

Structure of the Academic Year

Policy Category:	General
Subject:	Structure of the Academic Year
Subsections:	Hours of Instruction ; National Day for Truth and Reconciliation ; Remembrance Day ; Guidelines for the Structure of the Undergraduate Academic Year ; Guidelines for the Structure of the Academic Year in the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies ; Undergraduate Sessional Dates
Approving Authority:	Senate
Responsible Committee:	Senate Committee on Academic Policy
Related Procedures:	*
Officer(s) Responsible for Procedures:	*
Related Policies:	*
Effective Date:	September 1, 2025
Supersedes:	September 1, 2022, January 1, 2022

1.0 HOURS OF INSTRUCTION

The hours of instruction at Western University are:

8:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. Monday to Thursday
8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Friday

As a subcategory of the above, the hours of instruction for first-entry undergraduate programs at Western University are:

8:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Monday to Thursday
8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Friday

Notes:

- Exceptions, for sound academic reasons, may be made for make-up classes with the consent of the Dean (or equivalent) of the Faculty, School, or Affiliated University College.
- Classes during the 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. time period are scheduled only at the request of the department.
- Evening classes begin at 6:30 p.m. or 7:00 p.m. (6:00 p.m. start time is possible only in exceptional cases with the approval of the Dean).
- Graduate and second-entry professional programs and Scholar's Electives programming may have classes that deviate from this schedule from time to time based on the needs of the instructor or students.
- Class lectures, laboratories, tutorials, clinics and seminars always finish 10 minutes before the end times that appear in the Academic Timetable, e.g., the timetable may indicate that a class begins at 8:30 a.m. and ends at 9:30 a.m. but, in fact, the class will end at 9:20 a.m. to allow students 10 minutes to get to the next class.
- For scheduling of examinations see the policy on *Scheduling of Examinations and Responsibility for Printing*.

2.0 NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

September 30 is recognized as a day that honours the survivors of the Canadian residential school system, their families, and communities. Acknowledgement of the horrendous abuses committed at the schools is a critical part of establishing collective awareness of our history, but it must be accompanied by broader reflection and response to the legacy of colonization and disenfranchisement that spans centuries.

September 30 will be observed as a non-instructional day to allow students and employees to observe this day as an opportunity to advance the work of 'Truth and Reconciliation' as we reflect on the meaning of decolonization, and the actions required by the Western community to achieve it. If September 30 falls on the weekend, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation will be observed on the Friday prior.

3.0 REMEMBRANCE DAY

Two minutes of silence will be observed on November 11 at 11:00 a.m. throughout the University and, where this is not possible, two minutes of silence will be observed between 11:00 a.m. and 12:00 noon.

Students are permitted to be absent from class to attend a Remembrance Day Service, provided the instructor is informed in advance of the intended absence.

4.0 GUIDELINES FOR THE STRUCTURE OF THE UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC YEAR

Note: The following provisions are not applicable to: Ivey Business School, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Law, and certain programs in the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry (i.e., Doctor of Medicine (MD), Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS)).

4.1 Guidelines for the Structure of the Undergraduate Fall/Winter Session

The Fall/Winter session is considered the regular academic session and is divided into two terms:

Fall term: normally from September to December.

Winter term: normally from January to April.

4.1.1 Scheduling and Length of the Fall and Winter Terms

- (a) The Fall and Winter terms will each be comprised of at least 60 instructional days including at least 12 of each day of the week.
- (b) The last day of registration for either the Fall or Winter term will normally be seven days from and including the start date of the term (excluding weekends).
- (c) The first day of classes in the Fall term should not be scheduled on the first or second day of Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish new year) or on Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) unless the cancellation of classes on those days would result in a term of less than 60 instructional days. In that case, classes will proceed as usual.

4.1.2 Scheduling Study Days and Examinations

- (a) There will be at least one study day (including Saturdays and Sundays) between the completion of lectures and the first scheduled final examination in December and April.
- (b) The final day of examinations will be no later than December 22 in the Fall term and April 30 in the Winter term.
- (c) The final examination period will be at least 12 days in the Fall term and at least 17 days in the Winter term.
- (d) No examinations are to be scheduled on Good Friday or Easter Sunday.
- (e) No examinations are to be scheduled on the first two days of Passover unless the avoidance of those dates would extend the final examination period beyond the end of April. In years where examinations are scheduled on the first two days of

Passover, affected students may request accommodation and arrange with their instructor(s) and/or Dean for an alternative examination.

4.1.3 Scheduling Fall Term Reading Week and Winter Term Reading Week

- (a) A Fall Term Reading Week will be scheduled to begin as of 6:00 p.m. on the Friday prior to Thanksgiving and end at 11:59 p.m. on the Sunday following Thanksgiving.

[Secretariat Note: The Undergraduate Sessional Dates for 2025-26 were approved prior to the policy revision approved by Senate on May 16, 2025. The Fall Term Reading Week in 2025 is as approved by the Senate Committee on Academic Curriculum and Awards and reported to Senate on November 8, 2024. Fall Term Reading Week will be scheduled as above beginning in the 2026-27 academic year].

- (b) A Winter Term Reading Week will be scheduled to begin as of 6:00 p.m. on the Friday prior to Family Day and end at 11:59 p.m. on the Sunday following Family Day.

- (c) The following provisions apply to Fall Term Reading Week and Winter Term Reading Week:

- (i) No lectures, tutorials, labs, or other regularly scheduled course-related academic activities may be held during either Reading Week.
- (ii) No undergraduate evaluations may be scheduled or have a deadline during either Reading Week. This includes essays, quizzes, tests, examinations, lab reports, or evaluations of any other kind.
- (iii) Learning activities such as field work, experiential learning, and clinical placements that are an integral part of the course, and for practical purposes (e.g., travel abroad) must take place during one of the Reading Weeks, may be exempt from the restrictions outlined in points (i) or (ii) upon approval of the Dean.

4.2 Guidelines for the Structure of the Undergraduate Spring/Summer Session

- (a) The Spring/Summer session is normally an optional study period from May to August.
- (b) The Spring/Summer session shall be comprised of three periods:

Summer Evening and Spring/Summer Distance Studies:
Twelve-week period - May to August.

Intersession: Six-week period - May to June.

Summer Day: Six-week period - July to August.

- (c) The last day of registration for Summer Evening, Spring/Summer Distance Studies, Intersession, and Summer Day will be two days before the start of classes.
- (d) Scheduling of classes will be within the following hours:
 - (i) 8:00 a.m. to 9:40 p.m. for Intersession;
 - (ii) 8:00 a.m. to 3:40 p.m. for the Summer Day;
 - (iii) 5:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. for the Summer Evening; and
 - (iv) no classes will be held on statutory holidays.

Note: Scheduling of classes in the undergraduate Spring/Summer sessions may vary from the Hours of Instruction noted above.

- (e) A first-term full (1.0) or half (0.5) course (comprising twelve or six weeks for Summer Evening and Spring/Summer Distance Studies, and six weeks for Intersession and Summer Day) will normally begin:
 - for Summer Evening and Spring/Summer Distance Studies, the first Monday in May after May 2
 - for Intersession, on the Monday following the first day of Summer Evening
 - for Summer Day, on the first Monday in July after Canada Day.

A second-term half (0.5) course for Summer Evening and Spring/Summer Distance Studies will begin six weeks after the start of the Summer Evening and Spring/Summer Distance Studies Session.

- (f) There will be two study days for Summer Evening, Summer Day and Spring/Summer Distance Studies courses between the end of classes and the examination period (including weekends). For Intersession, there will be two study days.
- (g) Examinations for Summer Evening, Intersession, and Summer Day will be held over two days and for Spring/Summer Distance Studies, over four days, with the exception of the Arthur Labatt Family School of Nursing's Accelerated Year 4 program.

5.0 GUIDELINES FOR THE STRUCTURE OF THE ACADEMIC YEAR IN THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

(a) The academic year in the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies consists of three terms:

Fall term: normally beginning September 1 and ending December 31.

Winter term: normally beginning January 1 and ending April 30.

Summer term: normally beginning May 1 and ending August 31.

(b) Term dates do not necessarily coincide with the beginning of classes, therefore students should contact their program for the specific date when courses start.

6.0 SESSIONAL DATES

Undergraduate sessional dates are published in the Academic Calendar per the *Academic Calendar* policy.

6.1 Undergraduate Sessional Dates

The Office of the Registrar, in consultation with the academic community and appropriate administrative offices, will determine all applicable undergraduate sessional dates for the academic year in accordance with Senate Academic Policy and communicate them to the Senate Committee on Academic Policy for information and transmittal to Senate.

6.2 Faculty-Specific Undergraduate Sessional Dates

Faculty-specific undergraduate sessional dates are determined for programs that do not fall under the Guidelines for the Structure of the Undergraduate Academic Year established in section 4.0. These programs include:

- Ivey Business School (Honours Business Administration Program)
- Faculty of Education (Bachelor of Education Program)
- Faculty of Law (Juris Doctor Program)
- Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry – Doctor of Medicine Program (MD)
- Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry – Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS)

Faculty-specific undergraduate sessional dates are determined by the relevant Faculty in accordance with Senate Academic Policy and provided to the Senate Committee on Academic Policy through the Office of the Registrar for information and transmittal to Senate.