

Dear UTM Faculty,

We are sending you the message below, to be sure our community receive messages at the same time as other divisions, and to minimize confusion. UTM students will receive a version of this message soon, so we wanted to inform you first.

We understand that many of our undergraduate students are faced with difficult decisions regarding whether to return home, given the increasing challenges with international travel. We have decided that UTM undergraduate students will not be required to return to the U of T campuses for the Winter 2020 session. More information to follow regarding completion of term work and exams. Students registered with Accessibility Services should continue to contact Accessibility Services to receive accommodations and supports. As of now the UTM campus remains open, although “in-person” classes are not continuing. We are still working on final exam delivery but there will be no “in-person” exams.

Please note that exams are not “cancelled”, any more than our courses were “cancelled”; however, they cannot be delivered in person. Some of you have already thought about alternatives to exams, and discussed them with your Associate Chairs and Chairs. Changes to exams require the same steps as other changes to course evaluation methods and weights, i.e. a proposal to your Chair, a student vote, and a revised syllabus sent to your Chair for approval and forwarding through CISS.

UTM had already relaxed the policy on having assignments due during the exam period, but asked that any assignments be due no later than the originally scheduled exam date. This will space out student work and will also ensure that instructors and TAs have time to mark materials before the final marks deadlines; instructors were asked to consider marking time when deciding on alternative evaluation methods and their due dates. These policy changes still stand.

As also noted in the Dean’s memo of March 13, Chairs should not approve the reweighting of a course involving removal of course evaluation methods such as an exam for amounts over 25% without decanal approval as this would very likely affect the ability of the students to achieve major learning outcomes. The Dean’s Office is unlikely to approve of such cases without significant explanations of why alternative assessment methods are not possible. Please make sure you do not take such heavy reweighting options for a vote before receiving decanal approval.

If you would like guidance in particularly difficult decisions around exams or high-value tests which will be difficult to replace by other methods of evaluation, including difficulties with marking changes, please do not hesitate to reach out to your Chair or Associate Chair as soon as possible; we have promised your Chairs that we will work with you, your Chair and campus resources to come up with the best options possible.

Please do check in the Discussions portion of the UTM Teach Anywhere Quercus Shell for pedagogical and practical ideas, and answers to some policy questions. Anyone teaching this term should have access through their Quercus dashboard.

We are so thankful for your expertise and dedication during this very difficult time; the response of our instructors has highlighted the impressive teaching ability at UTM.

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and

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