



To: Faculty
From: Diane Gauvin, Academic Dean
Date: March 24, 2020
Subject: Memo to Faculty

As the College prepares for the transition to online instruction, it is committed to maintaining the integrity of all its academic programs. This fundamental consideration involves both ensuring that all competencies are covered and maintaining academic integrity.

The task of shifting to an alternative mode of teaching and learning is a monumental one, amply borne out by the numbers: 10,084 students, more than 700 teachers, 2180 course sections, and 53,261 course seats. Your patience and support as we work through the logistics of organizing all these variables are greatly appreciated.

In our planning of this transition, we have been guided by the following principles:

- Equity
- Continuity
- Inclusiveness
- Flexibility
- Compassion

Before elaborating some of the details of what this shift to online instruction entails, we must be clear that **this document will not answer all your questions**. On the one hand, our preparations have not been finalized and, on the other, the context in which the College is operating continues to evolve. **The Ministry may issue directives that will require partial or substantial modification of our plan.**

1. Scheduling

Courses using an alternative mode of delivery will start anytime from March 30 until the first scheduled class of the week of April 6. This staggered introduction will allow more time for teachers who need to prepare for the transition online. **Before you start your course, you must obtain the approval of the department.** The decision of when to start is an individual teacher's responsibility and the start date must be clearly indicated on the revised course outlines. While the choice of when classes will resume belongs to the individual teacher, that date may not be later than the first scheduled class of the week of April 6. This date must be clearly communicated to students using MIO.

Contact hours (synchronous activity) must take place during the scheduled class time to avoid conflicts with other courses.

Unless we hear otherwise from the Ministry, **courses should not be condensed to fit within a shorter period.** Doing so would create an unmanageable course load for students. When the College closed on March 13, 8 weeks of the semester had finished, leaving 7 more to complete. Please note that on Tuesday, April 14, 2020, we follow a Friday schedule.

2. Support to teachers

Many teachers and professionals are working to develop tutorials, webinars and workshops. At the moment, it is expected that some tools and a schedule of workshops will be posted on the Faculty Hub website on March 25. This information will be updated continually. The first workshops are expected to be offered on March 26. We will share information as it becomes available.

3. Design of courses

Ponderation/contact hours: To ensure that students have the opportunity to pose their questions and express their thoughts and concerns to teachers, **each course must be at least 25% synchronous**, that is, devote that minimum portion of time to provide direct contact with students. Teachers are also required to provide availability outside the virtual classroom.

All competencies must be covered in order for a course to be credited. It is permissible, however, to change the way in which the competencies are met.

There can be collaboration between teachers. For example, for multi-section courses, it is acceptable for a group of teachers to develop content (e.g. a recorded lecture) that will be shared with all students. Individual teachers would then arrange synchronous meetings with their students to discuss the lecture and answer questions.

When developing your revised courses, as much as possible, please take into account the need to make your materials accessible to all students, including those with learning challenges and physical disabilities.

While revising your course outline, please also take into account that students may not have access to their material and therefore may not be in a position to demonstrate their acquired knowledge in the first week of class.

4. Course approval process

We are seeking to manage the transition to distance education by favouring a collaborative, organized approach that draws on disciplinary expertise. Recently, the Deans asked each **department** to determine the following:

- The courses that can be offered **entirely** using alternative means of teaching;
- The courses that can be offered **partially** using alternative means of teaching;
- The courses that **cannot be offered** using alternative means of teaching;

- For those courses that can be offered partially online, a list of the elements that cannot be completed (including any assessments).

Departments must agree on a proposal for the implementation of online courses. Once agreed upon the information must be relayed to the sector dean. **Following departmental approval, teachers can begin teaching their courses as of March 30, taking into consideration the guidelines established by the department and the College.**

It is understood that if a department deems that a course can be entirely or partially offered using alternative means of teaching, this may still not be possible for certain teachers, depending on their personal circumstances (see section 12).

5. Modifications to the course outline

ISEP Section IV (a) states that:

Under exceptional circumstances, substantive changes to the course outline, such as those which may impact on the evaluation of students, may be made. Such changes must be approved by the Department Chair as well as the Sector Dean and then communicated in writing to students.

We ask that when you modify your course outlines you follow the guidelines established by your department and the College.

Any changes that must be made to assessments, including their values and due dates, must be clearly communicated to students.

The Deans will verify the outlines when time permits, but that delay should not preclude you from starting your course once you have received approval from your department. Please send a revised course outline to:

- Creative and Applied Arts sector, including Continuing Education courses, with the exception of Independent Video Game Design (discipline numbers from 502 to 615): caaoutlines@dawsoncollege.qc.ca
- **For Independent Video Game Design:** aec@dawsoncollege.qc.ca
- Science, Medical Studies and Engineering sector, including Continuing Education courses (discipline numbers from 101 to 270) smseoutlines@dawsoncollege.qc.ca
- Social Science and Business Technologies sector, including Continuing Education courses (discipline numbers from 300 to 420) ssbtoutlines@dawsoncollege.qc.ca

6. Assessments and academic integrity

Even in these challenging times, Dawson is committed to academic integrity. Faculty members who are involved in SALTISE, and others, are currently reviewing various online tools and techniques for evaluating student work. We will keep you informed as information becomes available.

7. Grades

Many of you have asked if teachers can use a pass/fail grading system. The College has no authority over this decision. Among other things, pass/fail grades would have a significant impact on the R-score. The request has been submitted to the Ministry and we are awaiting a response.

8. Internships and clinicals

Most internships and clinicals are suspended. In some cases, however, employers are asking interns to work from home. If approved by the department, this is permitted. For safety reasons, students are not permitted to attend *stages* that take place outside their home.

9. End of semester intensive courses

Courses that are scheduled to be offered in an intensive manner at the end of the winter semester are expected to take place where possible. The dates will be communicated to you later.

10. Professional orders

There is much discussion with the Fédération des cégeps, the professional orders, accrediting bodies, teachers and deans. The decisions will likely vary from program to program. Information will be provided to teachers by your dean and/or program coordinator.

11. Access to equipment

With the cooperation of the deans, the IST department is currently analyzing the results of the survey concerning alternate modes of course delivery, and is elaborating a plan for distributing equipment when it is necessary. In the meantime, you can address urgent requests to helpdesk@dawsoncollege.qc.ca.

12. Teachers unable to teach online

Teachers who are unable to teach their courses online due to a lack of internet access and/or family obligations, are required to leave a message by voice mail or e-mail with the sector secretary. Your message must include your name and phone number. The dean or delegate will communicate with you to discuss possible arrangements.

- **Science, Medical Studies and Engineering:** Andrea Bourgeois abourgeois@dawsoncollege.qc.ca or 514 931 8731 ext. **1685**
- **Social Science and Business Technologies:** Kevin Rochford krochford@dawsoncollege.qc.ca or 514 931 8731 ext. **1596**
- **Creative and Applied Arts:** Tanya Viltofsky tviltofsky@dawsoncollege.qc.ca or 514 931 8731 ext. **5108**
- **Continuing Education:** Audrey Vanasse-Bedard avanasse@dawsoncollege.qc.ca or 514 931 8731 ext. **1485**

13. Students access to courses

We are aware and very concerned that some students may not be able to pursue their studies online. We will continue to explore solutions.

14. Course drop deadline for students

We do not know if the Ministry will move the course drop deadline or change its requirements. If it does not, we will use the *Authorized Absence* mechanism. In this case, no documentation will be necessary.

15. English Exit Examination

We have not received information from the Ministry about whether the May examination is postponed or cancelled.

16. Access to the College

If absolutely necessary, teachers may access the college once to retrieve documents and books in their offices. The visit must be kept short and should take place between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. For safety reasons, we unfortunately cannot authorize students to access the college at this time. If that decision changes, we will inform teachers and students.

17. Summer School

We are aware of the serious impact that a cancellation of summer school will create for students and teachers. Given the uncertainty, we will make a decision at a later date.

18. Student support

Student Services is working to develop a plan for supporting students (AccessAbility, Academic Skills, etc.). As soon as this plan is available, it will be communicated to students and teachers.

Finally, I want to share with you an article written by Professor Brandon L. Bayne from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill published in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. The article is titled [Nobody Signed Up for This': One Professor's Guidelines for an Interrupted Semester](#)

Here are the guiding principles he included in his revised course outline:

1. Nobody signed up for this.
 - Not for the sickness, not for the social distancing, not for the sudden end of our collective lives together on campus
 - Not for an online class, not for teaching remotely, not for learning from home, not for mastering new technologies, not for varied access to learning materials
2. The humane option is the best option.
 - We are going to prioritize supporting each other as humans
 - We are going to prioritize simple solutions that make sense for the most
 - We are going to prioritize sharing resources and communicating clearly

3. We cannot just do the same thing online.
 - Some assignments are no longer possible
 - Some expectations are no longer reasonable
 - Some objectives are no longer valuable

4. We will foster intellectual nourishment, social connection, and personal accommodation.
 - Accessible asynchronous content for diverse access, time zones, and contexts
 - Optional synchronous discussion to learn together and combat isolation

5. We will remain flexible and adjust to the situation.
 - Nobody knows where this is going and what we'll need to adapt
 - Everybody needs support and understanding in this unprecedented moment