

Guidelines for Academic Consideration in a Remote Learning Environment during COVID-19

August 2020

The University's *Policy on [Academic Consideration for Students in Extenuating Circumstances](#)* outlines how the University will respond to students who find themselves in a range of extenuating personal circumstances beyond their control that temporarily affect their ability to fulfill their academic obligations and requirements.

The remote learning environment creates new kinds of extenuating circumstances, specifically unforeseen "in-the-moment" technological and workspace-related disruptions. These should be accepted as consistent with the *Policy's* principle of good faith: "...the University and instructors are requested to assume that student circumstances and documented requests for consideration are legitimate unless there is compelling evidence to suggest otherwise. Similarly, students are requested to assume that the University and instructors will provide academic considerations that are deemed to be in the best interest of the student, taking into account academic progress and essential academic requirements and standards." Instructors are also requested to offer significant flexibility in their response to students given the unpredictability inherent in the remote learning environment. This category of circumstances should be accepted through to 31 August 2021. Its applicability will be reviewed by the University in advance of the start of the 2021-22 academic year, in the context of the learning environment at that time and the pandemic.

Each Faculty/School has developed protocols to provide a consistent and equitable approach in dealing with requests for academic consideration for students facing extenuating circumstances, and these remote-learning-specific circumstances should be responded to in accordance with Faculty/School procedures.

Examples of an unforeseen technological or workspace-related circumstance would include a hardware malfunction, an unexpected internet connectivity issue, power outage, fire alarm, unexpected need to care for children, etc. It is anticipated the circumstance would last less than three days, as defined under the *Policy*.

Academic consideration would not be required to be provided for **chronic** technological difficulties or workspace disruptions, such as long-term hardware/ software failure, prolonged poor internet coverage, lack of planning or knowledge of program software/onQ, missing notifications/reminders, use of unsupported/out-of-date software, or other persistent technological challenges. Students are expected to plan ahead to ensure their successful learning in a remote environment. This includes preparing a private space for learning, studying and writing exams with no interruptions; ensuring that they have access to a computer with any required technologies and tools as well as any necessary hardware; and ensuring they have reliable internet service.

Students requiring financial assistance to plan and mitigate against chronic disruptions are encouraged to apply for bursary funding from Student Awards:

<https://www.queensu.ca/studentawards/student-awards-covid-19-updates-and-important-information>