Policy on University Closure or Class/Examination Cancellation

Preamble:

Adverse conditions such as winter storms or power outages will, from time to time, require the University to reduce or restrict its normal activities or services. In effect, the University never closes totally. For the purposes of this policy, "closure" means a reduction or restriction of activities and services on Dalhousie's campuses. This policy covers all of Dalhousie's campuses, including the Agricultural Campus. The extent of any such reduction or restriction may differ depending on the particular circumstance and the nature or location of individual units' operations. For example, a power outage may not affect all campuses, and in such circumstances, some, but not all, campuses may be closed. Also, some units have responsibility for maintaining essential services, restoring services or securing the campus. In the event that adverse conditions require curtailment of activities/services during the regular work day, this will mean that some employees will be required to remain at work when others will be free to leave or required to leave the campus. It may also be decided that only classes or examinations will be cancelled. Therefore, this policy should be interpreted in light of the operational obligations and requirements of each of the units in which faculty and staff are employed. Also, because operations in particular areas will be resumed as feasible and necessary, all employees are deemed to be "on call" for what would otherwise be a regular work day and available to return to work upon notification by their supervisor or through media announcements.

1. Notification

1.1 When conditions develop outside of normal operating hours or overnight, a decision is made to cancel classes/examinations or close the University or certain buildings/campuses of the University. An announcement of this decision will, whenever possible, be broadcast on CBC at 90.5 FM and CKDU at 97.5 FM in Halifax and at CKTO FM at 99.5 and CKCL at 100.9 FM in Truro prior to 6:00 a.m.

The Dalhousie main web page will carry up-to-date storm cancellation/closure information as of 6:00 a.m. Check www.dal.ca for current cancellation/closure information and dal.ca/agriculture for the Agricultural Campus. As well, the University switchboard (902-494-2211) and the Agricultural Campus emergency phone line (902-893-6027, 1-877-672-2363) will carry a recorded message. Employees may also subscribe to Dal Alert for text messaging updates on cancelations and closures.

These announcements will indicate whether it is classes/examinations only that are cancelled or whether the University or parts thereof are closed.

1.2 Should circumstances lead to a decision to cancel classes/examinations or close during the day, a Notice Digest electronic broadcast will be issued and an announcement will be telephoned from the President's Office to the Office of each Vice-President, Dean and Administrative Director. They in turn will advise each department or unit reporting to them of the decision. A public service message will also be telephoned to radio stations in the Halifax and/or Truro area by Media Relations. An appropriate announcement will also be lodged with the University switchboard staff (902-494-2211), the Agricultural Campus emergency phone line (902-893-6027, 1-877-672-2363), and the Dalhousie website.

2. Unit Procedures

Each unit is responsible for determining which services will be required to operate in the event of a closure. This may vary depending on the particular circumstances of a unit.

A communication tree is to be established and maintained such that each employee in the unit can be contacted if required and so that each employee can contact their supervisor or designate.

Deans, Chairs, Heads, Directors, and Unit Managers are not authorized to close their units without express authorization from the Vice-President Finance and Administration or designate (Campus Principal in the case of the Agricultural Campus) to do so. Time not worked due to adverse conditions when the University is open will be accounted for through vacation time, authorized accumulated time, personal leave day (where provided by collective agreement) , unpaid leave day, or authorized time made up at a later date, subject to the department heads approval.

In some circumstances faculty and staff may not be granted access to University buildings without the express authorization of Security Services or the Safety Office. Deans, Chairs, Heads and Directors will be advised by the appropriate Vice-President's office if this is the case.

3. Essential Services

Positions designated as essential for purposes of this policy are:

- Faculty and Staff in clinical areas in the Faculty of Medicine
- Designated animal care staff
- Farm Staff responsible for care of animals at the Agricultural Campus
- Designated Communications and Marketing staff
- Designated systems programming, operations and communications staff – University Computing and Information Services
- Department of Facilities Management
    - Thermal Plant Operations
    - Security Services Staff
    - Environmental Services staff assigned to snow removal duties
    - Custodial staff assigned to Student Residence Facilities
    - All other required FM staff, based on the requirements during each closure for emergency repairs and maintenance. These individuals will be notified by their supervisor to report for work during the closure.
- Faculty of Agriculture Staff assigned to snow removal duties
- Designated staff in University Health Services
- Designated staff in Housing and Conference Services
- Food Services for Residence Students

4. <u>Policy on Payment of Salary and Wages:</u>

All regular employees will receive their regular pay in the event of a closure which is of short-term duration. Payment is conditional upon being available to report to work and reporting to or remaining at work when requested to do so. Employees who are on vacation, sick leave, or any other form of approved paid leave will receive their regular pay. They are not entitled to equivalent time off at a later date.

Should personal circumstances mean that an individual is unable to report or remain at work, when requested to do so, the responsible supervisor may schedule accrued vacation or any accrued time-off so that regular pay is maintained. Casual employees who work on a day-to-day basis as and when required and short term temporary employees will be paid from the time they report to work if required to do so and for the hours actually worked.

[Revised: December 2014]