

**Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on COVID Academic Planning and Policies
MINUTES**

Meeting of October 29, 2021 at 8:30a.m. TEAMS Conferencing Application

Present: Chris Buddle (Co-Chair)
Angela Campbell (Co-Chair)
Jennifer Chen
Nancy Czettel
Claire Downie
Rebecca Fuhrer
Petra Rohrbach
Daniel Weinstock
Laura Winer
Gillian Nycum (resource person)
Elyse Cragg (communications)
Paola Colapelle (secretary)

I. Resource email account & communication update

The Ad Hoc Committee resource email account (covidahoc@mcgill.ca) is now operational. An MRO included the email but as of yet no emails have been received. The Committee agreed that other modes for two-way communication would be explored and implemented in the near term.

Suggested channels of communications are “The McGill Reporter”, “What’s new” and “Dean’s Corner”. The use of existing distribution lists from student associations, MAUT and staff associations/unions should be considered to ensure a complete audience is targeted.

The Committee also suggested other methods of communication, such as online forum groups or drop-in sessions, to encourage discussions for all.

It was reiterated that a Q&A section should be created and posted on the Committee’s site. This would capture and address concerns raised by the McGill community. It will link to the relevant sections of the Coronavirus website.

II. Feedback from the community on decision for large lectures to be online

McGill has received some feedback from students and families of students who are going to be taking mostly online courses again in the Winter term (i.e., for the larger-enrolment courses). Unfortunately, this is the trade-off of the decision to keep larger lectures online. It is a difficult balance: some members of the community remain concerned about safety on campus and others are looking for relaxation of health and safety measures.

The committee agreed to work on initiatives for students who have exclusive on-line learning in W22 to allow them to have some contact with peers in an academic setting. The resource

implications will need to be considered carefully. Laura Winer, Gillian Nycum, and Chris Buddle will follow up with Faculties that offer the largest classes to explore in-person curricular opportunities for the Winter term.

It was noted that complaints are being heard from student societies who wish to plan social gatherings. The committee plans on working with SSMU and PGSS to create a communication on this issue. Although vaccination rates are high, the risk of increasing chances of transmission cannot be taken for the time being.

III. EOC transition and impact on ad-hoc committee (Chris)

The Ad-hoc committee was informed that a MRO communication will be sent that informs the community about the demobilization of the Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) since, although we are still in a pandemic context, we are no longer in the same state of emergency.

A new and reimagined structure called the Recovery and Operations Resumptions Committee (ROR), which will be chaired by Prof. Chris Buddle and Fabrice Labeau, will be created and will be in place starting on the week of 1 November. It will maintain the same functional groups which represent different areas of the University with the objective to return the decision-making and governance structures to their usual place.

The Ad-hoc committee's work will not be directly impacted by this, and there will be a direct connection between the committee and ROR through the co-Chair (Chris Buddle).

IV. Winter 2022 planning

A document stating draft Terms of Reference on W22 Course Delivery (see Attached) was distributed for the Committee review and feedback. This document is an elaboration on the five principles that the Committee had set at an earlier meeting.

Faculties were engaged with the creation and development of this document, which contains key points around decision-making as it pertains to delivery of online course activities for the Winter 2022 term. The document aims to provide a baseline of consistency across all Faculties and programs in terms of course delivery in the W22 term, while also extending discretion to individual Faculties to determine the parameters of online teaching instructors.

Committee members provided feedback to refine the document notably in relation to specific terminology and ensuring clarity for the readers. It was agreed that the document would be revised accordingly and that it would then proceed for review to the Academic Policy Committee (APC) before being presented to Senate for approval at its November meeting.

The committee was overall in favour of the document, but wanted to ensure there was an additional point about even distribution of workload throughout the term for students, and that instructors were careful in respecting contact hours. The committee also suggested that the terminologies pertaining to online/remote teaching be included with the document when presented to APC.

V. Student Accommodation follow-up

It was established that the Committee's meeting of November 5th will be devoted solely to discussions on student accommodations. Instructions will be provided to Committee members about information required for the table which was drafted last week with the aim to have a structured and concrete plan for next week's conversations on accommodations.

Course Delivery for Winter 2022 - Terms of Reference
Version 1: Discussed at Oct. 29 Committee mtg

All instructors are responsible for their courses and can adopt new approaches to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in support of course objectives. At the same time, it is important for the University, Faculties, and Departments or Schools to oversee teaching practices to validate that program requirements are upheld and to ensure high quality and consistent learning experiences for students. For the Winter 2022 term, large lectures (enrolment over 200) will be delivered principally online. Instructors of smaller-enrolment courses may also wish to integrate online components to their courses. This document sets parameters for such integration of online teaching and learning within courses, extending principles that were also in place – although not previously made explicit – in Fall 2021.

The following parameters apply for the Winter 2022 term:

- McGill remains committed to in-person teaching. Accordingly, the primary mode of instruction at McGill for the Winter 2022 will be in person, both at the course and at program levels. When a course activity is assigned a classroom, it is expected that it will be delivered in-person. However, this does not prevent an instructor from integrating some online learning components in alignment with parameters set out in this document.
- A small number of programs and courses at McGill have been previously designed to be delivered fully online. Those courses remain fully online and are not affected by the terms set out in this document.
- An instructor may be able to deliver online a limited proportion of a course they are assigned to teach in person without having to confer with or seek approval from their Chair or Faculty (“threshold”). The threshold is determined by each Faculty according to its own program and accreditation requirements and objectives and, as a general rule, is not to exceed 20% of contact hours.
- An instructor who wishes to teach online a proportion of their course that exceeds the threshold is expected to obtain approval from the Faculty in which the course in question is delivered. Each Faculty will have a process for assessing and deciding on these requests. Decision-making criteria include the following, as well as any other factors a Faculty deems appropriate given its own requirements:
 - Relevant program and accreditation requirements will be met.
 - Core student learning outcomes, experiences, and/or competencies that require in-person activities will be maintained or enhanced.
 - The course commits to a minimum number (or %) of synchronous in-person contact hours – to be determined by the Faculty – that will be delivered at least in part by the course instructor (that is, instructors cannot ask TAs to deliver all in-person components of the course).
 - The instructor has demonstrated the added pedagogical value of offering a significant online components to the course.
 - Instructors agree to include a question on their course evaluations to solicit and obtain student feedback on the remote components of the course.
 - The modality of delivery, including plans for blended learning (i.e., in-person and remote components), must be signaled in the course outline as of the first day of term.

Course Delivery for Winter 2022 – Terms of Reference
Version 2: to proceed to review by the Academic Policy Committee

These terms of reference apply only to the Winter 2022 Academic Term at McGill University.

McGill remains committed to in-person teaching. Accordingly, the primary mode of instruction at McGill for the Winter 2022 term will be in person, at both the course and program levels. All instructors are responsible for their courses and can adopt new approaches to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in support of course objectives. At the same time, it is important for the University, Faculties, Schools, and Departments to oversee teaching practices and validate that program requirements are upheld and to ensure high quality and consistent learning experiences for students.

For the Winter 2022 term, large lectures (enrolment greater or equal to 200) will be delivered principally online (for terminology see **Appendix A**). For other activities, when a course is assigned a classroom, it is expected that it will be delivered in-person. However, instructors of courses with enrolments under 200 may wish to integrate online components into their courses; this document establishes the parameters for such circumstances. The terms set out herein extend principles that were in place – although not previously made explicit – in Fall 2021.

These terms of reference do not affect the small number of programs and courses at McGill that have been previously designed to be delivered fully online.

For the Winter 2022 term, online learning components for courses can be integrated into teaching activities provided the parameters below are followed:

- An instructor may be able to deliver online a limited proportion (hereinafter “the threshold”) of a course they are assigned to teach in person without having to confer with or seek approval from their Chair or Faculty. The threshold is determined by each Faculty according to its own program and accreditation requirements and objectives. As a general rule, the threshold will not exceed 20% of contact hours. Online components are expected to adhere to good pedagogical practices and support the learning outcomes for the course.
- An instructor who wishes to teach online a proportion of their course that exceeds the threshold will obtain approval from the Faculty in which the course is delivered. Each Faculty will have a process for assessing and approving requests. Decision-making criteria include the following, as well as any other factors a Faculty deems appropriate given its own objectives and requirements:
 - Relevant program and accreditation requirements will be met.
 - Core student learning outcomes, experiences, and/or competencies that require in-person activities will be maintained or enhanced.
 - The instructor has demonstrated that they will respect the number of contact hours for the course and will ensure that the workload assigned to students in the course is distributed throughout the academic term.
 - A minimum number (or %) of synchronous, in-person contact hours – to be determined by the Faculty – that will be delivered, at least in part, by the instructor (i.e., instructors cannot ask TAs to deliver all in-person components of the course).
 - The instructor has demonstrated the added pedagogical value of offering online teaching that exceeds the threshold.
 - Instructors agree to include a question on their course evaluations to solicit student feedback on the online components of the course.

- The modality of delivery, including plans for blended learning must be signaled in the course outline as of the first day of term.

Appendix A: Terminology

- **Blended learning** refers to teaching and learning activities made up of a combination of online and in-person course components, both of which are necessary for students to achieve the learning outcomes of the course. The online components may be **synchronous** (e.g., delivered 'live' via Zoom), or **asynchronous** (e.g., pre-recorded and available for students to access at their convenience).
- A **Flipped classroom** is a kind of blended learning where students engage in learning activities such as doing readings, completing individual learning activities, and perhaps viewing pre-recorded lectures outside class time, and class time is designed for learning activities that require interaction and inquiry.
- **Online course** (or **Online course component**) refers to a course (or part of a course) that has been expressly designed for online delivery through the intentional implementation of instructional activities and selected technologies that support the achievement of course learning outcomes. Students have advanced knowledge that their course (or course component) has been designed for online delivery.
- **Remote delivery** or **Remote instruction** refers to a situational need to deliver a course online that would normally be delivered in person. During the COVID-19 pandemic, remote instruction happened largely through lectures delivered over Zoom instead of in person and, in some cases, with the implementation of additional technologies on an ad hoc basis.
- **Hybrid** (often referred to as **Hyflex** elsewhere) refers to a class where some students are physically present and others attend virtually at the same time with all students having the same opportunities to participate and engage in the classroom activities. Hybrid classes require technologies not readily available in most McGill classrooms and it demands additional instructor support for course planning and delivery.