

ACADEMIC CONTINUITY FOR STUDENTS

Message sent on behalf of Professor Dionne Gesink, Acting Associate Dean, Academic Affairs

Dear Students,

Thank you for continuing to adapt to, and with, the sudden changes within our School as we respond to the rapidly evolving COVID19 pandemic. Below, I provide an update on changes that have happened over the past week and resources. Some of you may be feeling overwhelmed, and this is normal. Please ask for help when you need it. I also provide information on mental health and well-being resources at the end of this message.

Thank you for physical distancing, and for your part in the response to this historic global event,

Dionne

Credit/no-credit:

At the graduate level, at this time, credit/no-credit must be course-wide, not individually decided by students. The final grades assigned in a graduate course must all be from the same scale.

Extensions:

We understand that students are anxious and may not be coping well with competing priorities and constant change. Instructors are being asked to be compassionate and accommodating.

Two options exist for everyone:

1. Short coursework extensions – *please check with the specific Course Directors re: the coursework and what possibility exists for short extensions.* This is dependent on Course Directors being able to complete the marking and submit the grades in advance of specific deadlines.
 2. Course Extensions into the Summer Term. This will require a formal request for an extension (easily done) and a deferred grade for now (form attached). The grade is changed when the coursework is submitted, and the grade goes through the system by end of the Summer term. Requests for coursework extensions are required for each individual course, so you'd need to do one for each course in which you wish to hold off on submitting.
- For student completing the entire program this term, right now, this means that you will graduate in November, rather than June.

Course Drop Date:

The course drop date has been reopened and **extended to April 25, 2020** to support students who are struggling academically. We ask that you consider why you're dropping *before* to verify

that there are no alternatives to successfully completing the course. To make a fully informed decision, please note:

- Students will not get a refund on tuition or fees if they drop between now and before April 25
- Dropping may extend student time to completion and thus graduation and may result in additional tuition and fees if they extend into the 20/21 academic year
- Students may have to wait until Winter 2021 to take the course they dropped again
- Students might be able to earn missing credits by completing a Summer 2020 course, but that will depend on the Summer 2020 course offerings
- Students expecting to graduate in June are encouraged not to drop courses, unless the course under consideration is extra credit, so they can complete on time

Grade Submission Deadline:

The deadline for grade submissions for individual courses has been **extended until May 15** with the expectation that tentative degree recommendations will be submitted on the current deadline date of April 17. Students will not be able to receive confirmation of degree letters until their degree requirements are confirmed.

Doctoral Research:

The U of T Health Sciences Research Ethics Board (REB) has suspended all research involving in-person contact with human subjects and all laboratory-based research. Hospitals have suspended non-essential research unless it can be conducted remotely. The RDC is closed. IC/ES is working on remote access to datasets. Depending on the nature and stage of dissertation, these changes will affect some candidates dramatically, slightly, or not at all.

– Please discuss the status of your research with your Supervisor and Committee Members.

– Doctoral students/candidates have maximum flexibility to revise dissertation protocols with their Supervisor and Committee to adapt to the changing research environment. Please work together to devise a Plan B as needed.

– An amendment describing how research activities will be revised to prevent in-person contact with participants can be submitted to the REB to restart previously approved research.

Final Oral Exams for Doctoral Candidates:

SGS has updated guidelines for remote completion and sent a message to faculty and students (attached). In brief, all scheduled Final Oral Exams will be conducted remotely. A candidate wanting an in-person final oral exam will need to postpone their exam until in-person meetings/gatherings resume.

Graduation:

The University has made the difficult decision not to hold Convocation ceremonies in June 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the directives of public health authorities regarding social distancing and against large gatherings. Students who complete their degree requirements will still graduate and receive their degrees and parchments. We are currently exploring possible alternative means of celebrating graduation.

Please visit the Office of Convocation website for further information and updates: <https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/covid-19-and-spring-convocation-faqs>.

Questions:

Course Questions? Please contact your Course Instructors.

Program Questions? Please contact your Program Director:

PHS: <http://www.dlsph.utoronto.ca/divisions/division-heads-and-program-leaders/>

IHPME:

HSR: Audrey Laporte audrey.laporte@utoronto.ca

Clinical Epidemiology: Rob Fowler rob.fowler@sunnybrook.ca; Jill

Tinmouth jill.tinmouth@sunnybrook.ca

MHSc: Tina Smith tina.smith@utoronto.ca

SLI: Abi Sriharan abi.sriharan@utoronto.ca

MHI: Julia Zarb julia.zarb@utoronto.ca

QIPS: Christine Shea christine.shea@utoronto.ca

Mental Health and Well-being for Students:**Finding Support – Mental Health Resources for Students**

Feeling distressed? Find someone to talk to right now – and if there is an immediate risk, call 911. Free 24/7 support is available outside the university. Students, staff and faculty can speak to a trained crisis worker at any hour of the day. **1-866-925-5454**

My SSP for U of T Students **1-844-451-9700**. Immediate counselling support is available in 35 languages and ongoing support in 146 languages.

Good 2 Talk Student Helpline **1-866-925-5454**. Professional counselling, information and referrals for mental health, addictions and well-being.

Gerstein Crisis Centre A 24-hour community based mental health crisis centre **416-929-5200**

Distress Centres of Greater Toronto **416-408-HELP (4357)**

SafeTALK is a 3-hour training designed to ensure that people with thoughts of suicide are connected to helpers who are prepared to provide first-aid interventions. Free for all students currently studying at University of Toronto.

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health **416-535-8501**, offers services near campus at [250 College Street](#)

Graduate student resources:

- [Grad Minds – Mental Health Advisory Committee of the University of Toronto Graduate Students' Union \(UTGSU\)](#)
- [Grad Mind Workshops](#)
- [Graduate Wellness Counselling](#)
- [Graduate Wellness Portal](#)
- [Graduate Resources & Supports](#)
- [Remote participation guidelines for students](#)
- [Course extension form](#)