



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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27 February 2019

To: Vancouver Campus Faculty, Staff, and Students
From: Senate Academic Policy Committee
Re: Consultation on Draft Senate Policy V-135 Academic Concession

Draft Senate Policy *V-135 Academic Concession* is presented for broad feedback from the community of the Vancouver Campus of the University, including faculty, administrative and service staff, and students. This policy articulates the expectation that under normal circumstances students will manage their various private commitments so as to avoid creating conflicts with their academic responsibilities. It also deals with the responses of instructors and academic units to requests made by students resulting from unanticipated conflicting responsibilities, temporary illnesses or other compassionate grounds that may hinder their attendance, participation in class or examinations, or the completion of assignments or other requirements.

The revisions were prompted by concurrent revisions to related policies, including Board and Senate Policy #73 – Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities and Board Policy #65 - Religious Holidays.

The draft policy linked below is a revision of the policy found in the [Academic Calendar](#). For the most part, the revised policy formalizes and makes clear current practice. However, there are a number of places where additional guidance is provided to align practice with current circumstances and understanding. For instance, the revisions incorporate considerations of Board Policy #131 – Sexual Assault and other Sexual Misconduct and reflect attention toward the impact that requests for medical notes can place upon the health services of the University and the Province.

To consider revisions to the policy, a working group was struck under the auspices of the Senate Academic Policy Committee. The working group had broad representation from across campus and included the following members:

- Chair, Max Holmes, Student Senator, member of the Senate Academic Policy Committee and AMS VP, Academic and University Affairs
- Jeanie Malone, Student Senator and member of the Senate Academic Policy Committee
- Dr. Paul Harrison, Chair of the Senate Academic Policy Committee

- Dr. Claudia Krebs, Professor of Teaching in Cellular and Physiological Sciences, Senator and member of the Senate Academic Policy Committee
- Shirley Nakata, Ombudsperson
- Janet Mee, Director Centre for Accessibility
- Susanne Goodison, Director Arts Academic Advising Services
- Brianne Howard, Director, Academic Support, Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
- Heather Robertson, Executive Director, Student Health & Wellbeing Student Development and Services
- Cindy Nahm, Director, Student Academic Services, Faculty of Science

Following the [Senate Framework for Student Mental Health and Wellbeing](#) (2014), the Working Group developed the following principles for the consideration of requests for Academic Concession:

This policy articulates the University's commitment to support students in their academic pursuits through recognizing that students may experience unanticipated events or circumstances that interfere with their ability to accomplish academic work. *Academic concessions*, where granted, are intended to help a student through a difficult period as part of a plan for recovery and success. In responding to students' requests for *academic concessions*, the University upholds the integrity of the curriculum and expects that the requirements of each course or academic program will be met within the university's broader academic mission and values.

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. Flexibility allows for the reasonable exercise of discretion and compassion in response to the unique circumstances of an individual student's case. 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*.

To accommodate for the volume of feedback that we anticipate in response to this consultation, and to allow for its timely analysis, synthesis, and consideration by the Senate Academic Policy Committee, [a short survey accompanies this consultation](#). However, open responses are always welcome from individuals and groups. Any

comments that cannot be accommodated in the survey platform are welcomed and should be made to Stephanie.oldford@ubc.ca with the subject line “Consultation Feedback for draft Senate Policy V-135 – Academic Concessions”.

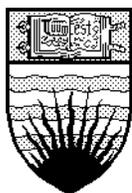
The consultation will be open from Wednesday February 27th to Sunday, March 31st, 2019. The Working Group and the Senate Academic Policy Committee appreciate your feedback. Our aim is to collaboratively arrive at a policy that provides the greatest amount of clarity for all in an area where there is a high degree of nuance and variable situations.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Paul Harrison, Chair

Senate Academic Policy Committee

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



SENATE POLICY:
V-#135 DRAFT

VANCOUVER SENATE
c/o Enrolment Services
2016 - 1874 East Mall
Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6T 1Z1

V-135: *Academic Concession*

Effective Date:

1 September 2019 (anticipated)

Approval Date:

April/May 2019 (anticipated)

Review Date:

This policy shall be reviewed number 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 recognizing that students may experience unanticipated

events or circumstances that interfere with their ability to accomplish academic work. *Academic concessions*, where granted, are intended to help a student through a difficult period as part of a plan for recovery and success. In responding to students' requests for *academic concessions*, the University upholds the integrity of the curriculum and expects that the requirements of each course or academic program will be met within the university's broader academic mission and values.

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. Flexibility allows for the reasonable exercise of discretion and compassion in response to the unique circumstances of an individual student's case. 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* provided by the Vancouver Campus of the University, including graduate students registered in theses and dissertations, which may bear zero credits.

Exclusions:

Residents and Visiting International Research Students are not included in this policy. Persons in these categories who face unexpected circumstances should contact their immediate supervisor to make suitable arrangements.

Definitions:

For the purposes of this policy and in all other policies in which they are not otherwise defined:

- *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.
- *Academic Advising Office* shall mean the academic advising office or unit in the student's home faculty/school (or the Dean's office in Faculties where there is no Academic Advising Office).
- *Course* shall mean course of instruction.
- *Dean* shall mean the Dean of the student's home faculty or the Dean's designate.
- *Graduate Supervisor* 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.

Policy:

- 1) Students facing circumstances that constitute grounds for *Academic Concession* may submit a request to the *instructor* of their *course*, their *graduate supervisor*, or the *academic advising office* of their *academic unit* as appropriate and as set out in the attached procedures. If *academic concessions* are sought in more than one course, the request should be made directly to the *academic advising office*.
- 2) Requests for *academic concessions* shall be determined on a case-by-case basis and in a timely manner. 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 may apply:
 - the nature and duration of the issue affecting the student;
 - confidential consultation with other appropriate units, such as the Centre for Accessibility,
 - the scope and type of academic work affected.
 - the proportion of prescribed academic work having been completed at the point in the term when academic work is affected.
 - The student's performance in the course to date.
- 3) Grounds for Academic Concession

Where a request for an *academic concession* is based on a protected grounds covered by the BC Human Rights Code, a concession will be granted unless doing so will create undue hardship (as that term has been interpreted under BC law) for the university . Other university policies may apply in these circumstances (see [Joint Board and Senate Policy #73 – Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities](#), [Board Policy #3- Discrimination and Harassment](#), the [Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies' Policy on Parental Accommodations](#), [Board Policy #65- Religious Holidays](#)).

Additional grounds for *academic concession* exist when one or more of the conditions below unexpectedly or unavoidably leads to a situation or conflict that hinders participation or attendance at a class session or examination, and/or a delay or inability to fulfil the requirements of a course or academic program, particularly where the requirements are assessed as part of a grade.

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

The possible grounds for academic concession are many and varied. Most fall into one or more of the following categories:

a) Conflicting Responsibilities

Conflicting Responsibilities that create grounds for *academic concession* are normally unanticipated or unavoidable. It is a student's responsibility to arrange their scheduled activities to the best of their ability in a manner that enables full attendance and participation in their *courses*. Conflicts arise from student circumstances including, but not limited to, the following:

- 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 (Senate, Board of Governors), tribunal or leadership search committee
- iii. being absent from campus to participate in academic conferences
- iv. unexpectedly being called to serve in the military
- v. working to support oneself or one's family
- vi. being absent in order to take a relevant work or professional development experience
- vii. providing care for a dependant or family member
- viii. being required to attend a court session
- ix. being required to attend a hearing on a matter of university discipline or academic standing
- x. being required to report to a government office for immigration or citizenship proceedings
- xi. participating in a religious observance (see Board Policy #65)

Conflicting responsibilities do not include having travel or social plans that conflict with class or exam schedules unless the travel is related to another valid ground for concession (e.g., compassionate grounds).

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 illness or a medical circumstance that arises or recurs during a term
- ii. a change in a chronic physical or mental health condition

Students with disabilities eligible for *academic accommodations* under Joint Board and Senate Policy #73 are encouraged to work with the Centre for Accessibility in this regard. Academic concession is different than academic accommodation for a

disability. Students with disabilities who face temporary illness or injury that is unrelated to their disability and that is likely to be substantially resolved in less than an academic term may request *academic concession* under this policy. Where there is uncertainty about whether a student has a temporary health issue or a disability, students, their *instructors* or *graduate supervisors* should consult with the Centre for Accessibility, 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 in the immediate aftermath of an unanticipated event, or later. Such events include, but are not limited to, the following:

- i. a traumatic event experienced by the student, a family member, or a close friend
- ii. an act of sexual assault or other sexual misconduct experienced by the student, a family member, or a close friend
- iii. a death in the family or of a friend

4) Types of *Academic Concessions*

There are numerous types of *academic concessions*. The *instructor*, *graduate supervisor*, or Dean (generally through a representative such as a member of an *academic advising office*, a Director or an Assistant or Associate Dean) will determine the most appropriate *academic concession* to apply in a given situation, depending on the grounds, and the situation of the student.

a) In-term Concessions

An *instructor* can 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, but are not limited to, 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. As long as the requirements of the *course* are met under these conditions by end of term, in-term concessions are not reflected on the student's transcript.

b) Late Withdrawal

A student may be granted late withdrawal (i.e., withdrawal after the withdrawal date) from a course 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 performance. Normally, a student will not be granted late withdrawal if the final examination has been sat or assignment has been written.

Late withdrawal from all registered courses or from a program may be granted as an alternative to leaving the program with failed standing. Granting late withdrawal from a term or a program may be contingent on a plan co-developed by the student, an academic 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. An application for readmission must be made by the published application deadline for the program (see [Readmission](#)). The student transcript will reflect a W for each of the courses for which late withdrawal is granted.

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

c) Deferred Standing

Deferral of a final examination or assignment beyond end of term (i.e., approval to write the missed examination or submit the assignment later) may be offered to a student who has been participating satisfactorily in a course during the term (i.e., in accordance with the expectations set out in the course syllabus), where a student is unable to write the normally scheduled final examination or meet the assignment submission deadline, and the student does not qualify for Aegrotat standing (see below).

Deferred Standing is granted by the Dean or Director or, commonly, their designate in an academic advising office. Before granting Deferred Standing, the advisor will explain to the student that additional work will be needed to complete a final assignment or additional study will be required to prepare for a final examination months after the course has ended. Further, there can be consequences if the student has planned to do an Exchange or Co-op placement in the following academic term. The student who is granted Deferred Standing should also discuss any necessary adjustments to course choice or load with an advisor in their program specialization (e.g., their major).

d) Aegrotat Standing

Aegrotat standing is an academic concession granted only in cases when a student has been meeting the learning outcomes in a course for most of the duration of the course but unexpectedly becomes unable to complete the final examination, project, paper, or presentation and has personal circumstances that make it unreasonable to expect that they will be able to complete it within the allowed time for deferred examinations. See [Standings](#).

e) Adjudicated Pass

An adjudicated pass in a course will be granted only when the Dean or Director (or designate) determines that a grade that is just below the pass mark resulted from an unforeseen event in the student's life that constituted grounds for academic concession and negatively affected a component of the course assessment. Normally, the calculated grade must be within a few percent of a pass.

A faculty or school may further limit the application of Adjudicated Pass, for example to courses not required for a major or to students in their final year of a degree program. The originally calculated grade is recorded and used in the calculation of sessional averages, with the standing “J”. See [Standings](#).

f) Retroactive Course Drop

The academic transcript is intended to be a true representation of the student’s relationship with the university. In exceptional cases, normally involving extraordinary compassionate or medical grounds, a dean or school director may remove a student’s registration in a course from the academic record. Such a concession is not granted simply to accommodate a student’s desire for a tuition rebate; for such purposes, there is a process whereby a student who, for extenuating circumstances, withdrew from a course or was withdrawn as a concession can appeal for a partial tuition refund (see Tuition adjustment or refund, <https://students.ubc.ca/enrolment/finances/tuition-fees/tuition-refund-dates>).

5) Documentation for *Academic Concession* requests

In all cases, students’ requests for *academic concession* should be made as early as reasonably possible, in writing, to their *instructor, graduate supervisor or academic advising office* in accordance with the procedures for this policy. These requests should clearly state the grounds for the concession and the anticipated duration of the conflict and or hindrance to 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.

In some credit courses, such as some practica 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.

a) 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 there is no practicable way to provide a letter or other official document from an organization relevant to the conflict.

In the case of a concession for care for a family member or for a religious observance, 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 (e.g., common cold or flu, food poisoning) likely to be quickly resolved without seeing a health professional, a self-declaration will usually suffice. Health professionals will not be able to provide meaningful reports for students who have not been under their care prior to the illness. Repeated requests for *academic concessions* resulting from acute illness may result in the student being asked to provide documentation to ensure that underlying health issues are being monitored properly.

Students who are clients of the Centre for Accessibility (CFA) should consult with that unit when they experience a change in a chronic physical or mental health concern. If the student is not a client of the CFA, the advising office may seek the advice of the CFA regarding documentation submitted. Students who are experiencing the emergence of a chronic condition may work directly with an academic advising office.

c) Documentation for Compassionate Grounds

When a student seeks academic concession on compassionate grounds, a self-declaration will usually suffice. As traumatic events may show effects long after the occurrence of the event, a self-declaration may also suffice for future re-traumatization. However, when the effects of trauma are long-lasting or recurring, the student may benefit from consulting a support unit which can then advise the academic advisor that an academic concession is warranted. Communications from a support unit will be on a need-to-know basis and are acceptable as documentation. The academic advisor then determines the appropriate concession that best supports the student's wellbeing and academic progress, ensuring that the student understands the alternatives and their implications.

6) Confidential Sharing of Information Among Support Units

A student may prefer first to consult their *academic advising office* or another source of support either within or outside UBC (e.g., Centre for Accessibility, Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office, the AMS' Sexual Assault Support Centre, Student Health Service, Counselling Services or an outside agency) and then have a representative communicate with the *academic advising office* on their behalf. These communications from a support unit will be considered as supporting documentation.

At all times, information is shared within the university on a need-to-know basis. In some cases, usually when the student's main support is outside UBC, documentation to support the grounds for concession may be required.

7) Appeals

- a) If a student believes that their request for an in-term concession has been unfairly denied, they are encouraged to take their protest to the head of the academic unit (often a department) that offers the course who will consult

the course instructor, their academic advising unit and any other applicable service unit before making a decision. If the complaint is not resolved there, the student may take it to the dean of the faculty or director of the school responsible for the course in accordance with the [Academic Calendar regulations on protests for academic standings](#).

- b) Students who are denied *academic concession* by their *academic advising office* (or other designate of the Dean or Director) may have grounds to appeal the decision if they feel that policy was not applied appropriately. See [Senate Appeals on Academic Standing](#).

Calendar Statement:

As above.

Consultations

The following groups will be consulted during the development of this policy:

AMS; Academic Advisors; Centre for Accessibility; CTLT; Deans, Directors and Academic Heads; Enrolment Services; First Nations House of Learning, GSS, PACSD; UBC Community via Senate Website and UBC Today newsletter, VP Students' Office; Office of the Ombudsperson; Office of University Counsel

History:

This is the first enumerated version of the policy for Academic Concessions using the approved policy template. The previous versions of this policy have been found in the Academic Calendar with the latest version having been reviewed by Senate in January of 2002. Earlier versions were considered by Senate in December 2000 and February 1994. Prior to 1994, the subject matter was included under the heading "Medical, Emotional or other problems".

Related Policies:

[Joint Board and Senate Policy # 73 -Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities](#)

[Board Policy #3 – Discrimination and Harassment](#)

[Board Policy #65 – Religious Holidays](#)

[Board Policy #131- Sexual Assault and other Sexual Misconduct](#)

[Senate Policy V-130 – Content and Distribution of Course Syllabi](#)

[Senate Policy V-302.2 – Graduate Student Leaves of Absence](#)

[Senate Policy V-303- Graduate Student Parental Accommodation Policy](#)

[Senate Appeals on Academic Standing](#)

[Attendance](#)
[Change of Registration](#)
[Grading Practices](#)
[Readmission](#)
[Withdrawal](#)

Appendix

There is no appendix to this policy.

Procedures:

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

1. General Considerations

- a. Course instructors are normally responsible for responding to requests from students who miss required assignments, tests, or deadlines during the term. The 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 academic advising office of the instructor's home faculty or school), that information should also be provided to students.
- b. Students are expected to pay timely attention to life events that disrupt normal participation in academic work and are urged to contact their instructor, program director or academic advising office as soon as possible upon realizing that they require an academic concession.
- c. Some issues can be solved through provisions an instructor makes for missed work as described in a course syllabus.
- d. Other issues may require the intervention of the student's home academic advising office, 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 detail of a course schedule in the syllabus is not sufficient, students must ask the course instructor for more information (see Policy V-135: Content and Distribution of Course Syllabi, in the Calendar).
- 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 (as required under Policy V-135: Content and Distribution of Course Syllabi, in the Calendar). 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 Centre for Accessibility must provide each course instructor with the requisite letter describing the required accommodation (see Board Policy 73 – Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities, in the Calendar).

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.c. 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 a concession (see Policy clause 3.b), or a change in circumstances creates a long-term conflict with academic work, then the student should consult their home academic advising office, 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 a representative in the home academic advising office, a student may wish to consult a different source of support (such as the Centre for Accessibility, the Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office, the AMS' Sexual Assault Support Centre, Student Health Service, Counselling Services or an outside agency) and then have a representative communicate with the academic advising office on their behalf.
- d. What students can expect from their home faculty or school:
 - The Dean or Director (or designate such as an academic advising office) makes decisions on academic concessions based on the student's individual circumstances, including the grounds for concession and the students' 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.
 - In many instances, students will be asked to provide a self-declaration to describe their situation. However, if the advising office 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 concessions may not be granted.

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

- a. In these cases, the student's home academic advising office must be involved in decisions on academic concessions (see 2.b-d. above).

5. Appeals

- a. If a student believes that their request for an in-term concession has been unfairly denied, they are encouraged to take their protest to the head of the academic unit (often a department) that offers the course who will consult the course instructor, their academic advising unit and any other applicable service unit before making a decision. If the complaint is not resolved there, the student may take it to the dean of the faculty or director of the school

responsible for the course in accordance with the [Academic Calendar regulations on protests for academic standings](#).

- b. Students who are denied *academic concession* by their *academic advising office* (or other designate of the Dean or Director) may have grounds to appeal the decision if they feel that policy was not applied appropriately. See [Senate Appeals on Academic Standing](#).