

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** UTSC Faculty  
**From:** Professor William A. Gough, Vice-Principal Academic & Dean  
**Date:** 26 June 2020  
**Re:** UTSC Winter Term Strategy

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Dear UTSC Faculty:

I continue to be deeply grateful for your sustained and very dedicated support of our academic mission. I wrote to you on May 12, 2020 detailing my reasoning with respect to the delivery of Fall term courses. This included a commitment to remote delivery, a conclusion reached by weighing a number of considerations.

Since students and faculty are now asking questions about the Winter in order to plan ahead, I, along with the other Deans at U of T, have turned our thinking to considering our options for the winter.

Let me first reiterate and stress that the key element in our thinking remains the health and well-being of our community. In the consideration of academic offerings, I begin by assuming we will not be returning to a fully in-person delivery of courses. The best projections for the Winter suggest that physical distancing, crowd size limitations, and travel restrictions (at least to some parts of the world), will still be in place, although perhaps in modified form (larger groupings of individuals, for example). It seems unlikely that a vaccine will be widely available, if at all. Thus, it is likely the Winter will not be different from the Fall with respect to variables that are critical to how we deliver courses.

Here, after consultations with Chairs and Academic Directors, is the framework to direct planning for the Winter term:

*Overarching directive: Course offerings remain largely remote with some in-person elements that are guided by the following considerations.*

- 1. We guarantee a pathway to graduation for those eligible to graduate next June.*
- 2. We ensure every first year offering can be completed remotely.*
- 3. We prioritize in-person graduate offerings, and in-person undergraduate course elements, that cannot be delivered remotely for initial space allocation.*
- 4. For courses with mandatory in-person elements (i.e., with no corresponding remote component), we guarantee that they will be repeated in subsequent terms.*
- 5. We provide other in-person elements as restrictions permit, as space permits, and for faculty who are willing.*
- 6. For any in-person offering, we need a remote backup plan in the event of a return to restrictions that will not allow for such in-person elements.*

I want to provide some commentary to unpack these considerations.

*1. We guarantee a pathway to graduation for those eligible to graduate next June.*

As much as possible, the impacts of COVID-19 on students' inability to complete their degrees should be minimized. It is possible, if we remain in a restricted mode, that not all program courses will be able to be offered and/or that not all elements of individual courses can be offered. I am asking for flexibility in delivering courses that are part of program requirements. It is also possible some courses will not be offered, because they simply cannot be offered remotely. In such cases, I am asking program supervisors to exercise flexibility in program completion, perhaps with appropriate course substitutions.

*2. We ensure every first year offering can be completed remotely.*

We know there are many applicants who have accepted our offer of admission who are still carefully considering their options. Within that group are individuals who may encounter substantial barriers in coming to Toronto, or who live locally but have personal health or family considerations that make them reluctant to come to campus. I would like to assure these groups of students that completing their first year remotely is a viable option. It is possible in some programs that a B level course is typically taken as a program requirement in first year. Departments may wish, at their discretion, to extend this guarantee to include these courses. This of course does not imply that higher-level courses will be offered in person. It is likely most will be offered remotely (see consideration #4).

*3. We prioritize in-person graduate offerings, and in-person undergraduate course elements, that cannot be delivered remotely for initial space allocation.*

In the fall term we scheduled in-person elements for courses taken in two professional Masters programs (Master of Environmental Science, Master of Accounting and Finance) first. This was followed by requests for undergraduate course elements. We were able to find space for all requests. We would like to repeat this process for the Winter term, noting that the Master of Accounting and Finance will not require space that term.

*4. For courses with mandatory in-person elements (i.e., with no corresponding remote component), we guarantee that they will be repeated in subsequent terms.*

Departments have identified some courses for which they are not able to find a remote substitute for some elements, and some departments had already moved these courses to the Winter. For departments with faculty, or other teaching staff, willing to deliver in-person, these courses, or elements of these courses, will be the first to be scheduled after the graduate courses as noted in the third consideration. In order for students who are accessing courses entirely remotely next year, we will guarantee to offer such courses in subsequent terms. This does not over-ride the first consideration for students who plan to graduate next June; a pathway without requiring an additional term needs to be found for them.

*5. We provide other in-person elements as restrictions permit, as space permits and for faculty who are willing.*

We anticipate even after the scheduling of graduate courses and courses, with mandatory elements (considerations #3 and #4), there will be space for other courses to offer in-person elements, such as tutorials and seminars, that replicate remote counterparts. These proposals will be brought forward by departments who have faculty or other teaching staff willing to do in-person teaching. I note that although we anticipate the eventual return to in-person teaching on campus, such teaching by faculty in the Winter will be voluntary.

*6. For any in-person offering we need a remote backup plan in the event of a return to restrictions that will not allow for such in-person elements.*

We recognize that Public Health restrictions may not allow for in-person elements in the Winter term. A backup plan that is entirely remote needs to be in place for every offering. This may mean some creativity in thinking through how specific learning objectives may be achieved or the substitution of another relevant learning objective reflective of the discipline and level of the course. This is particularly important if restrictions are imposed after the term has begun. On balance a department may decide not to offer a course in the Winter and may choose to offer it in a subsequent term. This decision needs to be made within the context of the first consideration, providing a pathway to graduation.

I recognize that this set of considerations may demand much of you. I have tried to balance the need to allow students to progress through their programs, the need to maintain pedagogical integrity, and the demands on faculty to deliver material in different modes.

Once again, I thank you for your inspiring work in fulfilling our academic mission.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'WAG', written in a cursive style.

**William A. Gough**  
Vice-Principal Academic & Dean  
University of Toronto Scarborough