

**UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
GOVERNING COUNCIL**

REPORT NUMBER 289 OF THE ACADEMIC APPEALS COMMITTEE

January 30, 2004

To the Academic Board,
University of Toronto.

Your Committee reports that it held a meeting on Friday, October 31, 2003, at which the following were present:

Professor Ed Morgan (Chair)
Mr. Sachin Aggarwal
Professor Mary Beattie
Professor Clare Beghtol
Dr. Alice Dong

Secretary: Mr. P. Holmes, Judicial Affairs Officer

Appearances:

For The Student:

Mr. M.

For the University of Toronto at Mississauga (UTM):

Professor Gordon Anderson

This is an appeal from the decision of the Academic Appeals Board of UTM dated March 20, 2003. That decision denied an appeal from a decision of the Committee on Standing dated January 15, 2003, denying the student's petition for a further extension of time to have term work graded in the course EUR200Y5.

The Student first registered at UTM in the 1998 fall term and majored in French Language and French Linguistics. He registered for EUR200Y5, a full-year course, in September 2001. The course had four graded components:

First term essay	30%
First term test	10%
Second term essay	30%
Final Exam	30%

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The student petitioned on May 1, 2002 for an extension of time to complete his term work. He complained of back problems that prevented him from sitting for long periods of time. The student had not submitted the first and second term essays, although he did write both the first term test and the final exam for which he received 29 out of a possible 40 marks. The Committee on Standing granted the Student's request on August 8, 2002 with a deadline of "early September 2002" to complete all work in the course. Professor Crista Saas, the Faculty Coordinator for EUR200Y, requested that the Registrar's office contact the student to give him a fixed date: September 3, 2002. After the Student subsequently contacted Professor Saas explaining that he had plans to be out of town that day and requested a later date, she permitted him to hand in the two papers by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 5, 2002.

As the deadline drew near on the due date, the Student called the departmental secretary and complained of a number of difficulties he was having, including car troubles and computer problems. Professor Sass called the student about a half hour before the deadline and left a message. The Student called back within minutes thereafter and repeated his complaints, making it clear that he was not going to meet the 5:00 deadline. Professor Sass gave the student a further extension to midnight. A copy of the first term essay was received at the department electronically at 5:33 p.m. on September 5, 2002. The second term essay was never received. The Student told Your Committee that he did send the second essay on September 5, 2002 before the revised deadline and assumed it had arrived safely. It was not until a few days later that the Student realized that the second essay had not been received. By this time Professor Saas refused to accept the second essay. On September 13, 2002, the Student presented a disk to Professor Michael Lettieri, Associate Dean of Humanities at UTM. The disk contained copies of both the first term and second term papers and indicated that they had been opened and saved on September 6, 2002 at 11:45p.m. In the result, only the first term essay was graded and the student was left with a final grade of 48.5% in the course.

Your Committee is of the view that the student was given numerous extensions and had ample time to complete the assigned work, and that his failure to submit the second term paper by the extended deadline was a result of his having left himself insufficient time to complete it. While the department's initial response to the student's request for an extension was somewhat vague in its reference to "early September 2002", the student was advised of the September 3rd due date in sufficient time to complete the two papers. Then, when he called to complain that he had plans for the long weekend preceding September 3rd, Professor Saas granted him two further extensions, first until 5:00 p.m. on September 5th, and then until midnight on that date.

Under the circumstances, the department was more than adequately generous with the student. The student complained that he had automotive problems on his drive back from his long vacation weekend, and that he encountered lengthy lines at the library computer terminals when he went at the last moment to use the library's facilities. Neither complaint is the fault of the department, and both are, in Your Committee's view, matters for which the student himself must take responsibility.

Your Committee agrees with Professor Saas that the best way to grant an extension on any assignment is to specify a firm time and date on which the assignment is due. In this case, the

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department's initial response did not meet that standard, but was remedied by the subsequent communications with, and generous treatment of, the student. In the future, however, Professor Saas' approach should be adopted by the department as the preferable one.

The student's appeal is dismissed.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul J. Holmes
Secretary

Ed Morgan
Chair