



Campus Closure/Class Cancellation Policy

Category: General;

Jurisdiction: Vice President, Administration and Finance;

Approval Authority: Executive Team;

Established on: November 2015;

Amendments: November 2015; February 13, 2018; August 27, 2019; March 2021.

Preamble

While Lakehead University is committed to maintaining its campuses open for classes and services at all times, it may cancel classes/exams, close the campus, or suspend campus services if continuing with normal operations poses a danger to students, staff and faculty.

Although the procedures herein have been developed primarily for class/exam cancellations and building/facility/campus closures as a result of hazardous weather conditions, they may also be employed for other circumstances (e.g. no heat or water, structural risks).

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is

- To coordinate information gathering, decision-making and action when the policy is enacted;
- To ensure effective communication, in a timely manner, to the campus community and broader community (when applicable) when circumstances threaten to interrupt the normal operations of the University.

Authority to Declare Cancellations and Closures

Delegation of Authority: Positions named within this policy may name a designate.

The decision to cancel classes, or close a building/facility/campus, is made by Lakehead University's President.

The President shall consider the recommendation made by the University's Vice-President (Administration & Finance) or designate before making a decision. That recommendation follows the Vice-President's (Administration & Finance) consultation with one, or all, of the following:

- Director of Security Services – Conditions of campus roads, parking lots, sidewalks, stairs, entrance accessibility;
- Director of Physical Plant – Conditions of campus roads, parking lots, sidewalks, stairs, entrance accessibility;
- Chief of Staff – Current and forecasted weather conditions; Road conditions for the region; Status of public transit; Police warnings; Status of other educational institutions, municipalities, and various organizations;
- Principal (Orillia Campus);
- Provost & Vice-President (Academic);
- Vice-President (External Relations);
- Vice-President (Research and Innovation);

While every effort will be made to consult before a cancellation or closure decision is made, such as decision may be foregone in the interest of safety, and speedy and efficient action.

Definitions

“Classes Cancelled”

When classes/exams are cancelled within a building, facility, or across a campus for a specified period of time, or until further notice:

- Classes and exams in affected area(s) are suspended;
- Students and faculty are not to attend classes in affected area(s);
- All other University services shall continue to operate normally.

“Campus Closure”

When a campus/building/facility of the University is “closed”:

- Classes are cancelled in affected area(s) unless instructors make alternate arrangements;
- Examinations are cancelled and rescheduled by the University’s Registrar;
- Meetings and other scheduled events are cancelled. Any exceptions will be communicated via the Lakehead University website and/or other communication mechanism as deemed fit by Media Relations;
- All areas and operations not defined as “required services” are closed (see definition, below);
- Deadlines within the Academic Schedule of Dates along with deadlines for student assignments and other submissions due on a “closed” day are postponed until the same hour on the next academic day that the University is not “closed”;
- Deadlines for job applications and other employment requirements are postponed to the same time on the next business day on which the University is not “closed”.

With the exception of “required services”, the decision to close a campus is final and not left to the discretion of individuals or departments unless special arrangements are made with the Vice-President (Administration & Finance). Only those employees who have been notified in advance by their supervisors that they are required workers for the purposes of this policy are expected to report or remain at work.

“Required Services”

Even when the University is “closed”, it is home for many students and some services must be maintained.

The following are defined as “required services”, and shall maintain normal operations during a campus closure unless otherwise notified by the Vice-President (Administration & Finance):

- Food Services for residence;
- Campus Security services;

- Physical plant services – emergency repair and maintenance, snow removal, other designated staff for plant operations, etc. as determined by Director of Physical Plant;
- Residence Life staff;
- Designated staff in Residence and Conference Services;
- Animal care;
- Media Relations;
- Specially designated staff in Student Health and Counselling.

Staff who will provide “required services” would be so designated by the department heads (or designates) responsible for those services. Department heads are responsible for assigning duties to be carried out and making reasonable arrangements for the protection of essential staff.

No department can designate any other services as “required” or require staff to work during a “closed” period without approval from the Vice-President (Administration & Finance).

Procedure

1. Assessment of Cancellation/Closure Indicators & Factors

Indicators and Factors to be assessed by respective Assessment Group should include as many of the following as possible:

- Safety of students, faculty, staff and visitors;
- The day’s scheduled events and activities;
- Campus conditions, including vehicle and pedestrian accessibility (parking lots and walkways);
- Weather reports (Environment Canada; Weather Network);
- Road conditions (Ministry of Transportation (Ontario) website; Media; OPP);
- Police recommendations and warnings (Websites; Social Media);
- Local and regional transit service;
- City Works status (Ploughs; Warnings; Closures);
- Status of local and region’s primary/secondary/post-secondary institutions;

Orillia Campus Assessment Group

- Associate Vice-President, Orillia Campus
- Security Services Coordinator, Orillia Campus – Conditions of campus roads, parking lots, sidewalks, stairs, entrance accessibility;
- Physical Plant, Orillia Campus – Conditions of campus roads, parking lots, sidewalks, stairs, entrance accessibility;
- Marketing & Communications Associate – Current and forecasted weather conditions; Road conditions for the region; Status of public transit; Police warnings; Status of other educational institutions, municipalities, and various organizations.
- Administrative Officer, Orillia Campus
- Principal, Orillia Campus

Thunder Bay Campus Assessment Group

- Vice-President (Administration & Finance);
- Provost & Vice-President (Academic);
- Director of Physical Plant – Conditions of campus roads, parking lots, sidewalks, stairs, entrance accessibility;
- Chief of Staff – Current and forecasted weather conditions; Road conditions for the region; Status of public transit; Police warnings; Status of other educational institutions, municipalities, and various organizations;
- Director of Security Services – Conditions of campus roads, parking lots, sidewalks, stairs, entrance accessibility;

Additional members of the Thunder Bay Assessment Group may include:

- Vice-President (External Relations);
- Vice-President (Research and Innovation);
- President.

2. ORDER OF ACTION (Campus Specific)

The following orders of action are in response to inclement weather conditions, however they may be employed for other circumstances and at any time of day.

Orillia Campus

- **Day before potential cancellation/closure**

Orillia Campus Assessment Group learns of forecasted inclement weather and is put on standby for conference call/text at 6:00 am the following day to evaluate indicators in preparation for cancellation/closure recommendation.

Security Services Coordinator (Orillia) informs Principal of Orillia Campus of potential cancellation/closure recommendation.

- **Day of potential Cancellation/Closure**

- **6:00 – 6:15 am**

Orillia Campus Assessment Group evaluates indicators and agrees on recommendation.

- **6:15 - 6:20 am**

Security Services Coordinator (Orillia) informs University's Principal of Orillia Campus of Group's recommended action, or whether no action is required. The Principal of Orillia Campus will notify the Vice-President (Administration & Finance)

- **6:25 am**

If the cancellation of classes or a closure IS RECOMMENDED by the Group, the Principal of Orillia Campus informs the Vice-President (Administration & Finance) and University President of recommendation.

If the cancellation of classes or a closure is NOT RECOMMENDED by Group, no further action is required.

Thunder Bay Campus

- **Day before potential cancellation/closure**

Thunder Bay Campus Assessment Group learns of forecasted inclement weather and is put on standby for conference call/text at 6:00 am the following day to evaluate indicators in preparation for cancellation/closure recommendation.

- **Day of potential Cancellation/Closure**

6:00 – 6:15 am

Thunder Bay Campus Assessment Group evaluates indicators, agrees on action to be taken (if any).

6:15 - 6:20 am

The Vice-President (Administration & Finance) will notify the President

6:25 am

If the cancellation of classes or a closure IS RECOMMENDED by the Group, the Vice-President (Administration & Finance) informs the University President of recommendation. The Group will proceed with next step (COMMUNICATION).

If the cancellation of classes or a closure is NOT RECOMMENDED by Group, no further action is required.

4. Communication of Cancellation/Closure

Once the Vice-President (Administration & Finance) or Principal of Orillia Campus has informed a Campus' Assessment Group that the President has been informed of the recommendation to cancel classes/exams, or for a building/facility/campus closure, it is imperative that the Group notifies the Lakehead community (and external community, if applicable) as soon as possible.

While classes being canceled, or the closure of a building, may occur at one campus, the entire University community will be informed as cancellations and closures may affect students, faculty and staff in various ways (e.g. cross-campus meetings/classes; dependency on cross-campus operations).

The following outlines courses of action in specific situations.

Cancellation of Classes/Exams or Closure of Orillia Campus (Heritage Place and/or Simcoe Hall)

Security Services Coordinator (Orillia)

- Issues Lakehead Mobile Safety app alert all Orillia students, faculty and staff.
- Post notices at all main entrances.

Marketing & Communications Associate (Orillia) and/or Chief of Staff/Director, Media Relations

- Updates University Campus Status webpage.
- Posts notice to all campus digital monitors.
- Issues social media notification.
- **See appendices, below, for all notification templates.*

Information/Switchboard

- Change the voice mail message on the University's main telephone numbers.

Cancellation of Classes/Exams or Closure of Thunder Bay Campus

Security Services (Thunder Bay)

- Issues Lakehead Mobile Safety app alert to all Thunder Bay students, faculty and staff.
- Post notices at all main entrances.

Marketing & Communications Associate (Thunder Bay) and/or Chief of Staff/Director, Media Relations

- Updates University Campus Status webpage.
- Posts notice to all campus digital monitors.

- Issues social media notification.
- Issues media advisory/alert.
- **See appendices below, for all notification templates.*

Information/Switchboard (Thunder Bay)

- Change the voice mail message on the University's main telephone numbers.

Notifying Direct Reports

All Vice-Presidents are responsible for informing their direct reports of the cancellation of classes/exams, or of the closure of a building/facility/campus. Direct reports will, in turn, advise all respective department heads, and so forth.

Individual department heads should not contact individual employees to notify them of a closure since all closure details will already have been sent via mass email, social media, and through the Lakehead Mobile Safety app.

Responsibilities of Members of University Community

Members of the University community are responsible for their own safety and for checking the Lakehead University website, watching for Bulletins, and watching/listening for updates from local media, and monitoring alerts from the Lakehead Mobile Safety app.

Lakehead classes and services are considered open unless the University has issued an official announcement stating the cancellation of classes/exams, or the closure a building/facility/campus.

Weather and road conditions within the regions of Northwestern and Central Ontario can vary widely. If you are in a particular area more adversely affected by weather and road conditions than the rest of the region — and cancellation/closure indicators have not signaled a need for Lakehead to cancel classes/exams or close a building/facility/campus — the University trusts

that you will choose to not risk traveling. If that is the case, please inform your instructor(s) or supervisor(s) of your absence due to unsafe travel conditions.

Faculty/Staff Absent Due to Inclement Weather

In the event of inclement weather and the University remains open, all employees are expected to make every reasonable effort to report to work. However, employees should not take unnecessary personal risks when it is unsafe to travel to work. Employees not able to report to work and Employees subject to pay loss may apply an accumulated vacation day, accumulated overtime, or make arrangements appropriate to their supervisor, to make up for time lost or to offset the monetary loss

In the event the University is closed due to inclement weather or some other unusual circumstance (the “Closure”) faculty and staff employees:

- (i) will be paid accordingly.
- (ii) required to work during a Closure will be compensated according to their employment contract or collective agreement.

All employees working shifts that fall outside normal University working hours must check with their supervisors to confirm their working schedule for any working day.

Assistance to those Stranded on Campus

In the event that the University is forced to close and people are stranded on one of our campuses, Residence & Conference Services will provide assistance, shelter and food, as required.

Appendix A – Notification Templates

The following notifications are templates, and may be edited, as required.

Lakehead Mobile Safety App and Bulletin (Classes/Exams Cancelled)

Due to extreme inclement weather, all classes and exams at our **[Orillia/Thunder Bay] campus are cancelled, today (**date**)**.

All campus services and offices will remain open. All members of the University community are advised to exercise caution, as the roads may be hazardous.

For more information please check [Orillia/Thunder Bay Campus status web page: [
<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/about/thunder-bay-campus> //
<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/about/orillia-campus>].

Please monitor the University's website, your email, and the Lakehead Mobile Safety app for updates.

Lakehead Mobile Safety App and Bulletin (Campus Closed)

Due to extreme inclement weather and poor driving conditions, the **[Orillia/Thunder Bay] campus is closed, today (**date**)**.

Unless you are considered a required service, it is not recommended to travel to the campus, today.

For more information please check [Orillia/Thunder Bay Campus status web page: [
<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/about/thunder-bay-campus> //
<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/about/orillia-campus>].

Please monitor the University's website, your email, and the Lakehead Mobile Safety app for updates.

Media Release (Classes/Exams Cancelled)

The following texts must be inserted into a Lakehead University media release template to be issued by the Office of Media Relations.

Lakehead University Cancels Classes and Exams, Today

Due to extreme inclement weather and poor driving conditions, all Lakehead University classes and exams at the [Orillia/Thunder Bay] campus are cancelled, today (**date**).

All other campus services and offices will remain open.

All members of the University community are advised to exercise caution, as the roads may be hazardous.

For more information and updates please check [Orillia/Thunder Bay Campus status web page: [
<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/about/thunder-bay-campus> //
<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/about/orillia-campus>].

Please monitor the University's website, your email, and the Lakehead Mobile Safety app for updates.

Media Release (Campus Closed)

Lakehead University's Thunder Bay/Orillia Campus CLOSED, Today

Due to extreme inclement weather and poor driving conditions, Lakehead University's **[Orillia/Thunder Bay] campus is closed, today (**date**)**.

Except for University employees fulfilling a required service (e.g. food/residence services, security services), Lakehead recommends that students, faculty and staff not travel to the campus.

For more information and updates please check [Orillia/Thunder Bay Campus status web page: [<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/about/thunder-bay-campus> // <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/about/orillia-campus>].

Please monitor the University's website, your email, and the Lakehead Mobile Safety app for updates.

Review Period: 7 years;

Next Review Period: 2027-2028;

Related Policies and Procedures: To be determined;

Policy Superseded by this Policy: Absenteeism, Inclement Weather.

The University Secretariat manages the development of policies through an impartial, fair governance process, and in accordance with the Policy Governance Framework. Please contact the University Secretariat for additional information on University policies and procedures and/or if you require this information in another format:

Open: Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 4:30pm;

Location: University Centre, Thunder Bay Campus, Room UC2002;

Phone: 807-343-8010 Ext. 7929 or Email: univsec@lakeheadu.ca.