



FOR INFORMATION

PUBLIC

OPEN SESSION

TO: UTSC Academic Affairs Committee

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DATE: February 6, 2018 for February 13, 2018

AGENDA ITEM: 5

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

Revisions to Academic Regulations- Credit/No Credit (CR/NCR)

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

The University of Toronto Scarborough Academic Affairs Committee (AAC) “is concerned with matters affecting the teaching, learning and research functions of the Campus” (*AAC Terms of Reference, Section 4*). The AAC has responsibility for academic regulations, including “approval of minor amendments of academic regulations that are consistent with University-wide policy” (*AAC Terms of Reference, Section 5.1 and 5.6*).

GOVERNANCE PATH:

- 1. UTSC Academic Affairs Committee [For Information] (February 13, 2018)**

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

No previous action in governance has been taken on this item.

HIGHLIGHTS:

We are proposing to move the deadline to select a course to be graded as Credit (CR)/No Credit (NCR) from: “no later than the last day to drop courses without academic penalty,” to: “the last day of classes.”

Under the current academic CR/NCR policy, students may select up to 2.0 FCE of their degree credits to be assessed on a CR/NCR basis. Students must choose this mode of assessment via ACORN no later than the last day to drop courses without academic penalty. In accordance with the *University Assessment and Grading Practices Policy* (2012), at least one piece of term work, which is part of the evaluation of student performance, and has a weight of at least 20% of the final grade, must be returned to the student prior to this date.

We are proposing a change to the deadline to select the CR/NCR option for the following reasons:

1. It will be better aligned with the spirit of the original policy by: (a) allowing students to take a course outside of their comfort zone without fear it will negatively impact their academic record, thus encouraging students to experiment; and (b) providing more time, and more information, for students to thoughtfully consider the CR/NCR option.
2. Instead of being limited to the option of selecting “Late Withdrawal After the Drop Date (LWD) for a course, students will have the option to select CR/NCR at the end of term and retain credit.
3. It reduces the occurrence of early CR/NCR selection, which sometimes results in students sacrificing a good mark on their academic record (30.4% of students who selected CR/NCR in the 2016-17 academic year obtained a final mark over 70%).
4. It provides a potential financial benefit to students if it stops them from selecting LWD for a course, and paying more tuition to take additional courses.
5. It will reduce the number of petitions for reversal of CR/NCR for program requirements, or to include a course grade in students’ CGPA (122 petitions were received to add or remove CR/NCR status in the 2016-17 academic year).
6. It simplifies course option (LWD, CR/NCR) deadlines by: (a) giving students more than one option to consider; and (b) streamlining the deadlines for students and staff.
7. It allows for more effective academic advising opportunities, for example: (a) LWD versus CR/NCR; (b) entry requirements for programs; and (c) completion of program requirements.

We believe this student-centred change will improve the UTSC student experience by streamlining the CR/NCR process, reducing anxiety, giving students more time and information before having to make a decision, and allowing for improved academic advising. We further believe this change can have a positive impact on retention, progression, and graduation rates.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no net financial implications to the campus operating budget.

RECOMMENDATION:

Presented for Information.

DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED:

1. 2018-19 Curriculum Cycle, Changes to Academic Regulations: Credit (CR)/No Credit (NCR), dated December 6, 2017.



2018-19 Curriculum Cycle

Changes to Academic Regulations: Credit (CR)/No Credit (NCR)

December 6, 2017

[For Information]

Type of Change Being Proposed	Minor modification to an existing academic regulation
Division	University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC)
Proponent	UTSC Office of the Vice-Principal Academic and Dean; UTSC Office of the Registrar
Contact	Annette Knott, Academic Programs Officer; aknott@utsc.utoronto.ca
Effective Date	2018-19 Academic Year

Proposed Change:

This is a proposal to move the deadline to select a course to be graded as Credit (CR)/No Credit (NCR)

From: “no later than the last day to drop courses without academic penalty.”

To: “the last day of classes.”

Background:

As of the 2010 Summer session, UTSC undergraduate degree students are able to select up to 1.0 FCE of their degree credits to be assessed on an Credit (CR)/No Credit (NCR) basis [raised to 2.0 FCE as of the 2013 Summer session]. This policy was introduced to allow students to take courses in unfamiliar subject areas without risk to their academic record. Similar policies were introduced at both the Faculty of Arts and Science (FAS) and the University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM).

Under the current academic CR/NCR policy, students may select up to 2.0 FCE of their degree credits to be assessed on a CR/NCR basis. Students must choose this mode of assessment via ACORN no later than the last day to drop courses without academic penalty. In accordance with the *University Assessment and Grading Practices Policy* (2012), at least one piece of term work, which is part of the evaluation of student performance, and has a weight of at least 20% of the final grade, must be returned to the student prior to this date.

In the 2016-17 academic year, 4757 students took advantage of the CR/NCR option to complete 714 different courses. Of this number, 3966 students received CR, 781 received NCR, and 1 received Standing Deferred (SDF). Of the 3966 students who received CR, 1207 (30.4%) achieved a mark of 70% or higher.

In the 2017 Summer term, 830 students took advantage of the CR/NCR option to complete 125 different courses. Of this number, 704 received CR, 120 received NCR, and 6 received Standing Deferred (SDF). Of the 704 students who received CR, 246 (35%) achieved a mark of 70% or higher.

Rationale:

We are proposing a change to the deadline to select the CR/NRC option for the following reasons:

1. It will be better aligned with the spirit of the original policy by: (a) allowing students to take a course outside of their comfort zone without fear it will negatively impact their academic record, thus encouraging students to experiment; and (b) providing more time, and more information, for students to thoughtfully consider the CR/NCR option.
2. Instead of being limited to the option of selecting “Late Withdrawal After the Drop Date (LWD) for a course, students will have the option to select CR/NCR at the end of term and retain credit.
3. It reduces the occurrence of early CR/NCR selection, which sometimes results in students sacrificing a good mark on their academic record (30.4% of students who selected CR/NCR in the 2016-17 academic year obtained a final mark over 70%).
4. It provides a potential financial benefit to students if it stops them from selecting LWD for a course, and paying more tuition to take additional courses.
5. It will reduce the number of petitions for reversal of CR/NCR for program requirements, or to include a course grade in students’ CGPA (122 petitions were received to add or remove CR/NCR status in the 2016-17 academic year).
6. It simplifies course option (LWD, CR/NCR) deadlines by: (a) giving students more than one option to consider; and (b) streamlining the deadlines for students and staff.
7. It allows for more effective academic advising opportunities, for example: (a) LWD versus CR/NCR; (b) entry requirements for programs; and (c) completion of program requirements.

We believe this student-centred change will improve the UTSC student experience by streamlining the CR/NCR process, reducing anxiety, giving students more time and information before having to make a decision, and allowing for improved academic advising. We further believe this change can have a positive impact on retention, progression, and graduation rates.

Calendar Description Showing Changes:

6C.3 Alternative Types of Courses

Credit/No Credit:

UTSC degree students may select up to 2.0 full credits of their degree credits to be assessed on a Credit/No Credit basis. Courses identified as program requirements, or that are intended for individual study, such as supervised reading courses, are not eligible for Credit/No Credit assessment. Students must choose, **or cancel**, this mode of assessment via ACORN **no later than the last day of classes** ~~no later than the last day to drop courses without academic penalty~~. Once the deadline has passed, students may not under any circumstances reverse this decision.

The CR/NCR option is open only to degree students. Once students have graduated, they may not

complete courses on a CR/NCR basis, even if they enrolled in the course before their graduation; for example, a student graduating in June, selecting a Summer course as CR/NCR. Or a student graduating in November, selection a Fall or Winter course as CR/NCR, will have the CR/NCR designation removed and a percentage grade will appear on the student's record.

7.2 Credit/ No Credit

UTSC degree students may select up to 2.0 full credits of their degree credits to be assessed on a Credit/No Credit basis. Courses identified as program requirements, or that are intended for individual study, such as supervised reading courses, are not eligible for Credit/No Credit assessment. Students must choose, **or cancel**, this mode of assessment via ACORN **no later than the last day of classes** ~~no later than the last day to drop courses without academic penalty~~. Once the deadline has passed, students may not under any circumstances reverse this decision.

To achieve a status of CR (Credit), a student must earn a final grade of at least 50%. Grades below that will be assessed as NCR (No Credit). Courses with a final status of CR will count as degree credits but will have no effect on the student's GPA. They may count as breadth requirements and degree credits, but cannot be used to satisfy program requirements.

Courses with a final status of NCR will not count as degree credits but will not count as failures, and will also not be included in the GPA calculation. If a student commits an academic offence in a Credit/No Credit designated course, the CR/NCR designation will be removed and a grade will appear on the student's record.

The CR/NCR option is open only to degree students. Once students have graduated, they may not complete courses on a CR/NCR basis, even if they enrolled in the course before their graduation; for example, a student graduating in June, selecting a Summer course as CR/NCR. Or a student graduating in November, selection a Fall or Winter course as CR/NCR, will have the CR/NCR designation removed and a percentage grade will appear on the student's record.

Certain courses, including some music courses, are graded on a CR/NC% basis. In these courses, to achieve a passing grade a student must receive a final mark of at least 50%. This will be designated as CR on a transcript and will not be included in the grade point average. A failing grade (below 50%) will be designated on the transcript as NC%, and the course will be included as an "F" (value zero) in the grade point average.

In courses graded on a CR/NC% basis, students may opt for a normal graded assessment with specific grades assigned. Students must choose this mode of assessment no later than the last day to enrol in the relevant course. Requests for this type of assessment are made through the course instructor offering the course. Once the deadline has passed, students may not under any circumstances reverse this decision.

Consultation:

There has been extensive consultation on the proposed change. The proposal was shared with the academic Chairs and Directors on December 8, 2017, and again on January 12, 2018; their feedback has been supportive and positive. The proposal was shared with the Scarborough Campus Students' Union – their December 15, 2017 letter of support is attached below as Appendix A.

Appendix A: Letter of Support, Scarborough Campus Students' Union

SCARBOROUGH CAMPUS
STUDENTS' UNION

University of Toronto
Scarborough



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December 15, 2017

To: The University of Toronto Scarborough Campus

Re: Credit/No Credit Changes to Academic Regulation

On behalf of the 13,000 students that the Scarborough Campus Students' Union (SCSU) represents, we are strongly in favour of extending the Credit/No Credit (CR/NCR) deadline to the last day of classes.

The purpose of the Credit/No Credit deadline is to allow students to take classes outside of their programs without fear of lowering their GPA and encourages the University's priority of obtaining a wholistic academic experience at the University of Toronto. In our consultations with students, many of them are in support of this ask, as outlined in the SCSU report "Creating an Accessible Campus: Guidelines for the University of Toronto Scarborough 2017". By extending this deadline not only would it better reflect the purpose of this policy it would also assist in streamlining academic deadlines between campuses, as this already in effect at University of Toronto Mississauga Campus.

Furthermore, by extending the current policy to the last day of classes, students will be able to use this additional time to make well-informed decisions about their academics - furthering academic success. The petitions and appeals process is one that is time consuming for students, staff, and administration. By extending the Credit/No Credit deadline we are:

- 1) effectively alleviating the number of petitions and appeals, decreasing the amount of time and resources allocated to resolve student cases
- 2) encourage students to take courses outside of their program requirements allowing them to become more wholistic academics
- 3) allows the UTSC campus to move towards a healthier campus as it will alleviate undue stress

Due to the reasons listed above, the SCSU is willing to work together through the processes that are involved in amending this policy.

Thank you for your time.

Regards,

Christina Arayata
Vice-President Academics and University Affairs

Sitharsana Srithas
President