

Completion of Courses and Finalization of Grades Communication from the Senate Executive Committee

Updated 12 March 2024

The CUPE 3903 strike that began on 26 February 2024 has substantially interrupted the University’s academic activities. The impact of the disruption on undergraduate and graduate course delivery is uneven. There are several categories describing the status of academic activities; they are:

- i. courses that are continuing either through in-person or remote delivery
- ii. courses that are continuing but students are unable to or have chosen not to attend due to the strike
- iii. courses for which lecture components are continuing but labs / tutorials suspended
- iv. courses that have been suspended

Guided by the Senate [Disruptions Policy](#), the Executive Committee has announced options that are available for the completion of FW23-24 and Winter 2024 term courses and finalization of grades. The options are designed to promote flexibility while adhering to the principles of academic integrity and fairness to students defined in the Disruptions Policy. This updated communication specifies what options apply to each category of course status set out above. This information is provided to assist instructors with course planning, and to assist students in knowing what options are available for completing their courses in a timely manner and to support their responsibility for mastering materials covered if they did not participate in academic activities during the strike.

This communication also provides information known at this time about the length of the Winter 2024 term and forthcoming remediation period.

Confirming and Specifying Course Completion Options by Course Status

All of York’s undergraduate and graduate students have legitimate and understandable desires to complete their courses as soon as possible. Many are in particularly vulnerable situations or have especially urgent needs, such as international and exchange students facing the expiration of visas, those graduating this term, and those for whom term completion impacts on opportunities for further study or employment. The course-based options set out below have been designed to provide accommodations to support students’ timely completion of courses, and to provide flexibility for instructors to determine what remedial action is required to preserve academic integrity of the courses.

Summary of Options and Modifications Effective 10 March 2024	
For Courses that have Continued	<p>For Courses:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. that are suspended ii. lectures continued but tutorials or labs were suspended (NEW) iii. which students did not attend
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change in length of the winter term • Normal class schedule applies unless instructor arranges alternative scheduling • Final day of exams is no later than April 26 • Extension of deadline to withdraw from course without receiving a grade • Students who are either unable or have chosen not to participate during the strike are entitled to complete the course after the disruption is over; course directors have same options as for courses that were suspended. • Changes to the Number, Kind and Weight of Assignments (<i>*effective 17 March 2024</i>) • Temporary broadening of the Senate Policy on Pass / Fail Grades • Temporary modification to course evaluations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised class schedule to be announced after the conclusion of the strike • Revised examination schedule to be announced after the conclusion of the strike • Extension of deadline to withdraw from a course without receiving a grade • Cushion period before assignments are due and tests are held when classes resume • Changes to the Number, Kind and Weight of Assignments (<i>*effective 17 March 2024</i>) • Temporary broadening of the Senate Policy on Pass / Fail Grades • Move an exam from the revised Examination period to be held during the last class of the revised schedule <i>*effective in revised exam schedule when set</i> • Temporary modification to course evaluations

Fuller details about each of the options are set out below. **Note:** further course completion options will be added to the list if the strike continues beyond 17 March 2024.

The Faculty of Graduate Studies is developing “*Remediation Options and Guiding Principles for Graduate Students.*” The document will be made available once finalized.

The Meaning of “Remediation” and “Remediation Period”

The term “remediation” in the context of the Senate Disruptions Policy describes “*accommodations for students, modifications of normal academic regulations, and adjustments in class and examination schedules*”. The Policy states that “the completion of courses will involve a combination of such changes.” For ease of understanding, this document uses plain language such as “options” or “adjustments.” The term “revised” refers to a class or examination schedule for courses that resume.

Revisions to the FW’23-24 and Winter 2024 term class and examination schedules will be necessary because of the interruption to academic activities. The Senate Disruptions Policy presumes the need for a revised teaching term examination schedule when two or more weeks of instructional time are lost in 6-credit courses and one week or more is lost in 3-credit courses. As such, classes, tutorials and labs that have been suspended during this disruption will resume following the end of the strike. This time of resumed courses and academic activities is necessary to facilitate the completion of courses / course components that were suspended; it is called the “remediation period”. The exact length and dates of the remediation period will be defined by the Senate Executive Committee once the end date of the strike is known. A remediation examination period follows the remediation period for classes, tutorials and labs. The remediation exam period will also be defined by Senate Executive once dates are known.

Academic Integrity and Fairness to Students

The Senate Disruptions Policy provides accommodations for undergraduate and graduate students who cannot or choose not to participate in academic activities because of the strike. Students in this category are provided:

- immunity from penalty
- reasonable alternative access to course materials covered in their absence
- reasonable extensions of deadlines, and
- such other forms of academic accommodation as Senate deems necessary and consistent with the principle of academic integrity.

In providing this option and these accommodations, the Disruption Policy also states that students have the “...responsibility for mastering material covered” in their absence. The course completion options made available to all students support their ability to finish courses in as timely a manner as possible in the circumstances while also balancing a course’s academic integrity. Students who need assistance understanding these provisions in the Senate Disruption Policy, including any advantages and disadvantages to be weighed for those with a choice to attend courses, can speak to their course instructor, student academic advisors, Undergraduate / Graduate Program Director or Associate Dean in their home Faculty. The [Frequently Asked Questions](#) site is another University resource for information related to the labour disruption.

Details on Course Completion Options

Term Lengths and Class and Examination Schedules

Term Length for Courses (without tutorials or labs) that have *Continued*

For courses (with no tutorials or labs) that have continued during the disruption, there will be no alteration of the length of the term. Classes and activities for these courses will continue on the original term schedule and dates.

Term Length for Courses where *Lectures Continued but Tutorials or Labs Suspended*

For courses where the lecture has continued but labs or tutorials have been suspended, the course will not be considered completed within the original FW or Winter term dates. The tutorial or labs will be rescheduled in the remediation period upon the conclusion of the labour disruption. Note, course directors may arrange for alternative scheduling if needed to adjust the delivery of some elements of the course, for example due to non-participation by some students. Alternative scheduling at a time that is convenient for students and instructors can be arranged through the Office of the University Registrar.

Term Length for Courses that have *Continued which students did not attend*

For students who could not or chose not to attend courses that continued during the disruption, a remediation period will be provided after the strike concludes for the rescheduling of suspended course components, facilitation of course completion options and revised grading scheme timelines. Students who have not participated in courses during the disruption will follow a revised final examination schedule that will occur following the remediation period.

Term Length for Courses that are *Suspended*

In the case of courses that have been suspended, a modified schedule will be announced. There will be a reduction in the length of the term for these courses and there will be a compressed remediation and examination schedule as a result. Details on the revised term will be announced following the end of the strike. Students who have not participated in courses during the disruption will follow the revised schedules. Exceptions will apply to programs that have strict accreditation requirements that define the length of term.

When suspended courses resume, alternative scheduling of presentations, performances, labs, practica (that is, outside of regularly scheduled class meets) can be arranged through the Office of the University Registrar at a time that is convenient for instructors and students.

Final Examination Schedule for Courses that *Continued*

The formal examination schedule for courses without tutorials and labs that have continued through the disruption - and students who are participating in those courses - ***will end no later than 26 April 2024***. This does not apply to either courses that are currently suspended or courses with tutorials and labs that are currently suspended.

Even in courses that continued through the disruption, it may not be possible for some examinations to proceed as scheduled. As a result, there may be some changes to examination dates prior to April 26. Additionally, students needing accommodation for extenuating circumstances related to the disruption have the option to seek deferred standing through their course instructor or the petitions process. The searchable final examination schedule for courses that are continuing is posted on the *Office of the University Registrar* [website](#).

Remediated Final Examination Period for Suspended Courses, Suspended Components of Courses and for Students who did not Participate in Continuing Courses.

The remediation examination period for courses that are suspended, courses that have tutorials or labs suspended and for students who did not participate in continuing courses will be announced when the disruption ends and posted on the Office of the University Registrar website. A compressed examination schedule can be expected.

Assignments: Changes to the Number, Kind and Weight / Cushion Period

Changes to the Number, Kind and Weight of Assignments (*As of 17 March 2024*)

If the strike remains ongoing as of 17 March 2024: instructors of all categories of courses are permitted to make changes to the number, kind, and weight of assignments, tests and examinations provided this does not disadvantage students and preserves academic integrity as much as possible.

While instructors may make these types of changes to assignments, tests and examinations, if at all possible, students should have the choice to complete the assignments following the originally published grading scheme for the course.

For courses that have been suspended or courses where tutorials or labs have been suspended, there will be a compressed remediation period and remediation examination period announced. For these courses, instructors are authorized to move an exam from the revised Examination period to be held during the last class in the remediation period. For this option only, the *Limits on the Worth of Examinations in the Final Classes of a Term* Senate Policy is waived.

Cushion Period Before Assignments are Due and Tests Set in Revised Schedules

Instructors in courses that will resume in the remediation period are urged to help re-orient students to their studies and discuss options and possible changes with them before and during the first class. This is applicable to students in courses that were suspended, courses where tutorials and labs were suspended, and who were unable or chose not to attend during the disruption.

There should be a cushion period before assignments are due and tests / mid-terms are held. Tests / mid-terms should not be held, and the submission of assignments should not be required, in any course component (regardless of delivery mode) until at least one class “meet” has been held in the remediation period or one week has occurred, whichever is longer. This does not apply to assignments or work such as laboratory exercises which are typically assigned and submitted as a regular and integral part of the lab session).

Course Completion Options

Courses Switched from In-person to Asynchronous Online Delivery

As a form of remedial action, instructors can switch an in-person course / academic activity to online delivery, either synchronous or asynchronous mode, for the duration of the disruption and reported to Deans' / Principal Offices. Course instructors' decision to use an asynchronous mode of delivery is subject to specific program accreditation requirements.

Recorded Lectures as a Form of Remedial Action

In accordance with the Senate Disruptions Policy, students who cannot or chose not to participate in academic activities during a disruption are entitled to reasonable alternative access to materials covered in their absence. Senate Executive confirms that posting recorded lectures delivered either in-person or remotely will be included as a form of remedial action that meets the requirement to provide reasonable alternative access to materials covered in their absence. This confirmation is provided as a suggestion to assist course instructors with planning ahead.

Withdraw from a Course Without Receiving a Grade

As [announced](#) earlier by Senate Executive, the last day to drop 2024 Winter term undergraduate courses without receiving a grade or a "Withdrawn from Course" (W) notification on their transcripts has been extended to the last day of classes. Currently the last day of classes for continuing courses is 8 April 2024. For suspended courses or courses with components suspended, the deadline to drop a course will remain the last day of classes in the revised schedule.

The late withdrawal option does not apply to:

- graduate courses or the JD program
- Fall (F) term courses
- FW (six-credit) courses with a drop deadline before 26 February 2024

Modifications to the Pass/ Fail Grading Option for Undergraduate Courses

Senate has a *Pass/Fail Grades Policy* that allows students to elect to earn a limited number of credits on a pass/fail basis in some courses. It cannot be used for the following kinds of courses:

- i. courses which satisfy major or minor requirements (including for-credit practica not already on a pass/fail grading scheme)
- ii. required courses outside the major
- iii. courses taken to satisfy Certificate requirements
- iv. required 1000-level science courses for students in the Faculty of Science, the Lassonde School of Engineering and the Faculty of Health

Note: The Pass/Fail option is not applicable to BEd, JD, BBA or iBBA degree programs.

Senate has approved two modifications to the Senate [Pass/Fail Grades Policy](#), as follows:

- An extension of the deadline to select the Pass/Fail grading option for eligible courses to the last day of classes on the original schedule for courses that continued or the revised schedule following the disruption, and
- A broadening of the Pass/Fail Policy to permit students to add 6 credits above the normal maximum for both 90-credit (normally 6 credits) and 120-credit (normally 12 credits) degree programs; and for students who have not yet completed 24 credits an additional 6 credits above the normal maximum of 3 credits.

As provided for in the Pass/Fail Policy, students may revert to a grades assessment by the final day to withdraw from classes.

Students Note: that this option is very limited and can only be implemented by means of a formal request. Moreover, students are advised to consider this option with great care before electing it. A pass / fail notation on a course may have a negative impact on applications to graduate and professional programs.

Accommodations, Petitions and Appeals

Course Evaluations

The [Senate Policy on the Student Evaluation of Teaching](#) continues to apply. However, surveys will be conducted for all Y 2023-2024 and W 2024 courses only at the request of individual instructors. Faculties should develop the means by which faculty members can communicate their desire to have evaluations conducted for their courses this term.

The Senate Executive Committee is continuing to consider course completion options, other forms of accommodations and schedule changes necessary with the ongoing disruption. Any decisions taken will be promptly communicated.

Poonam Puri, Chair of Senate