

## EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

Academic policy for adverse weather conditions resulting in campus closures or reduced operations, or unsafe travel to instructional locations

### 1. Intent

This policy is intended to address short term conditions that may cause a course to fall short of the necessary contact hours to meet the requirements of Academic Regulation 27. In the event of extended disruption or suspension of campus operations, as in a pandemic, massive earthquake, volcanic eruption, or similar catastrophe, campus and system leadership will determine when to invoke Continuity of Operations policies and procedures, and inform their respective campuses accordingly (BPPM 50.39).

### 2. Policy statement

When appropriate campus authorities declare a "Yellow"/"Delayed or Limited Operations" or "Red"/"Closed" campus condition (BPPM 50.40-46), or travel to instructional locations is unsafe, course instructors can use their discretion to offer students an alternative learning option that does not require travel to campus.

Faculty are expected to use a standard of reasonable prudent judgment as the basis for their decisions to offer or not offer alternative learning options. They will not be penalized for working remotely to provide students with alternative learning options. If an instructor holds class during a weather event, but a student does not attend due to adverse conditions, the instructor will not penalize the student and will ensure that all students receive any instruction or content covered if the class was held; materials will be made available in a timely manner. This also applies in the situation where a student does not have access to online alternatives. Allowances to the course attendance policy and to deadlines for scheduled assignments, including exams and quizzes, will be made by the instructor. Students requiring reasonable accommodation involving campus-based resources may need extended deadlines.

Students who attempt to gain advantage through abuse of this policy (e.g., by providing an instructor with false information) may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for disciplinary action. Students who believe that they have not been accorded the flexibility in completing work granted by this policy may appeal under Academic Regulation 104, Academic Complaint Procedures.

### 3. Definitions

- a. Condition Levels (as defined in BPPM 50.40-46)
  - i. Green: Classes, nonessential services, and essential services are all operational.

- ii. Yellow or Delayed/Limited Operations: Class operations are delayed two hours or cancelled. Nonessential services are reduced at the discretion of unit heads. Essential services as defined per BPPM 50.39 are operational.
  - iii. Red or Closed: Campus is closed. Nonessential services are suspended. Essential services as defined per BPPM 50.39 function with minimal levels of staffing.
- b. Appropriate Campus Authorities
  - i. President or Chancellor, or their designees

#### 4. Responsibilities

- a. President or campus Chancellor or designee decides condition level.
- b. Campus emergency management office informs community of condition level.
- c. Faculty members determine alternate arrangements, if any, and communicate with students.
- d. Videoconferencing staff on each campus inform appropriate campus counterparts as well as students and faculty on other campuses.
- e. Students contact faculty to explain exceptional circumstances.

#### 5. Procedures

WSU campuses are diverse in terms of geography and climate; conditions in one region may significantly differ from conditions in another region. In the event that public health, property or safety is jeopardized due to an emergency, the appropriate campus administrators will make a determination about campus operations and issue an emergency statement per the provisions in BPPM 50.40 and related policies at the individual campus level (BPPM 50.41-46). Faculty will follow the logistics of their individual campuses, but the central tenets of the academic policy are the same across all WSU instructional locations.

If campus authorities declare a "Yellow" (or "Limited/Delayed") (BPPM 50.40-46), faculty and students should take personal safety into account when deciding whether they can travel safely to and from campus or other instructional locations such as for internships or field work. Faculty will not be penalized for working remotely to provide students with alternative learning options. When the campus is closed ("Red" condition), or a class has been cancelled by delayed opening, course instructors can use their discretion to decide whether they will offer students an alternative learning option that does not require travel to campus. Instructors can also use their discretion to offer students an alternative learning option that does not require travel to campus when the campus is open, but access to campus or to other instructional locations such as internships or field work is unsafe. Faculty are expected to use a standard of reasonable prudent judgment as the basis for their decisions to offer or not offer alternative learning options.

In the case of delayed start, classes resume at the resumption of campus operations. For courses that span a temporary closure (e.g., a class that meets 9-12 and a delayed start of 10 a.m.), the course may resume at 10 at the instructor's discretion.

If an instructor holds class during a declared Yellow Campus emergency, but a student does not attend due to emergency conditions, the instructor will not penalize the student. This also applies in the situation where a student does not have access to online alternatives.

Allowances to the course attendance policy and to deadlines for scheduled assignments, including exams and quizzes, will be made by the instructor. Students requiring reasonable accommodation involving campus-based resources may need extended deadlines. Instructors of videoconferenced courses where the originating campus is open should grant these allowances to students on campuses that have declared Yellow (delayed) or Red (closed) status.

Additional considerations:

a. Faculty

- i. As a matter of general preparedness for adverse weather conditions as well as for situations in which Continuity of Operations plans are put into operation (BPPM 50.39-40), faculty may place syllabi and other course materials in the course space created for them each semester in their campus learning management system, or in a comparable online environment allowing asynchronous access to materials and activities. Campus technology support units or Academic Outreach and Innovation can assist with developing such modules using universal design principles. Campuses may have websites with toolkits for this situation; faculty are encouraged to review them and make use where appropriate.
- ii. Faculty should apprise students early in the semester of how they intend to handle scenarios of reduced or suspended operations. In addition to oral comments, this could be done in written form either under the Absence Policy in the syllabus, elsewhere in the syllabus, or in a separate document in the online course space.
- iii. Once a Yellow or Red campus condition has been declared, faculty members determine any alternative learning options they will offer and notify students, department staff, and AMS or other videoconferencing staff, if relevant, as soon as possible following receipt of emergency notification of the condition level.
- iv. Faculty inform the department chair that alternative arrangements are being made, if required by departmental policy.
- v. Faculty should keep in mind the need to extend reasonable accommodation to students with documented disabilities; this may involve extended timelines for accommodations requiring campus-based resources.
- vi. For videoconferenced courses affected under this policy, sessions should be archived and made accessible for student viewing on all affected campuses as soon as possible.
- vii. For courses that are not videoconferenced but have recording capability for instructional sessions, faculty are encouraged to post recorded sessions for student access on all affected campuses as soon as practicable.

- viii. Since labs and studios are difficult to address by these means, they may be rescheduled within the same term and with regard to students' abilities to access the make-up sessions. Labs and studios affected by delayed openings may resume instruction at the instructor's discretion when the campus opens.

b. Students

- i. In case of delayed opening or campus closure (reduced or suspended operations; Yellow or Red campus conditions), students should immediately consult their learning management course spaces or other online course space, as well as their WSU email, for messages from faculty regarding alternative learning arrangements. In the case of campus conditions involving a delayed opening, students should understand that class schedules will resume normal operation at the time noted in the emergency communication for resumed operations. This may include resumption of courses that were scheduled to begin before the time normal operations are resumed (example: resumption at 10 a.m. of a 9 a.m.-12 p.m. course or lab).
- ii. If students are not able to participate in alternate arrangements in a timely fashion due to lack of connectivity or other access issues, they should contact the faculty member to make alternative arrangements.
- iii. If students are not able to communicate with faculty, they should document to the best of their ability the reasons why and contact faculty as soon as possible after their communications have been restored.

6. Related policies

- a. WSU Academic Regulation 27, Credit Definition; NWCCU Credit Hour Policy
- b. Executive Policy 25, Emergency Management and Safety Plans
- c. BPPM 50.39, Emergency Planning and Preparedness
- d. BPPM 50.40-46, Suspended Operations
- e. BPPM 60.56, Faculty and Administrative Professional Personnel Leave
- f. Academic Regulation 104, Academic Complaint Procedures
- g. Vancouver Council of Faculty Representatives inclement weather policy

7. Key Search Words

Adverse weather, inclement weather, natural hazards, campus closures, emergencies, reduced operations, suspended operations, delayed opening, alternative learning arrangements

8. Revision history

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