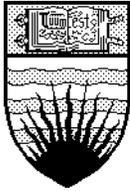


THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



SENATE POLICY:  
V-#135.1

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

V-135: *Academic Concession*

**Effective Date:**

September 2020

**Approval Date:**

15 April 2020

**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 unanticipated events or circumstances that interfere with their ability to accomplish academic work.

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 upholds the academic standards of the curriculum and expects that the requirements of each *course* or academic program will be met.

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 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 for undergraduate students, students in professional programs, and graduate students in programs administered by disciplinary faculties, the *academic advising office* or unit in the student's home faculty or school, or the dean's office in faculties where there is no *academic advising office*. For graduate students in programs administered by the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, *academic advising office* shall mean the Office of the Dean and Vice-Provost, Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

- *Course* shall mean course of instruction.
- *Dean* shall mean the dean of the student's home faculty (or the dean's designate), and for graduate programs administered by the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, the Dean and Vice-Provost of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, except in cases of a student appeal of the decision of a course instructor when dean shall mean the dean of the faculty offering the course or the dean's designate.
- *Graduate Supervisor* shall mean the faculty member with primary responsibility for overseeing a graduate student's program of study.
- *Graduate Advisor* shall mean the appointed faculty member in a graduate program who takes administrative responsibility for ensuring that faculty supervising or teaching graduate students, and graduate students are aware of, and adhere to, applicable policies and procedures. The *graduate advisor* acts as the primary liaison with the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.
- *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 3 may submit a request for *academic concession*. Students are responsible for submitting their requests as soon as possible.
- 2) Requests for academic concession may be made to the *instructor* of the student's *course*, their *graduate supervisor* or *graduate advisor* for their graduate program, or the *academic advising office* of their academic unit 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 *academic advising office* or equivalent.
- 3) Requests for *academic concessions* shall be determined on a case-by-case basis and in a timely manner by the *instructor*, *academic advising office*, or *dean* (on the recommendation of the *graduate supervisor* or *graduate advisor* for graduate students in programs administered by the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies). For graduate students in programs administered by Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, all requests resulting in a change to the student academic record must be directed to the Dean and Vice-Provost of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.
- 4) 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 that can provide professional opinion 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 graduate or professional program to date.
- 5) Providing an *academic concession* shall not lower the academic standards of UBC, its courses, or its programs, and shall not remove either the need for evaluation or assessment or the need for the student to meet essential requirements.
  - 6) Courses and programs with continuous assessment and those that assess the development of graduate attributes and standards of professional conduct and of patient care may be constrained in the form of *academic concession* they can offer.
  - 7) 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.
  - 8) Grounds for *Academic Concession*

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, or an inability otherwise to fulfil 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 when 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* has been found to be based on a protected ground covered by the BC Human Rights Code, the University has a duty to grant an *academic concession* 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 Related Board Policies: [SC7](#) and [SC17](#); [Joint Board and Senate Policy LR7](#); [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 (i.e., 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
- ix. participating in a religious observance or, for First Nations, Métis, or Inuit students of Canada, a cultural observance (see [Senate Policy J-136](#))

Other conflicting responsibilities that can be foreseen may also occasionally create grounds for *academic concession* (e.g., attending an academic conference, professional development opportunity or participating in a cultural observance other than those listed above). In these situations, students must consult their *instructor* or *graduate supervisor* or *graduate advisor* or their *academic advising office* as appropriate.

#### 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

Students with disabilities eligible for academic accommodations under [Joint Board and Senate Policy LR7](#) are required to work with the Centre for Accessibility in this regard. The 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. Students who are experiencing the emergence of a chronic condition may work directly with an *academic advising office*.

c) Compassionate Grounds

Compassionate grounds for *academic concession* may arise in the immediate aftermath of an unanticipated event, or later. Examples include:

- 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 close friend

9) Types of *Academic Concessions*

There are numerous types of *academic concessions* and the list below is non-exhaustive. The *instructor*, *academic advising office*, or *graduate supervisor* or *graduate advisor*, or *dean* or designate will determine the most appropriate *academic concession* to apply in a given situation, 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 Concessions

An *instructor* (or *academic advising office* where appropriate) 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. In-term concessions are not reflected on the student's transcript.

b) Late Withdrawal

Late withdrawal from one or more *courses* is granted by the student's *Dean* or director or their designate (such as an *academic advising office*), 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.

For the provisions for late withdrawal from all registered *courses* or from a program, see “[Withdrawal](#)”. Granting late withdrawal from a term or a program may be contingent on a plan co-developed by the student, an *academic advising office*, a *graduate supervisor* or *graduate 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](#)).

While 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 is granted by the student’s *dean* or director or their designate (such as an *academic advising office*), 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

The academic transcript should be a true representation of the student’s relationship with the university. In exceptional cases, normally involving extraordinary compassionate or medical grounds, a *dean* may remove a student’s registration in a *course* from the academic record. Examples include:

- The student was incapable of withdrawing themselves by the withdrawal deadline
- The occurrence of severe trauma

Such a concession is not granted 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 refund](#)).

10) 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 *graduate advisor*, or *academic advising office* or equivalent 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 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.

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

In the case of an *academic 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 and in the case of a religious or cultural observance, no later than two weeks in advance (see [Senate Policy J-136](#)).

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 suffice. Health professionals are not able to provide meaningful reports for students who have not been under their care prior to the illness.

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 *academic advising office* or *graduate supervisor* or *graduate advisor*. Students who are experiencing the emergence of a chronic condition may work directly with a faculty or school *academic advising office*, or *graduate advisor*, or *dean* as appropriate. In such cases, the student may be asked to provide documentation to ensure that underlying health issues are being monitored properly.

If the student is not registered with the Centre for Accessibility, the *academic advising office* or *graduate supervisor* or *graduate advisor* may seek the advice of the Centre regarding documentation submitted.

c) Documentation for Compassionate Grounds

When a student first seeks *academic concession* on compassionate grounds, a self-declaration will suffice. As traumatic events may show effects long after the occurrence of the event, a self-declaration may also suffice for the first incidence where re-traumatization arises. If a prolonged absence is anticipated on

compassionate grounds, supporting documentation may be requested. Documentation can be provided by a professional or 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. The *academic advising office* or *graduate supervisor* or *graduate advisor* or equivalent with input from the instructor then determines the appropriate concession that best supports the student's wellbeing and academic progress, through direct communication with the student, ensuring that the student understands the alternatives and their implications.

#### 11) Confidential Sharing of Information

Whether the student first consults their *academic advising office* or *graduate supervisor* or *graduate advisor* or instead another source of support either within or outside UBC, all communications are governed by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

A third-party authorization is needed if the student wishes to authorize a person or unit external to UBC to speak with any member of the University on their behalf.

#### 12) 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 office*, *graduate supervisor* or *graduate advisor* 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, director of the school responsible for the *course*, or Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies 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 *graduate supervisor* or *graduate advisor* (or other designate of the dean or director) may appeal the decision if they feel that policy was not applied appropriately. See [Senate Appeals on Academic Standing](#).

#### 13) 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 consulted during the development of this policy:

AMS; Academic Advisors; Centre for Accessibility; CTLT; Deans, Directors and Unit Heads; Enrolment Services; UBC Community via Senate Website and UBC Today newsletter, VP Students' Office (Student Development and Services); Office of the Ombudsperson; Office of University Counsel

## **History:**

This version of the policy includes amendments related to Senate Policy J-#136. The first enumerated version of the policy for Academic Concessions using the approved policy template was reviewed by Senate in May 2019. 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:**

[Board Policy SC7 - Discrimination](#)

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

[Board Policy SC17 - Sexual Misconduct and Sexualized Violence Policy](#)

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

[Senate Policy J-136 - Academic Accommodations for all Students' Religious Observances and for Cultural Observances for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Students](#)

[Senate Policy V-302 - 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. Faculties may vary the procedures and practices they implement to facilitate the submission and determination of requests for *academic concession*; however, in so doing they will adhere to the principles and provisions of Policy V-135.
- b. 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* or *dean's* office of the instructor's home faculty or school or by the *graduate 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* or *graduate advisor*, or *academic advising office* as soon as possible upon realizing that they require an *academic concession*.
- d. *Instructors* are strongly encouraged to make clear in their course syllabi the provisions for missed/late work and the potential penalties that students may incur.
- e. Other issues may require the intervention of the student's home *academic advising office*, either directly or with input from another support unit.
- f. In some circumstances related to the BC Human Rights Code the University may have a duty to inquire even if the student has not requested an *academic concession*.

### 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 [Senate Policy V-130](#)).
- 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 [Senate Policy V-130](#)). 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 [Joint Board and Senate Policy LR7](#)).

### 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 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, Student Health Service, Counselling Services, the AMS' Sexual Assault Support Centre or an outside agency<sup>1</sup>) 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 *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.
  - In many instances, students will be asked to provide a self-declaration to describe their situation. However, if the *academic 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 *academic concessions* may not be granted.

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<sup>1</sup> The AMS' Sexual Assault Support Centre and any other outside agency are third-parties to the university with regard to the confidential sharing of information described in Policy Section 11.

- 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 Policy clause 9. b-f.).