

Winter 2024 Academic Disruption

Academic Council Recommendations

Date: January 8, 2024

The Academic Council met on Sept. 27, 2023, Oct. 4, 2023, Oct. 9, 2023 January 3, 2024, and January 8, 2024 to discuss academic continuity should there be a Presidential declaration of emergency in the case of a GTFE 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 GTFE 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

The 2019 Senate Academic Continuity policy identifies the principles of academic integrity, transparency, and fairness for students as key principles to be observed while striving to meet the primary goals of minimizing disruption and continuing academic activities as much as possible.

Academic integrity is primarily maintained by relying on academic units to determine the appropriate strategies to employ to meet the goals of minimizing disruption and continuing academic activities as much as possible. This includes, as outlined below in “Personnel Considerations”, the ability of the local unit to determine who is qualified to serve as an IOR or perform other work in the unit.

Allowing local decision-making on the strategies and on who is qualified to perform certain work in the unit is also central to the principles of transparency and fairness for students. It is fair for students to know that those doing the instruction and grading of their work are qualified. At the same time, fairness for those students also dictates that their education continues and that they receive final grades. Thus, academic units must also in good faith strive to meet the primary goals of the academic continuity plan.

In addition, as stated in the University Senate’s Academic Continuity policy, “Any Academic Continuity Plans and their implementation must comply with all existing collective bargaining agreements.”

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 by the end of the term even with such adjustments or that such adjustments would lead to an unreasonable amount of work, then emergency grades would be issued for those courses. For courses with emergency grades that are prerequisites for other courses which require a particular minimum grade, departments would determine whether a course with an emergency grade can count as that prerequisite. For courses with emergency grades that fulfill degree requirements which require a particular minimum grade, departments would determine whether a course with an emergency grade can count as fulfilling the requirement. Departments should realize that if courses with emergency grades do not count as prerequisites or as degree requirements, students may have to retake those courses. As such, departments should consider such action carefully.

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.

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 GTFF 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.

Instructor of Record, as defined in the Academic Continuity Plan :

- A. The Instructor(s) of Record for a course are the instructor(s) assigned by academic units to teach a course. They must be actively engaged in teaching the course and are responsible for issuing final grades. Instructors of Record shall be listed in the Registrar's course registration system (currently BANNER/Duckweb) by the beginning of the term. This listing shows who has the ability to assign and change final grades except as otherwise explained in this policy. Units shall assign Graduate Employees as Instructors of Record for courses for which they have primary teaching and grading responsibility. Section leaders and graders may be listed in the course registration system e.g. as section leaders, but they are not Instructors of Record for that course.
- B. Replacement Instructors of Record: If an Instructor of Record leaves the university permanently or is otherwise not expected to return to duty before final grades are due, the unit head or designee may remove the original Instructor of Record, and appoint a Replacement Instructor of Record to take on the full duties and responsibilities including teaching and grading.
- C. Additional Instructors of Record: If an Instructor of Record takes a temporary absence from their duties and is expected to return before final grades are due, the unit head or designee may appoint an additional Instructor of Record. The original Instructor of Record retains authority for final grades unless their absence becomes or is expected to become permanent, in which case the rule regarding replacements holds.

GEs as IOR

If a GE IOR goes on strike, unit heads may appoint a additional IOR, in accordance with the academic continuity policy IOR part C, 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 additional 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 additional 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 additional Instructor of Record will become the Replacement IOR (IOR part B) and 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 may be used until such time as the coursework can be graded. 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. Emergency grades may remain and not be replaced by regular grades depending on circumstances.

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.

As stated above, should a GE return prior to the end of the term, they retain their status as IOR, lab or discussion leader, or grader and will negotiate with the unit head a transition plan to conclude the course that is in the best interest, and thus fair, for students in the course. In most cases, it would be expected that the returning GE who planned the course would be in the best position to finish the course and determine final grades. This should be a decision made at the local level in consultation with the unit head and any replacement or additional IORs.

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.
- **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.