



Academic Consideration – Graduate Students

Subject:	Academic Consideration – Graduate Students
Sections:	Purpose ; Definitions ; Statement of Principles ; Policy ; Appeals
Approving Authority:	Senate
Responsible Committee:	Senate Committee on Academic Policy
Related Procedures:	Procedure for Academic Consideration – Graduate Students Student Medical Certificate
Officer(s) Responsible for Procedures:	Vice-Provost (Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies)
Related Policies:	Accommodation for Religious Holidays ; Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities ; Structure of the Academic Year ; Requests for Relief from Academic Decisions
Effective Date:	January 1, 2027
Supersedes:	(NEW)

I. PURPOSE

This policy sets out the parameters for graduate students to be excused from academic responsibilities for extenuating circumstances (i.e., personal circumstances beyond the student's control that have a substantial but temporary impact on the student's ability to meet essential academic requirements). Students experiencing longer-term impacts on their academic responsibilities as a result of a disability should consult Accessible Education about academic accommodation or consult their graduate program about a leave of absence.

Students who are registered with/have accessed support from Accessible Education for absences related to a disability condition on file with the unit should continue to

seek support from Accessible Education (see policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities).

II. DEFINITIONS

Program Designate, for purposes of this policy and associated procedure, means the individual designated as the decision maker on academic consideration requests. The Program Designate may be designated at the program or Faculty level (typically the program's Graduate Chair or the Associate Dean (Graduate) in the Faculty).

III. STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

This policy on academic consideration reflects the following principles and aims:

1. A consistent and fair approach that is appropriate for the academic activities within the graduate program and recognizes the common learning experience and expectations for all graduate students.
2. There is no expectation that a student must be in optimum physical or mental condition to carry out their academic responsibilities. Graduate programs may provide different specific expectations for particular academic activities, milestones, and/or professional experiential learning.
3. There is an expectation that students approach their graduate studies with professionalism and take responsibility with integrity and honesty for their decisions about absences and missed work due to extenuating circumstances.
4. Students may informally discuss and resolve academic consideration requests with the relevant individual or body overseeing the academic activity (e.g. course instructor, thesis or project supervisor, supervisory or examination committee) without sharing any formal documentation. If the matter is not resolved from the student's perspective, or if the program requires, they may submit a formal request for academic consideration as per the program's process. Individual graduate programs may request reporting of informal resolutions.
5. Students must demonstrate mastery of the learning outcomes and meet all academic requirements within their program. Graduate programs may designate some academic requirements in courses, milestones, and/or other academic activities as essential. In such instances, if the academic consideration request is approved, the student shall be provided with another opportunity to demonstrate proficiency in the content relevant to the missed

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academic activity within the time frame expectations identified by the graduate program.

6. Academic consideration is a formal mechanism for facilitating student well-being and academic fairness while acknowledging the integrity of relationships and interactions that students have with individuals and services on campus.
7. Graduate programs must articulate explicitly in their handbook and/or on the program website about their process for academic consideration in relevant academic activities, the type(s) of documentation required (e.g. formal supporting documents, self-declaration, etc.) and the procedure for submitting documentation. Programs may allow or restrict academic consideration requests without supporting documentation for particular academic activities.
8. Every graduate program must have a Program Designate. The Program Designate is appointed by the Dean (or designate) in their Faculty. For graduate students registered at Western International College, the Program Designate shall be the Senior Academic Lead (or a designate with an academic appointment at Western University). The Program Designate will receive the student's documentation, including a Western Student Medical Certificate (SMC) (if applicable) that indicates the student's ability to engage academically.
9. Students, faculty, staff, and administrators are expected to approach requests for academic consideration as being made and assessed in good faith, recognizing that evidence to the contrary (including false statements or altered forms or documents) may be liable to investigation as either a Scholastic Offense or a violation of the applicable Code of Student Conduct.

When a student is allowed academic consideration for an academic activity, the individual(s) or body responsible for overseeing the academic activity (e.g. course instructor, thesis or project supervisor, supervisory or examination committee) must determine how the student is expected to meet the relevant learning outcomes.

10. Where multiple requests for academic consideration are made with sufficient frequency, as determined by the graduate program, which may suggest an ongoing or longer-term challenge, Graduate programs may consider the following options:
 - Restrict continued academic consideration
 - Refer the student to Accessible EducationDiscuss alternative options such as a leave of absence or withdrawal from the program

IV. POLICY

1. Requests for academic consideration are made to the designated individual for each program.
2. Requests for academic consideration must include the components listed in the program-specific process, which may include:
 - a) Self-attestation signed by the student
 - b) Indication of the academic activity (e.g. course(s), milestone) for which the request has been made
 - c) Supporting documentation as outlined in program's process

Documentation for medical illness, when required, must include the completion of an SMC or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation by an Indigenous Elder or registered health care practitioner, or confirmation by Accessible Education where documentation is already on file to support the request.

3. Students must request academic consideration as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed academic activity. Program response times to academic consideration requests may vary.

This policy does not apply to post-hoc requests for academic consideration submitted for attempted or completed work, whether online or in-person.

4. Once the request and supporting documents have been received and reviewed, appropriate academic consideration, if granted, shall be determined by the individual or body responsible for overseeing the academic activity (e.g. course instructor, thesis or project supervisor, supervisory or examination committee).
5. The Program Designate may deny academic consideration for any academic activity that is not required for progression or where flexibility is already in place.

V. APPEALS

A student may appeal a decision on academic consideration as set out in the policy on *Requests for Relief from Academic Decisions* and *Procedure for Graduate Student Academic Requests for Relief*.

Last Reviewed:

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