



SENATE POLICY:
O-135

OKANAGAN SENATE

O-135: *Academic Concession*

Effective Date:

1 September 2022

Approval Date:

29 September 2022

Review Date:

This policy shall be reviewed 5 years after approval and thereafter as deemed necessary by the *responsible committee*.

Responsible Committee:

Academic Policy Committee

Authority:

University Act, S. 37(1)

“The academic governance of the University is vested in the senate and it has the following powers:

(d) to determine the conditions under which candidates must be received for examination, to appoint examiners and to determine the conduct and results of all examinations;

(g) to provide for courses of study in any place in British Columbia and to encourage and develop extension and correspondence programs;

(h) to provide for and to grant degrees, including honorary degrees, diplomas and certificates of proficiency, except in theology;

Purpose and Goals:

This policy articulates the University's commitment to support students in their academic pursuits through the application of *academic concessions* in the event that students experience events or circumstances that interfere with their ability to accomplish academic work. An academic concession is not a right; it is a privilege granted by the University after consideration of a student's unique circumstances.

When considering requests for *academic concessions*, the University applies principles of transparency, flexibility, and compassion. Fairness is achieved by applying this policy and its procedures in a flexible manner; however, it is recognized that fair treatment is not necessarily equal treatment in all circumstances. Flexibility allows decision-makers the reasonable exercise of discretion, sound judgement, and compassion in response to the unique circumstances of an individual student's case. In responding to students' requests for academic concessions, the University is committed to ensuring compassionate and flexible responses uniquely tailored to students' individual circumstances while upholding the standards of the curriculum and the requirements of each course or academic program.

Following these principles, this policy is designed to set out the circumstances under which *academic concessions* may be granted to students, which types of *academic concessions* may be granted to students under various situations and by whom, as well as requirements and procedures for submitting and responding to student requests for *academic concessions*.

Applicability:

This policy applies to all students registered in credit *courses* and programs provided by the Okanagan Campus of the University, including graduate students registered in theses and dissertations.

Exclusions:

"Visiting International Research Students" are not included in this policy. Persons in this classification who face a situation where an academic concession might have otherwise been considered should contact their immediate supervisor to make suitable arrangements.

Academic accommodations are not covered by this policy. Academic accommodations are governed by Joint Board and Senate Policy [LR7](#) - Accommodations for Students with Disabilities.

Definitions:

For the purposes of this policy:

- *Academic Concession* shall mean the provision of a variance in the timing or nature of a course or program requirement on the basis of one of the grounds defined in this policy.
- *Course* shall mean course of instruction.
- *Dean* shall mean the Dean, or designate, of the Faculty in which a student is registered, except for graduate courses and programs offered through the College of Graduate Studies (COGS), in which case it shall mean the Dean, or designate, of COGS. For students without a faculty, the Registrar shall be considered their dean for this policy,
- *Graduate Supervisor/Advisor* shall mean the faculty member with primary responsibility for overseeing a graduate student's program of study.
- *Instructor* shall mean the instructor of record for a *course* or the supervisor responsible for a practicum, internship, or field work.

Policy:

- 1) Students facing circumstances that constitute grounds as set out in Section 9 may submit a request for *academic concession*. Students are responsible for submitting their requests as soon as possible.
- 2) Requests for *academic concessions* shall be made to the *instructor* of the student's *course* or the *Dean* of the student's faculty, as appropriate, and as set out in the attached procedures. If concurrent *academic concessions* are sought in more than one *course*, the request should be made directly to the *Dean*.
- 3) Requests for *academic concessions* shall be determined on a case-by-case basis and in a timely manner by the *instructor* or *Dean*.
- 4) Before making a determination on a request for an academic concession, a *Dean* shall normally consult with:
 - a) The relevant *graduate supervisor/advisor* for graduate students in programs administered by the College of Graduate Studies;
 - b) The dean or designate of the faculty offering an affected *course*, if different from the faculty in which the student is registered; and
 - c) The instructor of an affected *course*.
- 5) Determination of whether to grant an *academic concession* and which type of *academic concession* is most appropriate will depend on the student's

individual circumstances. One or more of the following considerations generally apply:

- the nature and duration of the issue affecting the student;
 - confidential consultation with other appropriate units that can provide applicable professional opinions on the student's situation;
 - the scope and type of academic work affected;
 - the proportion of prescribed academic work having been completed at the point in the term or program when academic work is affected; and,
 - the student's achievements in the course or program to date.
- 6) The granting of an *academic concession* must not lower the academic standards of UBC, its courses, or its programs, and does not remove either the need for evaluation or assessment or the need for the student to meet essential requirements.
- 7) *Courses* and programs with continuous assessment, assessment of the development of graduate attributes, assessment of standards of professional conduct or assessment of patient care may be constrained in the form of *academic concession* they can offer.
- 8) In some credit *courses*, such as some practica, internships, and field-work courses, there may be steps required for approval and authorities involved in requests for *academic concessions* in addition to those described in this policy.
- 9) *Grounds for Academic Concession*

Grounds for *academic concession* exist when one or more of the conditions below lead to a situation or conflict that hinders participation or attendance at a class session or examination, or an inability to otherwise fulfill the requirements of a course or academic program in a timely manner, particularly where the requirements are assessed as part of a grade.

Grounds for *academic concession* may exist at the time a student enters an academic term but may also arise when a student's circumstances change unexpectedly during the term.

Where a request for an *academic concession* is based on a protected ground covered by the *BC Human Rights Code*, the University has a duty to grant an accommodation unless doing so will create undue hardship, as that term has been interpreted under BC law, for the University. This policy does not apply to accommodations; rather, other University policies apply in those circumstances. See Related Policies: Board Policies [SC7](#), and [SC17](#), Joint Board and Senate Policy [LR7](#), and [Joint Senate Policy J-136](#).

Grounds for *academic concession* fall into one or more of the following categories:

a) Conflicting Responsibilities

It is a student's responsibility to arrange their scheduled non-academic activities to the best of their ability in a manner that enables full attendance and participation in their *courses* and programs, including required practica and internships.

Conflicting responsibilities do not include travel or social plans that conflict with class or exam schedules unless the travel is related to another valid ground for *academic concession*.

Conflicting responsibilities that create grounds for *academic concession* are beyond the student's control and normally arise after the student has registered in *courses*. Examples include:

- i. being absent from campus to represent the University, British Columbia or Canada in a competition or performance
- ii. attending meetings required as a member of a University governance body
- iii. being called to serve in the military
- iv. needing to work to support oneself or one's family but only when the need changed after the student registered in the *course*
- v. a change in the need to provide care for a dependant or family member
- vi. being required to attend a court session as a witness, jury member, or party
- vii. being required to attend a hearing on a matter of University discipline or academic standing
- viii. being required to report to a government office for immigration or citizenship proceedings

Participation in a religious observance, or a cultural observance for First Nations, Métis, or Inuit students of Canada is governed by accommodations under Policy J-136.

b) Medical Circumstances

Medical circumstances that create grounds for *academic concession* are normally unanticipated and include, but are not limited to, the following:

- i. Acute physical or mental illness or a medical circumstance that emerges or recurs during a term
- ii. The emergence of, or a change in, a chronic physical or mental health condition

The Disability Resource Centre is available for consultation with students, instructors, and advisors of all types if it is unclear whether a medical circumstance qualifies for academic concession, especially where the student's temporary illness or injury has persisted for more than one academic term.

c) Compassionate Grounds

Compassionate grounds for academic concession may arise as a result of a traumatic event. A traumatic event is a distressing or overwhelming injurious event or situation (actual, attempted or threatened) that harms a person's sense of safety, sense of self and ability to regulate emotions and navigate relationships. Such an event can reasonably be expected to affect someone emotionally, psychologically or physically to such a degree that it significantly interferes with everyday life and tasks. Examples can include: acts of physical violence; sexualised violence; natural disasters; war; motor vehicle accidents; the death of a family member or close friend.

10) Types of *Academic Concessions*

There are numerous types of *academic concessions* and the list below is non-exhaustive. The *instructor* or *Dean* will determine the most appropriate *academic concession* depending on the grounds and the situation of the student according to the procedures set out in this policy and, where applicable, additional procedures set out by the Faculty.

a) In-term Course Concessions

An *instructor*, or *Dean* where appropriate, may provide one or more options to students who miss a marked assignment, test, or deadline. The options for each course should be identified in the course syllabus. Examples include provision of make-up tests, reweighting of missed marks to a later test or assignment, provision of an alternative means of fulfilling a participation or presentation requirement, or allowance for a maximum number of class discussions or quizzes to be missed.

b) Late Withdrawal

Late withdrawal from one or more *courses* may be granted by the student's *Dean*, but not by an *instructor*. A student may be granted withdrawal from a course after the withdrawal deadline (with "W" standing) when the student has not met *course* requirements during the term but has valid grounds for *academic concession* that address the reasons for the lack of demonstrated achievement. A student will not normally be granted late withdrawal if the final examination has been sat or final assignment completed. A "W" standing will normally be placed on the student's transcript when a late withdrawal is granted.

For the provisions for late withdrawal from all registered *courses* or from a program, see "[Change of Registration](#)". Granting late withdrawal from a term or a program may be contingent on a plan co-developed by the student, with a *Dean*, a

graduate supervisor/advisor, and other support services as appropriate. The plan may set conditions to be met before the student can be re-admitted and resume studies. If a student withdraws from a program, an application for readmission must be made by the published application deadline for the program if they wish to be considered for re-admission (see [Readmission](#)).

Where a student is the subject of academic discipline proceedings, withdrawal is not an available concession in the course in which the matter of discipline is being considered.

c) Deferred Standing

Deferred standing may be granted by the student's *Dean* but not by a course *instructor*. For the provisions for deferral of a final examination or assignment beyond end of term, i.e. approval to write the missed examination or submit the assignment later, see [Standings](#).

d) Aegrotat Standing

See [Standings](#).

e) Adjudicated Pass

See [Standings](#).

f) Retroactive Course Drop

In exceptional cases involving extraordinary compassionate or medical grounds, the *Dean* may remove a student's registration in a *course* from the academic record.

11) Requesting an Academic Concession

In all cases, students' requests for academic concession should be made as early as reasonably possible, in writing, to their instructor, graduate supervisor/advisor, or *Dean* in accordance with the procedures for this policy and those set out by the student's Faculty/School. These requests should clearly state the grounds for the academic concession and the anticipated duration of the conflict and/or interference with academic work. In some situations, this self-declaration is sufficient, but the submission of supporting documentation may be required along with, or following, the self-declaration.

For students who are requesting an academic concession on the ground of sexualized violence, Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office (SVPRO) can make the request directly to the *Dean* on behalf of the student. Full details of the incident and its impacts do not have to be disclosed.

12) Documentation for *Academic Concession* requests

a) Documentation for Conflicting Responsibilities

Supporting documentation should normally be provided in support of requests for *academic concessions* on the grounds of conflicting responsibilities. A self-declaration may be sufficient where, in the opinion of the *Dean*, there is no practicable way to provide a letter or other official document from an organization relevant to the conflicting responsibility.

In the case of an *academic concession* for care for a family member, the University does not require documentation. However, advance notice of interference with academic activities should be provided by the student as soon as reasonably possible.

b) Documentation for Medical Circumstances

For first occurrences of an acute illness likely to be quickly resolved without seeing a health professional, a self-declaration will normally suffice.

If a student makes a second or subsequent request to an *instructor* for *academic concessions* resulting from acute illness, the *instructor* will refer the student to their *Dean* or *graduate supervisor/advisor* as appropriate. Students who are experiencing a chronic condition may work directly with a Faculty or School *graduate supervisor/advisor* or *Dean* as appropriate. In such cases, the student may be asked to provide medical documentation regarding the effects of the condition on their studies.

If the student is not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, the *Dean* or *graduate supervisor/advisor* may seek the advice of the Centre regarding documentation submitted.

c) Documentation for Compassionate Grounds

If a prolonged absence is anticipated on compassionate grounds, supporting documentation may be requested. Documentation can be provided by a professional or support unit that can assess the effect of the event on the student.

If documentation is requested, it must come from a support unit or professional able to speak to the impact on the student. For documentation related to sexualized violence, a summary of the impacts, without details of the incident itself, from SVPRO or other mental health professional is sufficient.

The *Dean* or *graduate supervisor/advisor*, with input from the instructor, then determines whether an academic concession should be granted and which academic concession best supports the student's wellbeing and academic progress. Prior to determining the appropriate academic concession, the *Dean* or graduate supervisor/advisor, will communicate directly with the student to ensure that the student understands the alternatives and their implications.

12) Sharing of Confidential Information

A student seeking academic concession has a right to privacy in the personal information collected by UBC. The collection, use and disclosure of this information are governed by the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (“FIPPA”).

A student’s personal information related to the request for academic concession will be shared within the University solely on a need-to-know basis.

This information will not be shared with a person or unit external to UBC without the student’s written consent, or as otherwise authorized under FIPPA

13) Appeals

Students who are denied *academic concession* under this policy may appeal the decision within their Faculty or to the relevant Senate committee. See [Senate Appeals on Academic Standing](#).

14) Designates

Deans shall designate, in writing to the Registrar, those persons or positions authorized to make academic concession decisions on their behalf under this policy.

15) Procedures

The Senate Academic Policy Committee may set procedures under this policy to assist with its implementation and interpretation.

Calendar Statement:

As above.

Consultations

The following groups were invited to provide comment during the development of this policy:

UBSUO; Academic Advising; Disability Resource Centre; CTL; Deans, Directors and Unit Heads; Enrolment Services; UBC Community via Senate Website and UBC Today newsletter, AVP Students’ Office; Office of the Ombudsperson; SVPRO; Office of University Counsel

History:

This is the first enumerated version of the Okanagan policy for Academic Concessions using the approved policy template.

The previous versions of this policy, and related V-135 *Academic Concession*, were found in the Academic Calendar with review or consideration by Senate in January 2002, December 2000 and February 1994. Prior to 1994, the subject matter was included under the heading “Medical, Emotional or other problems”.

Related Policies:

[Board Policy – Discrimination](#)

[Joint Board and Senate Policy LR7 -Accommodations for Students with Disabilities](#)

[Board Policy SC17- Sexual Assault and other Sexual Misconduct](#)

[Joint Senate Policy J-136: Religious Observances](#)

[Senate Appeals on Academic Standing](#)

[V-135 Academic Concession](#)

[Attendance](#)

[Change of Registration](#)

[Grading Practices](#)

[Readmission](#)

Appendix

There is no appendix to this policy.

PROCEDURES

These procedures can be amended from time to time by approval of the Okanagan Senate Academic Policy Committee.

1. General Considerations

- a. Faculties may vary the procedures and practices they implement to facilitate the submission and determination of requests for *academic concession*; however, in doing so they will adhere to the principles and provisions of Policy O-135.
- b. Course *instructors* are normally responsible for responding to requests from students who miss required assignments, tests, or deadlines during the term. Any options for making up for missed work should be described in the course syllabus. If the *instructor's* academic unit manages such inquiries centrally (i.e., in the *Dean's* office of the instructor's home Faculty or School or by the *graduate supervisor/advisor* for the student's program), that information should also be provided to students.
- c. Students are expected to pay timely attention to life events that disrupt normal participation in academic work and are urged to contact their *instructor, graduate supervisor/advisor, or Dean* as soon as possible upon realizing that they require an *academic concession*.
- d. *Instructors* are strongly encouraged to make clear in their course syllabi any options for missed/late work and the potential penalties that students may incur.
- e. Other issues may require the intervention of the office of the *Dean* of the student's home Faculty/School, either directly or with input from another support unit.

2. Students must plan so as to avoid when possible conflicts with academic requirements

- a. When registering for *courses*, students who know they have commitments outside their academic studies are expected to try to schedule those commitments and their academic courses so as to avoid conflicts. This includes checking the schedules for the start and end dates of each upcoming term and of the term-end formal examination periods.
- b. Once a term starts, students should use their course syllabi to anticipate any possible conflicts between course requirements (e.g., dates of tests) and their outside commitments. If the details of a *course* schedule in the syllabus is not sufficient, students must ask the course *instructor* for more information.
- c. If efforts under a. and b. above do not avoid all conflicts, students should look in the *course* syllabus for information on options for meeting *course* requirements when a required activity is missed. If options are not provided in the syllabus, students must discuss options with the relevant *course* instructor(s).
- d. Students who are registered with the Disability Resource Centre must provide each course *instructor* with the requisite letter describing the required accommodation (see [Joint Board and Senate Policy LR7 –Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#)).

3. Managing Unanticipated Disruptions During a Term

- a. Missing one or only a few classes, tests, or deadlines:
 - Students who miss required course or program activities over a short period for reasons of a medical circumstance that quickly resolves or a

change in circumstances that creates a conflict with *course* or program requirements should look in the course syllabus for options as described in 1.b and d. above.

- b. Missing several classes, tests, or deadlines over one or more courses or encountering repeated or prolonged episodes of disruption:
 - If a medical circumstance is prolonged, the student has a compassionate ground for seeking an *academic concession* (see Policy clause 8.c), or a change in circumstances creates a long-term conflict with academic work, then the student should consult the *Dean* of their home Faculty/School, either directly or via a representative of another support unit, to discuss options.
- c. Sources of support other than academic advising offices:
 - Depending on the student's circumstances, instead of first speaking to the *Dean* of their home Faculty/School, a student may wish to consult a different source of support (such as the Disability Resource Centre, Health and Wellness, the Ombudsperson for Students, the Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office or an outside agency) and then have a representative communicate with the *Dean* on their behalf.
- d. What students can expect from their home Faculty or School:
 - The *Dean* makes decisions on *academic concessions* based on the student's individual circumstances, including the grounds for *academic concession* and the student's understanding of the implications of alternative actions on the student's academic progress.
 - Information provided by a student or on behalf of a student by another support unit will be kept confidential, subject to the provisions set out in Section 12 of this policy. In many instances, students will be asked to provide a self-declaration to describe their situation. However, if the *Dean* feels that the student's situation warrants input from or referral to one or more support units on or off campus, a decision on *academic concession* may require feedback from the other unit(s).
 - If a student seeks repeated *academic concessions* without evidence that proactive steps have been taken to address their issue(s), further *academic concessions* will not normally be granted.

4. Managing Missed Term-end Submission Deadlines or Formal Examinations

- a. In these cases, the student's home *Dean* must be involved in decisions on *academic concessions* (see Policy clause 10. b-f.).