Responding to Disruptions in "Off-Hours" Teaching Activities

(e.g. Evening Mid-Term Exams and In-Department Exams)

Preamble

A disruption in academic year 2024-25 took place on campus during evening mid-term exams. This incident highlighted the need for a set of **guidelines** that staff can use to **assess** and **manage** when a disruption occurs during a mid-term exam, particularly in the evening when buildings are otherwise quiet or on silent hours.

The teams involved in delivering and overseeing mid-term exams are often made up of a combination of **TAs, invigilators, and instructors**. These team members are often distributed over several locations that are remote from one another due to large class sizes and the need to maintain low student-to-seat ratios during exams. Additionally, those responsible for a course (i.e. the principal instructor) cannot be present at each location at all times. Thus, it is important that **each team member be made aware of the protocols used** to respond to a disruption during an exam.

What To Review Prior to a Mid-Term Exam

1. **Awareness of emergency procedures**

   Review the protocols associated with responding to three categories of disruption:

   1. Evacuation (fire, power outage, bomb threat, etc.)
   2. Aggressive/violent intruder
   3. Medical emergency

2. **Classroom Preparation**
   - Keep classroom door keys, phone, and ID on hand
   - Prior to the students coming into the exam room, identify the locations of:
     1. Emergency exits
     2. Fire alarms, landline phones, and panic buttons (when present)

3. **Communications**

   Note: items 2 to 4 require a sharing of contact information among exam organizers and staff prior to the start of the exam

   If a disruption is occurring, contact the following, in order of priority:

   1. **Campus Security** (**514-398-3000**); state the location and nature of the disruption
   2. The principal instructor
   3. The lead staff person (TA/Invigilator) in each exam room
   4. Relevant Department Chair

4. **Information provided to exam-writers**

   At the beginning of the exam, announce:

   - The location of the emergency exits
   - The lead TA/Invigilator in the room as the responsible person for emergency instructions
   - The procedures in case of a fire alarm or disruption:
     1. Stop activity immediately, flip exams and look for the lead TA/Invigilator in the room.
     2. Wait calmly for instructions from the lead TA/Invigilator. If evacuation is deemed safe leave all belongings on your desk/room. Do not attempt to collect personal items.
     3. Calmly proceed to the nearest, safe exit. Walk, do not run, push or crowd, and proceed as per instructions under Evacuation under 1.1 above.

If an Incident Occurs During the Exam:

1. **Disruption outside the exam room**

   If the disruption is **outside** the exam room and is judged to possibly pose a threat to the safety of those inside or compromise the exam fairness, contact **Campus Security** immediately at **514-398-3000** to have them assess and then manage the situation.

2. **Disruption inside the exam room**

   After contacting **Campus Security** at **514-398-3000**, determine the most appropriate response(s), such as:

   - Asking the disruptor(s) to immediately leave
   - Asking the exam-writers to methodically leave the room
   - If evacuation is necessary:
     - TAs/invigilators will collect exam materials
     - Students may retrieve personal belongings and leave
     - Students will be instructed to monitor their McGill email or MyCourses for more details from the instructor

   If after the disruption is resolved and continuation is possible, students will resume with extra time equal to the duration of the disruption plus 15 minutes.

Continuity of Examination in the Event of a Disruption

1. Disruption During First Hour

- If the disruption is resolved within the first hour, students may continue the exam with extra time equal to the duration of the disruption plus 15 minutes.
- TAs/invigilators must confirm the above with the principal instructor before proceeding.

2. Disruption After First Hour

- After the disruption is resolved and if continuation is possible, students will resume with extra time equal to the duration of the disruption plus 15 minutes.
- If continuation is not possible:
  - TAs/invigilators will collect exam materials.
  - Students may retrieve personal belongings and then leave.
  - Students will be instructed to monitor their McGill email for re-scheduling details.
- Completed exams (submitted before the incident) must be separated from incomplete ones.

3. Re-scheduling the Exam

- Instructors will notify students via MyCourses and/or email as to what arrangements for rescheduling the exam have been made.

Security Services Contact Information

www.mcgill.ca/campussafety
campus.security@mcgill.ca
805 Sherbrooke St. West Burnside Hall, Room 120
514-398-4556 (General inquiries)
514-398-3000 (Emergencies)