

University of Alberta Fall Semester Scenario Planning

Draft as at April 16, 2020

The Fall 2020 Planning Group will develop a unified plan to address all functions and operations necessary for the university to fulfil its mission as of the Fall 2020 Academic Term.

To reflect the uncertainty associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, the plan will be organized by scenario. The plan will address areas of significant risk as well as opportunity, and be ready for the consideration of university leadership and governors by June.

Vision statement

The University of Alberta will continue to provide the best possible learning experience for its students and maximize its research and service activities throughout the pandemic.

The university will adopt operational models and capitalize on opportunities and lessons learned to retain and enhance the position of the University of Alberta as a leading global research university.

The university will use this period to drive innovation, efficiency, and relevance.

Guiding Principles

1. The university will place the health and wellbeing of students, staff, and faculty above all other considerations.
2. Decisions regarding in-person and remote learning will be driven by program quality and fairness across all student demographics.
3. The University will provide as much certainty as possible to students and staff by making and communicating decisions as early as possible.
4. The university will be heavily challenged to shift the mode of delivery mid-way through a semester, however we will not preclude looking at ways to take advantage of any reduction in public health restrictions as they occur, keeping in mind the impacts on students, particularly those that may not be residing close to our campuses.
5. Tuition, fees, and related costs will balance fairness, manner of program delivery, service levels, and the need to manage fixed costs to the university.
6. The university will cooperate with peer institutions across Canada to share and create academic programming where it can enhance efficiency and maintain quality.
7. Research activity will be maximized to the extent possible.
8. The university will capitalize on lessons learned to enhance operations, sustainability and service delivery.

Planning Assumptions

1. Some form of physical distancing, as mandated by local health authorities, will remain in effect as of the start of the Fall Term.
2. The pandemic will have negative impacts on most enrolment categories.
3. All categories of staff, including instructors, researchers, and administrative staff, challenged by the changes and limitations forced by the pandemic, will need expanded supports.

4. Economies will be significantly weakened and unemployment will be high across the province and country.
5. Students will experience greatly elevated financial and other personal challenges and will seek financial supports and other accommodations from the university and governments.
6. The provincial government will not be in a position to provide emergency financial assistance directly to the university.
7. Governments will provide financial incentive programs to support infrastructure renewal.
8. Most university revenue streams, including through ancillary operations, will be negatively affected.
9. The university must continue to drive toward the expenditure reductions mandated by the provincial government.

Scenarios

Recognizing that the three scenarios described below are the most likely, the working groups will devote their limited time focusing on them. The two fundamental uncertainties at this time are the degree to which the coronavirus has been brought under control in Canada and around the world, and the specific government restrictions in place at the time the university must make key decisions.

In view of its extreme unlikelihood, a scenario imagining a full return to all normal university operations by September will receive only limited consideration by sub-committees that only focuses on key planning deadlines.

1. Limited in-person instruction permitted, non-essential research allowed, international students here, campuses are open

The spread of the coronavirus is substantially under control in Canada. The federal and provincial governments have relaxed some of the original measures to contain the virus, while others remain.

The university is permitted to offer in-class instruction, but controls related to class size and physical distancing remain in place.

“Non-essential” research is permitted to resume, but only in those areas that can adhere to clear hygiene and physical distancing requirements.

International borders with the university’s primary sources of international students are open, permitting most international students to come to Edmonton and Camrose for the start of the term.

Campuses are open: ancillary, social and recreational facilities at the university are permitted to offer programs limited by local hygiene and social distancing restrictions.

2. Limited in-person instruction, non-essential research allowed, international students NOT here, campuses are open

The spread of the coronavirus is substantially under control in Canada. The federal and provincial governments have relaxed some of the original measures to contain the virus, while others remain.

The university is permitted to offer in-class instruction, but controls related to class size and physical distancing remain in place.

“Non-essential” research is permitted to resume, but only in those areas that can adhere to clear hygiene and physical distancing requirements.

International borders with the university’s primary sources of international students remain closed.

Campuses are open: ancillary, social and recreational facilities at the university are permitted to offer programs limited by local hygiene and social distancing restrictions.

3. No in-person instruction, essential research only, international students not here, campuses are closed

The spread of the coronavirus is still not under control in Canada and all emergency restrictions remain in place.

The university is not permitted to offer in-class instruction.

Only essential research is permitted.

International borders remain closed.

Campuses are closed.