

ACADEMIC REGULATION 5.5 – REPEATING COURSES

It is recommended that, effective Fall 2012, the Academic Regulation 5.5 on Repeating Courses be revised as follows:

Students ~~are not~~ will be allowed to repeat the same courses, or its equivalent, more than two times in which they have received a grade of D or lower. ~~Students will need to make arrangements with the Registrar's office to repeat a course.~~ All instances of a course will appear on the academic transcript. The ~~highest~~ grade achieved on the most recent attempt will be taken into account in the grade point average.

Rationale

Under the current UOIT academic regulation on repeating courses, students who receive a marginal or failing grade (D or F) in a course can repeat it an unlimited number of times providing they continue to achieve a D or F grade in the course. In the early days of the university, this meant that some students were able to repeat the same course over four times, and ten or more times in a very few extreme cases.

In a recent review enrolled students we have found that most students (62%) are able to achieve a C grade or better on their second attempt at a course (see inset). On the third attempt, 50.5% students are able to attain the C grade. By the fourth attempt, the GPAs of most students are close to the 2.0 mark, and many will ultimately be suspended or dismissed based on their overall performance in all courses, despite the opportunity to continue repeating the same course. Further, in reviewing regulations on repeating courses at universities across Ontario, UOIT is one of only a few that does not limit the number of times a student is allowed to repeat the same course (Appendix A).

# of Attempts	Students
Two	1383
Three	151
Four	30
Five	7
Six	1

At the same time, students who may wish to improve their grade for a particular course are not able to do so under the current regulation if they have already achieved a grade of C or higher. In this again, UOIT is relatively unique in that it does not allow *all* students to repeat *any* course. With the change to regulation 5.5 as proposed above, students would be able to repeat any course *two times* regardless of the grade achieved, and they will be able to do so directly through the online registration system, whereas now they must be processed manually through the Registrar's office. Over the first few terms of its implementation, programs are urged to monitor their enrolments closely to determine what, if any, impact this change will have on enrolment planning.

With the proposed change, there will likely be a small group of students who, for any number of reasons, are still not able to achieve a passing grade in a particular course after their third attempt. For these students, the registration system will block them from enrolling a fourth time and they will be instructed to see their Academic Advisor. The Advisors can then work with the students to chart out a plan of action. This plan may involve transferring the student to another program where the course at issue is not required, or if the student is otherwise in clear academic standing, the student may be advised to apply to have the repeating course regulation waived in their case. In the latter case, the Dean may apply certain conditions on the student to ensure their ultimate success, such as limiting their course load to three courses for the term during which the course is to be repeated.

The regulation also anticipates that some students may exhaust all available opportunities to achieve a passing grade in a particular course that is required for their program, and so will be withdrawn from the program. Since this withdrawal will be carried out within the Faculty, a Dean may choose to provide a student with the option to apply for re-admission back to the program after a period of one year depending on the particular circumstances of the case.

Faculties should also be alert to courses that have a high recurring failure rate and work with the Teaching and Learning Office to put in place the appropriate supports and structures to counter this trend without compromising the academic integrity of the course and program.

The amended regulation also proposes that the GPA calculation take into account only the most recent attempt at the course. At present, the regulation allows the highest grade achieved for any particular course to be calculated into the GPA, despite the number of times the course is taken. Although there are merits in both approaches, the consensus is that the GPA should be based on the most recent course attempt. Thus students who have a compelling reason to re-take a course are free to do so, but students who may be less certain that their passing grade would improve on the second attempt may be less inclined to take the risk. The proposed change also aligns with most of our sister universities that calculate the GPA for repeated courses on the basis of the most recent grade received.

Finally, it is recommended that the new regulation take effect at the start of the 2012 academic term, September 2012. This will allow time for Faculties and the Registrar's office to inform students of the new regulations and to work out any implementation issues that may need to be addressed to minimize the impact this change may have on students. At the same time, the intervening period should offer time to put in place additional measures at the university to ensure that our students are able to find the support they need to succeed in all of our courses and programs.

Appendix A: Ontario University Policies on Repeating Courses

Ontario University	Students able to repeat courses	Number of times able to repeat each course	Number of courses able to repeat	Grade counted in GPA
Brock	All ¹	1	3.0 credits	Most recent
Carleton	All	5.0 cumulative credits for all repeats	5.0 credits	Most recent ²
Guelph³	Failed	Varies	Varies	All grades
Lakehead	All	2	Unspecified	Most recent
McMaster	All ⁴	Unspecified	Unspecified	All grades
Nipissing	All	1	Unspecified	Highest grade
Ottawa	All	1	15 credits	Most recent
Queens	All	Unspecified	6.0 credits ⁵	Highest grade
Ryerson	All	2	Unspecified	Most recent ⁶
Trent	All	No limit ⁷	Unspecified	Highest grade
Toronto	Failed ⁸	2	Unspecified	All grades
Waterloo	All	1	Unspecified	All grades
Western	All	1 (for passing grade) 2 (for failed grade)	6.0 credits	Most recent
Wilfrid Laurier	All	1	2.0 credits	Most recent
Windsor	All ⁹	1	Unspecified	Most recent
York	All	1	Unspecified	Most recent
UOIT (old)	D or Failed	Unspecified	Unspecified	Highest grade
UOIT (new)	All	2	Unspecified	Most recent

¹ Students who have passed a course must have approval from the Office of the Registrar.

² Previous instances of courses are placed in a special section of the transcript called “Courses Set Aside.”

³ Under some circumstances “supplemental privilege” will be granted to students to gain credit for a failed course. Repeating course policies outside of this vary by department.

⁴ An exception applies for the Faculty of Business who may only repeat failed courses.

⁵ Students who have accumulated 6.0 or more failures will be required to withdraw for a minimum of three years.

⁶ However, if the course has been repeated the maximum three times and the most recent attempt was a failure, as long as one of the attempts was a pass the course will count towards graduation requirements, but the failing grade will be used to calculate GPA.

⁷ Except for Trent/Fleming school of Nursing.

⁸ There are two exceptions to allow students who have passed to repeat a course 1) when a student requires a 100-level course with a specific grade for entry into a limited enrolment program 2) when required for a prerequisite or to qualify for external credential or future graduate study. The repeated course will be marked “extra” and not be used in GPA calculations.

⁹ Except for the Faculty of Engineering where passed courses may be repeated only in the final year of study.