-use-policy>)

- **FERPA-COMPLIANT APPLICATIONS** – Instructors of record should use only university-approved, FERPA-compliant applications (applications that include only non-directory student information) for course activity. Approved applications include Canvas, UO email, UO Microsoft 365 tools such as Teams, Outlook, SharePoint, UO Zoom. For complete list, see <https://service.uoregon.edu/TDClient/2030/Portal/KB/ArticleDet?ID=113454>. (Policy: <https://provost.uoregon.edu/student-records-privacy-policy-faculty-and-staff-ferpa-policy>)
- **COURSE MODALITY CHANGES** - Courses should be delivered as scheduled unless otherwise approved by supervisor. For instance, IORs or lab/discussion leaders shall not switch an in-person course to remote instruction without approval. Any changes to modality or location of a

course from what is on the course schedule must be approved by the dean through the department head. Shifting a course to synchronous online requires additional approval by the Office of the Provost. Requests for changes to synchronous online should be sent from the dean to Ron Bramhall in OTP – [rcb@uoregon.edu](mailto:rcb@uoregon.edu).

- **GE SUPERVISORS** - For all courses where a GE is the IOR, a supervisor shall be added to Banner with “0% responsibility” before classes start to provide oversight of GE teaching.