

Educational Policies for Pandemic and Evacuation Emergencies

The following general educational policies may be utilized in the rare event of a pandemic or other emergency, in which students, faculty and staff must be evacuated from campus and might not be able to return for extended periods of time. Under such circumstances, PLU policy states that the University will successfully complete the academic term, even when classes cannot physically meet. It is understood that small percentage of courses may not be able to be successfully completed and may result in IP grades. These courses might include clinical rotations, internships, practicums and other such experiential courses that rely on agency and community partnerships.

General policies

If a pandemic or other emergency occurs at the beginning of a term prior to the published “last day to add” date, or between terms such that a new term cannot be started, the University reserves the right to cancel the term and/or to make necessary adjustments to the University calendar to accommodate the term. This may include alterations to the January term or Summer terms, shortened or lengthened regular semesters or other adjustments.

The University may elect to note a special designation on the transcript for any semester affected by a campus evacuation.

In the unfortunate event that a faculty member is unable to return to campus following a pandemic or other evacuation emergency, the Dean of the respective unit, or his or her designee, in consultation with the Provost, is responsible for ensuring that courses taught by the faculty member are completed and that grades are awarded. To this end, the Dean of each unit should develop and execute a reasonable plan that will ensure the successful completion of the courses and the assignment of final grades within his or her unit. This may include the temporary redistribution of courses among available faculty. Such School or Division plans should be on file in the Provost’s office, and are to be updated every five years. Plans may include detailed information on a department’s expectations governing course completion and alternative instruction, interpretation of P/F grade options within the major, specific syllabi expectations etc. All School and Division plans must align with the University policies governing pandemic and evacuation emergencies.

Completion of the academic term and issuing of grades

If a campus evacuation occurs following the mid point of the semester, and a return to campus is not possible prior to the end of the term, the academic term may be considered complete on the designated Withdrawal date for that term. At that point each faculty member may issue regular grades, or may elect to utilize Pass/Fail grades for the class at his or her discretion. Final grades would not be due until the regularly published grade deadline for the term. If the campus is fully reopened prior to the Withdrawal deadline, the regular semester calendar remains in effect.

If a campus evacuation occurs prior to the midpoint of the term, regardless of whether or not a return to campus is possible, faculty will complete the term and issue grades in accordance with the regularly scheduled semester. Each faculty member may issue regular letter grades or may elect to utilize Pass/Fail grades for the class at his or her discretion. Final grades will be due on the regularly published grade deadline for the term. If “I” grades are issued to individual students, the clock governing their conversion to letter grades would begin on the first day in which the University is reopened for classes, and would be extended by the number of days that the University was evacuated plus an additional 6 weeks. The “I” grade is not to be used in mass.

The completion of courses during a pandemic or evacuation emergency in which the University remains declared as “open” is expected. Plans for completing course work are at the discretion of each individual faculty member, with respect to established School or Divisional policies, however work requirements may not encumber upon the following regular semester. Courses normally using the IP grade option may exercise this option during a campus evacuation period when circumstances prevent the completion of the essential course work (internships, practicum etc). For these courses, the clock governing IP grades would begin at the close of the first full long term, following the semester affected by the evacuation, in which the University is fully reopened for business.