

Guidelines for Response to Disruptions to Instruction

*In planning for a new semester, consider the possibility of disruption, and how you may build **resilience** into your syllabus. If a mid-semester disruption should occur, prioritize your **safety** and well-being; then **communication** with your students; then **accommodation** of the disruption in your instruction going forward.*

Environmental or public health emergencies or natural disasters can result in instructional disruptions. The Academic Senate's Committee on Courses of Instruction (COCI) urges instructors to be as prepared as possible for such eventualities ahead of time. Adapting instruction to such an event does not require COCI approval. This document provides guidelines for instructors, intended as suggestions but not as COCI requirements. We recognize that such an event may disrupt instructors' individual lives as greatly as it does the life of the campus; these guidelines are not intended to imply that you should go to extraordinary lengths to immediately resume teaching in the face of a crisis. We support compassion, grace, and common sense.

Planning ahead

Be sure you have relevant phone numbers saved in your phone or elsewhere. Who in the department will you call if your house burns down or some other disaster renders you unable to teach?

Maintain your gradebook in an online resource that you and your TAs can all access from any location (bCourses, Gradescope, Google Sheet), not in a locally-saved spreadsheet or on paper.

Review the campus' safety guidelines for emergencies that may unfold while you are in the classroom. (<https://teaching.berkeley.edu/teaching-guides-resources/guidance-instructor-preparedness-classroom-disruptions-and-emergencies>)

Build resilience into your syllabi by considering the following:

- include classroom activities that can be easily converted into graded assignments.
- pre-record some lectures.
- include a statement that explains how you plan to proceed in the event of an interruption to instruction.
- Check out the various toolkits and in-person consultations on how to shape your syllabi to be responsive to various sorts of disruption provided by the Center for Teaching and Learning (<https://teaching.berkeley.edu/home>).

In the wake of an event

- Students and instructional support staff, including TAs, will look to you to be the authority on how the course will proceed. Communicate as soon as you are comfortable doing so, even if the picture going forward is not yet fully clear. Continue to communicate with students and staff as you develop clarity.
- Both the specific nature of the disruption and its timing within the semester will largely determine the extent to which you and your students will be able to teach and learn during the affected period, or to make up for lost instructional time afterwards.
 - It may not be possible to cover all planned materials.
 - Students may not be able to produce the same quality of work that they would have under normal conditions.
 - Instructors will need to revise their instructional plan.
 - Obtaining student input on instructional revisions is an ideal that circumstances may limit.
 - Be as transparent as possible about expectations once regular instruction resumes.
- If the impact is too great for the semester to resume under normal conditions, we encourage instructors and their departments to work with students as best as possible to meet educational goals, while remaining attentive to students' general well-being.

The specific guidelines presented in the following sections take campus closures as their point of reference, and suggest different strategies, and different degrees of flexibility, for responding to different lengths of such closures. These guidelines may be of use as well when a disruption affects an individual class but not result in full-scale campus closure. **Instructors do not need to consult COCI when adapting their syllabi to unforeseen disruptions during the semester.**

SPECIFIC GUIDELINES FOR CAMPUS CLOSURES

CLOSURES or other ONE-TIME EVENTS LASTING ONE DAY OR LESS

- Missed material can be covered at an accelerated pace in remaining course sessions.
- Missed material can be canceled from the syllabus.
- Virtual meetings for lectures and seminars may be held. We encourage faculty to post the virtual meeting to bCourses for the benefit of students who may not be able to participate in the virtual session.
- Faculty may record a video covering the missed material for students to view asynchronously.
- If none of the above solutions are feasible—for example, if the missed session was an in-person lab, studio, or performance class using equipment or materials only available on campus—the session may be made up during RRR week. Where a session occurring only once per week is affected, and where no other means of adjusting the course schedule is deemed feasible, the remaining sessions may each be postponed by a week, and the final session rescheduled for the corresponding day of RRR week.
- If there are several lab sections per week (e.g., the same Chemistry lab with groups meeting on M, W, and F), and only one is missed, consider doubling a later lab that week to allow affected students to attend.
- Assignments due on a disrupted day can still be due if submitted electronically (through bCourses or by email to individual instructors) or postponed to the next day or class session. Instructors should however be mindful that, depending on the nature of the campus closure, some or all students may not be able to engage with the course at the same level as they would be able to during regular instruction; and that an event that disrupts internet access will prevent electronic submissions.
- Where feasible, classroom activities or discussion topics may be converted into homework assignments in order to maintain continuity during short-term campus closures.

EVENTS REQUIRING THE CANCELLATION OF MULTIPLE DAYS OF CLASS SESSIONS EQUAL TO OR LESS THAN THE EQUIVALENT OF TWO WEEKS

- COCI expects that a pivot to remote instruction will be the most feasible solution to sustain continuity of instruction during a campus closure extending over multiple days. However, some particular crises—e.g., a power outage affecting the campus and dormitories—may make remote instruction impossible, and force classes simply to be canceled.
- Some condensation or omission of course materials may be inevitable.
- For events requiring the canceling of classes for several sessions, consecutive or nonconsecutive, COCI recommends the campus provide blanket approval for classes to continue in their assigned classrooms during RRR week, where this is deemed necessary in order to compensate for essential lectures, labs, field trips, or discussion sections canceled during the term.
- In the event of complete cancellation of classes for five or fewer days, COCI recommends campus approval for make-up sessions on the corresponding days of RRR Week (e.g., if T, W, and Th were canceled, the make-up sessions should be on T, W, and Th of RRR Week) to avoid disruption of the normal weekly schedules of students and instructors (work,

family, etc.).

- As noted above, however, at the same time COCI urges instructors to preserve as much of RRR Week for its intended purpose as possible, balancing students' need for final exam preparation time with the instructional needs of their courses by using the various recommended remedies for one-day closures listed in the preceding section, singularly or in combination.

EVENTS REQUIRING THE CANCELLATION OF CLASSES FOR MORE THAN TWO WEEKS

COCI views two weeks of campus closures as the threshold at which the remedies enumerated in the above sections are likely to be insufficient to allow normal instruction to proceed. At that point, deans and central administration must decide whether to provide emergency remedies that can maintain continuity of instruction, or if the semester must be canceled.

Instructional Continuity Post-Disaster or During an Extended Emergency

Decisions at the Discretion of the Instructor

Recommendation	Risk/Impact	Tactics for Managing Risk
In the event of instructor illness, smaller classes or sections of the same course should be collapsed into one when feasible and if a health risk will not be created.	Over-impacted space demands, especially at peak times.	Prepare instructors to be flexible in scheduling, especially to offer classes during off-peak times. Departments plan ahead by conducting succession planning and establish a “teaching buddy” system so to have alternate instructors identified in advance.
Where feasible, if alternative teaching modules, such as recorded lectures or online discussion groups have been prepared, these should be activated as the effects of extended emergency become significant.	There may be bottle necks with campus or student resources that would limit student engagement (e.g., poor WiFi access, lack of online instructional tools).	Solicit funding so that technology can be used in all courses. Have archive of courses stored off site.
Alternate final examination methods, such as take-home exams or term papers, may be used in lieu of an in-person final exam with the approval of the department chair and do not require authorization from COCI.	Volume huge in large departments. Chair may not be available. Additional time may be required to grade. OR will not know how the instructor is administering the final.	Departments should be prepared to track changes in final exam methods. Departments will need to notify OR about changes. Deadlines could be extended for final grades submission.

Decisions at the Discretion of COCI, the Office of the Registrar, and other the Administrative Offices

Recommendation	Risk/Impact	Tactics for Managing Risk
<p>If an extended emergency is declared after the published drop deadline, COCI recommends that colleges extend the deadline for dropping classes.</p>	<p>Students may fall below limits established by financial aid lenders.</p>	<p>COCI urges the campus to pursue options for working with lenders to ease this burden.</p>
<p>If classes are cancelled for the rest of the semester, COCI may waive the requirement to hold a final examination. In this case instructors should assess student performance to date.</p>	<p>In the case where the final exam is a large percent of the grade, instructors may not have enough data to give a final grade.</p>	<p>Alternative grading options could be considered. In limited cases, instructors could assign an incomplete (I) grade and give the final exam later or the campus could move to a temporary “default Passed/Not Passed” policy. The Registrar could manage such changes in consultation with COCI. There are a range of ways to handle grading in extreme circumstances and COCI will be involved in actualizing options dependent on the scenario.</p>
<p>In the case of emergency, during or expected during Final Exam Week, COCI will announce via CalMessage and on its website if the final exam requirement has been waived.</p>	<p>OR and department will not know how the instructor is administrating the final.</p>	<p>Department should still require that the instructor notify them of any change and the department will notify OR.</p>
<p>If the semester is disrupted between Week 9 and 13, instructors may grant students Incomplete (I) grades at their discretion</p>	<p>Students may have too many I grades. Graduation could be affected.</p>	<p>Graduate Division and colleges have a procedure in place to waive the requirement for the number of I grades allowed. The replacement grades could be managed as changes, not I removals. Degrees could be backdated to allow students more time to submit incomplete coursework.</p>

Recommendation	Risk/Impact	Tactics for Managing Risk
<p>Students making up coursework during future semesters should be accommodated as to unit requirements for full time status.</p>	<p>May affect financial aid; federal regulations may not allow.</p>	<p>The Financial Aid Office (FAO) will take mitigating circumstances into consideration in any student appeal process for deadlines, family contributions, academic progress, and requests for budget adjustments. During times of natural disasters, the Department of Education provides guidance regarding extended federal deadlines for federal aid, deferrals of federal loans, extension or retraction of certain rules for affected populations. The Financial Aid Office will take its lead on federal aid issues from the Department of Education. Likewise, the Chancellor and the Office of the President will provide guidance for university aid in such times.</p>
<p>The campus should seek to extend financial aid to students who are required to register for semesters past their original academic plan.</p>	<p>There may not be enough aid for these students.</p>	<p>See above.</p>
<p>Deans extend the deadlines for changing grading options to P/NP or S/U.</p>	<p>Programming is required and there may not be sufficient time to implement.</p>	<p>This option should be used only if programming staff is available.</p>
<p>Depending on the severity of the extended emergency, COCI will consider waiving the 1/3 limit on P/NP and S/U units, or any other limits on P/NP and S/U grades for the affected semester.</p>	<p>Could adversely affect students who are applying to Medical or Law schools.</p>	<p>Work with Association of American Medical Colleges (AMCAS) and Credential Assembly Service (CAS) so that P or S grades taken during the pandemic are treated differently than regular P or S grades.</p>
<p>OR may grant extensions or consider requests for extensions in certain circumstances.</p>	<p>Numbers of requests could be overwhelming.</p>	<p>Determine in advance what types of circumstances warrant an extension and who has authority to grant. Create central database to track situations.</p>