

Approval Authority in an Emergency Situation

In the event of an emergency¹, as declared by the President, Senate authorizes the Senate Executive Committee to act for Senate in determining academic matters which require urgent resolution. These matters include, but are not limited to:

- a) Revisions to the academic schedule and the delay of the exam period and changes to other dates and deadlines;
- b) The temporary modification or suspension of academic policies, such as the Final Examinations and Final Grades Policy, the Responsibility of Academic Staff to Students Policy, in response to the emergency, In these cases, a timeline to review/rescind the temporary modifications or suspensions should be included;
- c) Changes to assessment requirements;
- d) Completion of course requirements;
- e) Changes of requirements of continuing awards;
- f) Approving academic accommodations for students affected by the emergency.

In most cases, emergency authority to act will be exercised by the Senate Executive committee. However, should the nature of the emergency warrant it:

- a) the Senate Executive Committee may delegate any of its emergency authority to the Provost and Vice-President (Academic); or
- b) the President may authorize the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) to act for Senate in place of the Senate Executive Committee in an emergency situation where immediate actions are required (e.g., a cyberattack where there is a risk to the security, authenticity and integrity of digital technologies, infrastructure and digital assets, and personal information and personal health information in the custody and/or control of the University or an active situation where there is a real or perceived, immediate risk to physical safety.). Such situations are considered exceptional and are to be limited to addressing the emergent situation. The preferred option shall always be collegial decision-making.

Decisions made under this delegated authority should be confined to dealing with the specific issues related to the emergency for the period of the emergency and the period immediately after the emergency. Care must be taken to avoid making decisions that may have ongoing implications for the delivery of academic programs. Normal approval channels shall be restored by the President as soon as it is practicable and safe to do so. All decisions taken under this emergency authority shall be shared publicly with the university community and promptly communicated to Senate both by email and at the subsequent meeting of Senate following an emergency situation, recognizing that privacy and confidentiality considerations may constrain the amount of detail beyond the decision itself that may be shared in the short term.

Approved by Senate March 16, 2020
Revisions approved by Senate January 8, 2025

¹ For this approval authority, "Emergency" is defined as a present or imminent situation or condition that requires prompt action to prevent or limit (a) the loss of life, or (b) harm or damage to the safety, health or welfare of people, or (c) damage to property or the environment.