

EMERGENCY ACADEMIC REGULATIONS

In line with *Rules and Regulations of the Faculty*, Section 2.102 (<https://facultygovernance.mit.edu/rules-and-regulations#2-102>), the Chair of the Faculty has declared that temporary emergency academic regulations are in effect as of **8 AM on Friday, March 13, 2020**.

In the event of a Significant Disruption, Section 2.102 permits the Chair of the Faculty, in consultation with Deans' Group, the Registrar, and the chairs of the Committees on Academic Performance, Curricula, Graduate Programs, and the Undergraduate Program, "to declare that emergency academic procedures are in effect" and to "impose temporary changes in the regulations regarding the academic calendar, registration, assignments and examinations, grades, the procedures for accepting theses, and the awarding of degrees".

One of the key goals of doing so is to "preserve the standards and integrity of the MIT curricular and degree-granting processes"; another is to "address the needs of students in their final term".

There are two guiding principles throughout:

- 1. to maintain equity among students in their ability to continue to make progress in their degree programs; and**
- 2. to ensure that instructors have sufficient flexibility to adapt to the necessary changes, while at the same time not inadvertently overburdening students during this challenging time.**

The following provides details regarding temporary changes that took effect at 8 AM on Friday, March 13, 2020, and that will remain in effect through Commencement 2020. The use of these changes for the Summer Session will be considered and communicated at a later date. **The text of the standard relevant sections is included here, inside text boxes and in italics; the links provided will take you to the full text of the standard *Rules and Regulations*.**

Note: Students are expected to adhere to the handbook for academic integrity at MIT (<https://integrity.mit.edu>).

1. Academic Calendar

2.11 (<https://facultygovernance.mit.edu/rules-and-regulations#2-11>)

[...] Spring term classes shall begin on the following Monday [after the end of IAP], followed by:

- fourteen calendar weeks for classes (ending on Tuesday), interposed with a one-week Spring vacation after the seventh week of classes;*
- a two-day reading period followed by one day reserved for final examinations; and*
- a two-day reading period followed by three days reserved for final examinations.*

Section 2.11 is hereby temporarily changed such that there will be **thirteen** calendar weeks for academic exercises (classes, recitations, etc.) for the Spring 2020 semester. There will be no academic exercises held or due from March 14 through March 21, or during the following week, March 22 through March 29 (the regular Spring Break). This will provide time for students to get settled and will also give instructors two weeks during which to begin to coordinate online instruction and to work to modify their syllabi. **Note: This means that all instructors will need to find a week's worth of material in their classes to cancel. Extra class sessions may not be scheduled to make up for the missed class periods from March 14 through March 21, nor for the missed class periods due to emergency cancellation of classes on Friday March 13.**

Academic exercises will resume on Monday, March 30, in an online format, i.e. without in-person meetings of classes. The remainder of the dates for the semester as set out in the Academic Calendar (<https://registrar.mit.edu/calendar>) will remain as they are currently scheduled.

It is anticipated that faculty will need to be creative in developing online versions of their classes that achieve the existing or appropriately revised learning goals of the subjects. The Teaching and Learning Lab and the Office of Digital Learning have resources to assist in this process (<http://teachremote.mit.edu>), and they are eager to help. In addition, subject librarians are available for consultation (<https://libraries.mit.edu/experts/>).

In the exceptional cases where instructors believe it is not possible to develop an online version of the remainder of a subject, they can petition the Chair of the Faculty (facultychair-reply@mit.edu) for permission to terminate a subject early or to cancel a partial term subject that has not yet begun to meet. The request must be approved and submitted by the Head of the Academic Unit (e.g., Department Head or their designee such as the Associate Head for Education). The request must include assurance that the Office of Digital Learning has been consulted with regard to the feasibility of developing an online version of the subject (please contact Dean for Digital Learning Krishna Rajagopal, krishna@mit.edu). The Chair of the Faculty will consult with the Registrar and the appropriate faculty curriculum committee as needed to make a final determination.

2.12 (<https://facultygovernance.mit.edu/rules-and-regulations#2-12>)

*Exercises shall, in general, be held between 9 A.M. and 5 P.M. Monday through Friday. Exercises shall begin five minutes after and end five minutes before the scheduled hour or half-hour. For undergraduate subjects taught on campus during the instructional period of the fall and spring terms, there shall be no required academic exercises between 5 P.M. and 7 P.M. Monday through Thursday and between 5 P.M. Friday and 8 A.M. Monday.
[...]*

Given that students will be spread across the world's time zones, the Chair of the Faculty is suspending Section 2.12 for the remainder of the Spring 2020 semester, and offers two options for scheduling classes during this time of disruption, **recognizing that a mix of the two may be needed:**

- Hold class sessions in real time (“synchronously”). Such classes must begin at the regularly scheduled start time in the Eastern Daylight Time zone (EDT) and end not later than the regularly scheduled end time EDT – in this way students will not have schedule conflicts. In the case of classes offered synchronously, instructors are strongly encouraged to also deliver class content via an “asynchronous” online format (e.g., via a posted video recording) that students can access at any time.
- Hold the class asynchronously – for example, instructors could record lectures that students can watch at their convenience, or there could be online discussion forums that students can participate in at any time. Note that in the case of asynchronous delivery the duration of the recorded lecture must not be longer than that of the normally scheduled lecture.

2. Syllabi

2.52 (<https://facultygovernance.mit.edu/rules-and-regulations#2-52>) – All subjects

[...] No required classes, examinations, or assignments of any kind may be scheduled after the last regularly scheduled class in any subject – whether full-term or half-term – except for final examinations scheduled through the Schedules Office.

2.52 essentially remains in place. No required classes, exams, or assignments of any kind may be scheduled **after 10pm EDT on Tuesday, May 12** (the last day of classes), in any subject except for final examinations scheduled through the Schedules Office. Since some class sessions may be held during their regularly scheduled times but others may be held asynchronously, to avoid ambiguity about when “the end of the last scheduled class period in the subject” is, we have set a single date and time of 10pm EDT on Tuesday, May 12.

2.53 (<https://facultygovernance.mit.edu/rules-and-regulations#2-53>) – Undergrad subjects

The faculty member must provide to students, by the end of the subject’s first week of classes, a clear and complete description of the required work, including the number and kinds of assignments, the approximate schedule of tests and due dates for major projects, whether or not there will be a final examination, and the grading criteria and procedures to be used. The precise schedule of tests and major assignments must be provided in full-term subjects by the end of the third week and in half-term subjects by the end of the second week. [...]

2.54 (<https://facultygovernance.mit.edu/rules-and-regulations#2-54>) – Graduate subjects

The faculty member must provide, by the end of the third week of classes in a full-term subject and by the end of the second week of classes in a half-term subject, a clear and complete description of the required work, including the number and kinds of assignments, the schedule for tests and due dates for major projects, whether or not there will be a final examination, and the grading criteria and procedures to be used. [...]

With regard to both 2.53 and 2.54, instructors are given the flexibility at this time to re-work certain aspects of their syllabi, specifically: the number and kinds of assignments that will be counted towards the final grade, the schedule for tests and due dates for major projects, whether or not there will be a final examination, and the grading criteria and procedures to be used. Instructors could, for example, decide that instead of a final exam, there will be a final assignment. **However, additional assignments may not be added.**

For all subjects, both undergraduate and graduate, the instructor must provide to students, no later than the end of the week of March 30 (5 PM on Friday, April 3), a description of the schedule for the remaining assignments and any changes in the required work and procedures that will be used to determine grades relative to that announced at the end of the first week of the regular semester.

In some cases instructors may need to make subsequent adjustments in what is announced the week of March 30; any such changes after April 3 must be approved in advance by the Chair of the Faculty (facultychair-reply@mit.edu).

We understand that there is a need for flexibility throughout the rest of the semester – but we ask that instructors keep students updated along the way as they (instructors) discover what is and what is not feasible. Communication is critical.

We also ask that students be understanding of instructors as well during this challenging time. That said, if a student feels that the landscape in a subject is changing without sufficient notice for students to know what is going on, if a student feels that the requirements have been increased, and/or if a violation of the regulations is occurring, we encourage them to contact the Chair of the Faculty at exam-termregs@mit.edu.

3. Academic Exercises Held Outside Regular Class Time

2.52 (<https://facultygovernance.mit.edu/rules-and-regulations#2-52>) – All subjects

A student who is unable to take a test or participate in a required review or other academic exercise that is held outside of scheduled class time owing to a conflict with a regularly scheduled academic exercise must be allowed to do so at another time.

Some subjects may require extra hours outside of regular class time for special activities such as presentation sessions. ... students who are unable to participate as described immediately above shall be accommodated. [...]

These regulations remain in place. Since some subjects may meet during their regular class times, we ask that instructors bear in mind that students are enrolled in multiple subjects and, as such, if an instructor sets a specific time for a required special activity such as presentations, there may be students who have another required academic activity – as is the case during ordinary times as well.

4. Exams During the Term

2.53 (<https://facultygovernance.mit.edu/rules-and-regulations#2-53>) – Undergrad subjects

[...] The length of tests held outside scheduled class times shall not exceed two hours. Such tests must be scheduled through the Schedules Office. They may begin no earlier than 7:30 P.M. [EDT] and may not be held on Monday evenings. A student who is unable to take the test owing to a conflict with a scheduled academic exercise or extracurricular activity shall be allowed to do so at another time.

When a test is held outside scheduled class time, a regularly scheduled class [session] (lecture or recitation) shall be cancelled, or no assignment shall fall due that calendar week.

These regulations remain in place.

5. End-of-Term Regulations

2.53 (<https://facultygovernance.mit.edu/rules-and-regulations#2-53>) – Undergrad subjects

[...] For full-term subjects and H2 and H4 half-term subjects, there shall be no tests after the Friday preceding the start of the Reading Period, to be called the Last Test Date. For each subject in which there is testing during the final examination period, no assignment may fall due after the Last Test Date. For each subject in which there is no testing during the final examination period, there may be at most one assignment due between the Last Test Date and the end of the last scheduled class period in the subject. Optional assignments during the last week shall be for self-study, and may not be used toward part of the grade in a subject, even for extra points or as substitutes for earlier assignments. [...]

2.54 (<https://facultygovernance.mit.edu/rules-and-regulations#2-54>) – Graduate subjects

[...] For each full-term subject or H2 or H4 half-term subject with testing during the final examination period, no test shall be given and no assignment shall fall due after the Friday preceding the start of the Reading Period. For each subject in which there is no testing during the final examination period, there may be at most one assignment due or one in-class test held between the Friday preceding the start of the Reading Period and the end of the last scheduled class period in the subject. [...]

In addition to dealing with syllabi, Sections 2.53 and 2.54 regulate work during the last week of classes. As stated in the Academic Calendar, the “Last Test Date” (the Friday before the last week of classes) is May 8, 2020. The regulations for subjects with final exams remain the same, and is the same for both undergraduate and graduate subjects: There may be no assignments due and no tests held after the Last Test Date.

However, there is a change for subjects with no final exams. For these subjects, the due date for any assignments during the last week of classes is **10pm EDT on Tuesday, May 12**, the last day of classes. In the case of graduate subjects with no final exam and no assignment due during the

last week of classes, one test may be held during the last week before **10pm EDT on Tuesday, May 12.**

6. Final Examinations

2.52 (<https://facultygovernance.mit.edu/rules-and-regulations#2-52>) – **All subjects**

[...] Final examinations for full-term subjects ... and H4 half-term subjects shall be held during the final examination period following each term, and shall be scheduled through the Schedules Office. The final examination scheduled in any of these subjects shall last at least one hour and not more than three hours. Final examinations may not be cancelled once they are announced, and after the final examination schedule is published by the Schedules Office, the time of the final examination may not be changed. [...]

Final exams will be conducted remotely. They will be one to three hours in length as usual, and will be held according to the schedule previously published by the Registrar (<https://finalexams.mit.edu/#/Finals>), no matter what time zone a student may be in. Conflict exams will be coordinated by the Registrar's Office as usual. Finals can be either closed book or open book – **however**, the information as to whether a final will be closed or open book for a given subject must be provided to students by drop date (April 21).

If an instructor decides to have a final assignment instead of a final exam, they must notify the Registrar's Office immediately.

Final exams will likely need to be revised to reflect changes in content and delivery necessitated by the shorter term and remote/online mechanisms. However, Instructors are also encouraged to not make the remote exams harder in an effort to compensate for concerns about lack of honesty in taking a closed book exam. We need to set high expectations for the integrity of our students and trust them, rather than implicitly induce bad behaviors by seeking to compensate under an assumption of such behaviors. Instructors should assume that students will take the exam in the same way, i.e. they will maintain academic integrity. Please consider that an exam that is much more difficult than would have ordinarily been given could result in significant student stress.

7. Theses

2.72 (<https://facultygovernance.mit.edu/rules-and-regulations#2-72>)

Two copies of each thesis shall be delivered to the office of the headquarters of the department or Course in which the candidate is registered as follows: for Bachelor's, Master's, and Engineer's degree candidates not later than one week before the end of term, and for Doctor's degree candidates not later than two weeks before the end of term. For these purposes, the end of term of the first term is considered to be the last day of classes of the Independent Activities Period following the first term, the end of term of the second term is the last day of classes of that term, and the end of term for the summer session is the last day of classes of the regular summer session. Additional copies of the thesis shall be delivered as required by the department.

2.72, cont.

All theses submitted shall be of satisfactory physical quality for deposit in the Archives. The several departments and Courses shall transmit two copies of each graduate thesis to the Institute Archivist not later than one month after the end of the term in which the thesis was accepted. Undergraduate theses which, in the judgment of the department or Course, represent a significant contribution shall be transmitted to the Institute Archivist in the same manner.

The dates as stated in the Academic Calendar will remain the same. However, students may submit an electronic copy rather than a hardcopy. Details of this submission process will be coordinated by the Libraries.

Thesis defenses may be conducted remotely if necessary.

8. Grading

2.64 (<https://facultygovernance.mit.edu/rules-and-regulations#2-64>)

Provisions for Alternate Grades in the Event of Significant Disruption:

When a Significant Disruption is declared as set forth in Section 2.102, the Chair of the Faculty may authorize the use of the grades defined below and establish the conditions for their use.

PE *When authorized, the grade of PE reflects performance at any of the levels A, B, or C, under the circumstance of an Institute emergency closure.*

NE *When authorized, the grade of NE indicates a performance at the level of D or F for which no record will appear on the external transcript.*

IE *Incomplete due to disruption. When authorized, the grade of IE indicates that a portion of the subject requirements has not been fulfilled, due to a major disruption of the Institute's academic activities. A letter grade may be assigned if the work is subsequently completed. To receive a letter grade, the work must be completed prior to a date set by the Chair of the Faculty. If the work is not completed prior to the established completion date, the grade will remain an IE on the student's record and transcript. A grade of IE does not carry credit but need not be resolved prior to graduation.*

Whenever possible, instructors should award grades as defined in Sections 2.62 and 2.63. The use of the grades PE, NE, and IE is reserved for situations in which the performance of a student is substantively impacted by a period of Significant Disruption.

The transcript of a student's record should contain a description of any Significant Disruption of the Institute's academic activities that occur during the student's enrollment. These grades will not be included in calculations of grade point average.

In view of the global pandemic, its effect on our students, faculty, and all the members of our community who support our educational programs, and after extensive consultation and deliberation, it has been decided that what are referred to as "Alternate Grades" (PE, NE, and IE) as defined in Section 2.64 of *Rules and Regulations of the Faculty*

(<https://facultygovernance.mit.edu/rules-and-regulations#2-64>) must be used for all undergraduate and graduate full-term and H4 subjects this semester. The PE grade provides full credit for a subject and can be used to fulfill General Institute Requirements, minor requirements, or departmental requirements. If a student receives an IE grade and subsequently completes the work, then the student's record will be revised to show IE/PE.

Exceptions are the grades S and SA defined in Section 2.62.2 (<https://facultygovernance.mit.edu/rules-and-regulations#2-62-2>) and O, OX, DR, T and the thesis grades J and U as defined in 2.62.3 (<https://facultygovernance.mit.edu/rules-and-regulations#2-62-3>). In accord with the intent of the "Alternate Grading" system, O and OX grades will resolve to the grading system in place for the semester in which they were assigned, e.g., to NE and PE for O and OX grades that are assigned this semester.

For half-term H3 subjects, instructors have two options. Letter grades may be awarded according to the normal rules defined in *Rules and Regulations* Section 2.60 (<https://facultygovernance.mit.edu/rules-and-regulations#2-60-grades>) based on the work completed in the six weeks of the normal seven-week H3 period ending March 13. Alternatively, instructors may choose to assign "Alternate Grades" as defined in Section 2.64. This should be the case if instructors believe that they have insufficient information to allow discrimination between A, B, C-level etc. work in the six completed weeks of the class. Note that no additional assignments, exams, and other academic exercises can be scheduled or be due for H3 subjects after 8 AM on Friday, March 13.

Per 2.64 above, the following statement will be included for Spring Term 2019-2020 on the transcript for all students: "Semester significantly disrupted due to Coronavirus, COVID-19, outbreak starting 3/13/2020".

Questions with regard to grading that are not covered in the section above should be directed to the Chair of the Faculty (facultychair-reply@mit.edu).

9. Petitions and Requests to the Committee on Academic Performance with Regard to Change of Status, Degrees with Deficiencies, and Alternate Grades

The Committee on Academic Performance (CAP) fully recognizes that these are extraordinary circumstances and stands ready to work with the Faculty Officers, administrative staff, academic departments, relevant Institute Committees and all other interested parties to act in the very best interests of our displaced students. To this end, the following guiding principles will apply and actions are proposed:

- The CAP will continue its role of adjudicating petitions for changes of status. Current circumstances will be taken into account as petitions are reviewed, with deference given to the inherent difficulties of the spring term. It is not expected that there will be any changes to the petition process from the student side, though CAP may decide that certain petitions will be approved administratively, obviating the need for full committee review. As has always been the custom, no petitions will be denied administratively, with one exception noted below.

- A key function of the CAP is to recommend the awarding of SB degrees to the faculty. Existing policies and past practices of the CAP allow for the awarding of so-called “single-deficiency” degrees as recommended by the departments. The CAP recognizes that the current Significant Disruption may require the previous definitions of “deficiency” to be modified in order to ensure equity and fairness to all students. **The CAP believes that establishing the parameters for such degrees is a critical task, and one that should not be hastily undertaken.** However, the Committee has decided that two policies regarding deficient degrees will be immediately implemented. Please see below for further details on these recommendations as well as the proposed approach to establishing additional guidelines on deficient degrees.
- The Chair of the Faculty has issued a notice that “Alternate Grades” must be used for all undergraduate and graduate full-term and H4 subjects this semester, per Section 2.64 of the Rules and Regulations of the Faculty. The CAP appreciates the extensive discussions and deliberations that led to this decision, and wishes to note, as did the Chair of the Faculty, that the current situation affects “our students, faculty, and all the members of our community who support our educational program.” No petitions will be considered to change the grade of PE to a letter grade. The CAP believes that this decision is in the best interest of the entire MIT community, although recognizing that it may be upsetting to some fraction of our students. Petitions to change from PE/NE to Regular Grading will be administratively denied.

Further re degrees with deficiency

Since at least 1980, the CAP has from time to time voted – albeit rarely – to recommend a “single-deficiency degree.” This option can be used under the following circumstances:

- The student’s major department strongly supports recommendation of a single-deficiency degree.
- The student registered for the correct subjects to complete his/her degree requirements but earned a grade of F, O, or OX in a single subject, excluding thesis, and is left with a deficiency in a departmental requirement.
- The student must have been registered for, and received the grade, during the term in which the degree is awarded (Spring Term for June degrees, Summer Term for September degrees, and Fall Term for February degrees).
- The student’s major department affirms that the student made an honest effort to complete the work during the term, and that the deficiency is not due to gross neglect on the part of the student. This affirmation must be based on a conversation with the instructor in charge of the subject conducted by the faculty advisor and the departmental representative.

Deficient degrees have never been allowed to include the waiver of a General Institute Requirement (GIR), though students may petition the Committee on Curricula for a substitution of a GIR. The CAP sees no reason to alter this policy. To the CAP Chair’s knowledge, the deficiency has never been applied to the physical education and wellness (PEW) or swim test requirements.

The CAP has approved an exception to the swim requirement as needed. DAPER has notified all students still missing the swim requirement of the option to complete an online conceptual class after spring break. Students who demonstrate an inability to complete this option, including but not solely for reasons anticipated below, may be granted an exemption. This exemption would apply only to students who receive SB degrees in May 2020.

In addition, DAPER is in the process of identifying remote options for the earning of PEW credits. **The CAP has approved an exception to the PEW requirement, allowing seniors to graduate with six points earned.** The value of six points was selected to reflect the fact that a senior at this stage would have been able to complete the PEW requirement by taking a single Q4 DAPER class this term. While the CAP does not wish to reward those students who have delayed the satisfaction of these requirements to this point in their MIT careers, the Committee strongly feels that we do not want to add more stress and burden to displaced students than is already necessary under these circumstances. This exemption would apply only to students who receive SB degrees in May 2020.

The matter of deficient degrees due to lack of departmental requirements is far more complex. The CAP envisions that, in addition to a student taking and failing a required subject as described above, students may not be able to complete required subjects due to at least two other circumstances: (1) the subject(s) not being available in remote form, and (2) the student lacking adequate access to participate meaningfully in the subject(s). The Committee notes that the policy of requiring instructors to receive an exemption from the Chair of the Faculty to not offer a scheduled subject should reduce the probability of the first circumstance, but the prevalence of the second cannot be anticipated and other circumstances may emerge that are difficult to predict at this time.

The CAP notes the first requirement for the awarding of single-deficiency degrees under existing guidelines: “The student’s major department strongly supports recommendation of a single-deficiency degree.”

The Committee believes that the placement of this statement as the first requirement is both meaningful and essential. The CAP will consult with departments to determine guidelines for the recommendation of deficient degrees. This consultation will begin with a (virtual) visit of the Chair of the CAP to the Undergraduate Officers Group (perhaps as early as March 19) to discuss the issue and begin to outline procedures. The Chair of the CAP will ask that departments canvass the enrollment of seniors in remote classes and attempt to identify those students who may be in danger of not completing degree requirements no later than April 17 (the Friday before Drop Date), so that both the CAP and each department may be aware of the number of students who may be affected. In particular, it is important to identify those seniors who may be deficient in more than one departmental requirement, as single-deficiency cases would be handled according to existing policies. An unscheduled meeting of the CAP may need to be convened to further refine the expectations for deficient degrees, so that these are firmly in place prior to the end of the term. CAP will have a critical role in ensuring equity across departments. Thus, it is essential that guidelines are consistent and fair to all students.

Finally, the CAP notes one other guideline for the awarding of deficient degrees: “While the CAP has recommended such degrees even though the deficiency results in fewer than the required number of units beyond the GIRs (180-198) specified for the particular Course, it has been very reluctant to recommend a degree with fewer than 180 units.”

This guidance notes a “reluctance” but not a “rule” towards awarding degrees in this case. The interpretation of this guidance is that it is already within the purview of the CAP to grant degrees in this case; however, the CAP is likely to remain “very reluctant” to do so. The departmental canvass for potential deficiencies will also seek to identify cases where students are likely to earn fewer than 180 units.