

Memo



COVID Memo #4: Q&A Memo

QUESTIONS RELATED TO ONLINE CLASSES:

Q: What do I do if I don't have the equipment I need to teach online?

A: The College has confirmed the following process for requesting equipment:

1. Send an e-mail to helpdesk@dawsoncollege.qc.ca which specifies the following:
 - a detailed list of equipment needs (this may include laptop, headset, webcam, tablet, cables, internet)
 - if you have a specific item that you would like to purchase, provide as much information as possible (including price and where you intend on purchasing item)
2. Copy your Sector Dean
3. Wait for a response from the Help Desk; they will either approve your purchase or offer an alternative (note that any item reimbursed by the College will remain College property)

We have been told that any reasonable purchase will not be refused; please contact us if you have any issues obtaining the equipment that you require.

Q: What exactly does the College mean when it says I have to give 25% of my course synchronously?

A: Firstly, we would note that there is no indication that the 25% synchronous portion of the class needs to take place per week; if you are not yet ready to go to synchronous classes, you could structure your courses so that the synchronous portions occur later in the semester.

The College has indicated that they will be interpreting the idea of "synchronous" classes quite loosely. Synchronous classes could take the form of online classes using a video conferencing platform such as Zoom, but it could also be a case of designating time periods when you will be "live" on your computer and respond to student MIOs as they come in.

Q: How do I record student attendance in an online class, as requested by the College?

A: The College has asked in its last memo that you track student attendance and inform them of any students that do not participate in courses within a week of you resuming them. This does not have to be a formal attendance taking. You may also want to consider (if you haven't already) asking students via MIO whether they intend to continue participating with online classes.

Q: What are the issues with zoom, and what is “zoom-bombing”?

A: You may have seen the memos from the IT Department referring to an issue with “uninvited guests” and cyber-bullying in zoom classes. Several of our teachers have reported such experiences, ranging in severity from mildly disruptive to harassing and aggressive behaviour, including projecting explicit images. Clearly, this compromises the safety of the learning environment for both teachers and students.

The College has now implemented a process that requires students to authenticate through their Dawson profile in order to access a Zoom class (see the e-mail sent Sunday, April 5th). We strongly encourage teachers to follow the suggestions sent by the IT department to minimize the possibilities of such occurrences. We would also urge you to report any instances of disruptive behaviour to your sector dean and to us.

There have also been several news reports in recent days related to security issues surrounding the use of Zoom. If you are concerned with the privacy and security issues surrounding Zoom, it is perfectly reasonable for you to refrain from using it.

Q: What is an Authorized Absence?

A: An authorized absence is also referred to as an incomplete or permanent incomplete. This **differs from a temporary incomplete** which is used when a teacher can not provide the final grade of a student by the usual deadline because of unfinished work. A temporary incomplete usually involves the teacher and student coming to an arrangement about when unfinished work will be completed. In the case of an authorized absence, once it is granted, the remark 'IN' will appear on the student's transcript instead of a numerical grade. This result will not affect the student's R-score.

Under normal circumstances, a student is granted an authorized absence in the case of a medical condition or other grave and serious reasons. Given the circumstances, deadlines and criteria for applying for an authorized absence have been loosened. Students do not have to provide any justification in order to be granted an authorized absence.

Q: If a student wants to request an authorized absence, whom do I refer them to?

A: It is important to note that the College has not set a deadline for applying for an authorized absence. It may be worth encouraging your students to make an attempt at resuming their classes before making a decision to request an authorized absence. Several students may be anxious and uncertain which may result in them dropping classes preemptively.

In the event that a student wishes to request an authorized absence, they should follow the Academic Dean's instructions:

To request an Incomplete(IN), you should send an email to authorizedabsence@dawsoncollege.qc.ca . Your request should include the following:

1. Full name
2. Student number
3. Phone number
4. Course(s) for which an IN is being requested. If the request is for all courses, then you must indicate that you want to abandon all courses. If the request is for only some courses, then you must list the courses you wish to abandon.
5. Brief description of the reason for requesting an authorized absence (no medical note required).

Q: In its memo, the College makes reference to an EQ/IN grading scheme; what is this and how does it differ from a Pass/Fail grading scheme?

A: The Ministry has waived the requirement for numerical grades to be issued to students; however, it has issued the directive that this waiver only be applied in *exceptional circumstances*.

When a numerical grade cannot be issued, but the attainment of competencies can still be measured, students can be assessed on a *pass or fail* basis. However, there are some differences between the traditional notion of *pass or fail* evaluation in comparison to the EQ/IN model that applies in the current context.

- Students who are granted an EQ (equivalence) in a class are considered to have successfully completed it
- Students who are granted an IN (incomplete) in a class are **not** considered to have failed it - the IN notation is used for the granting of authorized absences and has no effect on a student's R-Score

If a class uses an EQ/IN evaluation scheme students cannot be assessed as having "failed", they can only be assessed as having "passed"

Q: Can I decide that I would like to implement an EQ/IN grading scheme?

A: The College has stated that it (the Academic Dean) is the final authority on which courses can use an EQ/IN grading scheme. It will make the decision based on departmental recommendations that are to be transmitted to respective Sector Deans. The College has set out the following guidelines:

- If an individual teacher wishes to implement an EQ/IN grading scheme, it must be discussed and approved at the department level
- For multi-section courses*, the EQ/IN grading scheme must apply to all sections of the course
- All students in a class must be graded using the same scheme; this means that a teacher cannot issue numerical grades to certain students in the class and EQs to others

In all cases, in order to justify an EQ/IN grading scheme, the following two conditions must be met:

1. It must be possible to actually assess whether a student has attained the competencies of the course; if not, then neither numerical grades nor equivalences can be granted
2. It must be impossible to properly assess the “level of attainment of competency”, meaning that any numerical grades would not accurately reflect student performance

* We are of the opinion that in certain disciplines, depending on the individual teacher's assessment methods, it may make sense for certain sections to use an EQ/IN grading scheme while other sections issue numerical grades. Even though the College has stated that this is not permitted, we urge departments to make grading recommendations to the College that they deem to be the most pedagogically sound - this may involve recommending that two sections of the same course use different grading schemes.

Q: Why can't the College implement the same system for grading as the universities?

A: The Règlement sur le régime des études collégiales (RREC) is the Quebec legislation that stipulates the rules that colleges must respect. Normally, numerical grades must be provided for cegep courses. The National Assembly recently relaxed some of the provisions of the RREC, but it has not given complete flexibility to colleges concerning student evaluations. As we mentioned earlier, the modifications now allowing for the granting of EQ (equivalency) are limited.

It should also be noted that cegep grades are used to determine a student's R-score. The R-score is the main factor used for admissions of cegep students to Quebec universities. Given the possible impacts on the R-score, there has been a reticence to implement large-scale modifications of grading at the cegep level.

Q: Will there be an effect on R-scores for our students if we opt for a certain marking scheme?

A: The Government has announced that a student's average R-score will be determined as the best between the R-score with the Winter 2020 grades and the R-score without the Winter 2020 grades. This guarantees that if a student has unusually poor results this semester, it will not affect their average R-score.

It should be noted, however, that it will be difficult for an R-score calculation to accurately represent relative performance this semester given the fact that students can apply and be granted an authorized absence at any time.

Q: Will Cont Ed teachers receive additional remuneration for the additional tasks they are being asked to perform?

A: We recognise that all teachers are currently doing a tremendous amount of work to transition their classes online in the current situation, and that this involves an increase in the amount of student encadrement, training sessions, and meetings teachers are required to undertake.

In the case of Continuing Education teachers, these kinds of duties are not covered by their contract and thus they are essentially doing such work with no remuneration. The Union has officially requested that the College remunerate Continuing Education teachers for such work, a request that we know is being made at other Cegeps throughout the network. We have been informed that this issue is being discussed at the provincial level with the *Fédération des cégeps* and the Ministry of Education. It is worth noting, however, that the Government is sadly hesitant to acknowledge the work done by Continuing Education as it is an important issue in the sector table negotiations.

Q: Can I access the College building to get materials

A: Last week, the Government ordered that all activities to retrieve material from schools be halted. It is therefore impossible to retrieve material from the school until further notice.

Prior to this announcement, the College had allowed teachers and students limited access on a scheduled basis to collect **necessary** materials from the building.

Q: If I'm unable to teach my course online, what happens?

A: The College has stated that it is committed to supporting its employees during the current situation and that they are willing to be flexible and supportive. If you are unable to teach at the moment for any reason, you are encouraged to contact your sector dean and your coordinator as soon as possible.

If you are at all worried that this may result in loss of salary or other negative repercussions, please contact us and we can assist you. The College has stated on several occasions that it does not intend on penalizing teachers who are unable to fulfill their duties under the current circumstances.

OTHER QUESTIONS:

Q: I am a non-permanent teacher, do I have to submit a GOS and if so, how?

A: All non-permanent and Continuing Education teachers who wish to exercise their priority on workloads for the following academic year (Fall 2020, Winter 2021, Summer 2021) are required to complete a GOS (General Offer of Service) form and submit it to the College. Given the current situation, this year the **only** method for submitting GOS forms is via Omnivox. The deadline for submitting the form is **May 3rd, 2020**.

Please note that the Omnivox system requires you to submit a CV and cover letter in order to submit a GOS. This is a technicality that the College has, unfortunately, not been able to remove from the process. However, teachers can simply upload a blank PDF file in order to proceed. There is absolutely no need to update your CV and cover letter (which will not be looked at).

Q: How do I apply for a leave or workload reduction for the Fall semester and are the deadlines the same?

A: The College has not extended the deadlines for applying for leaves. The deadlines for the Fall semester are:

Personal Leave - April 15th

Voluntary Workload Reduction - May 15th

Professional Development Leave - Reasonable delays (sufficient time to hire a replacement)

Sabbatical - Reasonable delays (sufficient time to hire a replacement)

Please contact us if you have any questions regarding leaves.

Q: I'm on a medical leave, do I need to provide the College with documentation?

A: The College stated that it has relaxed its requirements for disability medical reports (DMR) during the current crisis. However, it also stated that teachers will be expected to provide a DMR confirming their disability leave once the self-isolation directive is cancelled and we return to normal working conditions. The College has also stated that it would require documentation for any teacher currently on a medical leave who wishes to return to work earlier than originally indicated.

Please contact us if you have any questions regarding medical leaves.