



Office of the Associate Dean
Academic and Student Relations
250.721.8152 | lawassoc@uvic.ca

Guide to Academic Concessions at the Faculty of Law

1. Introduction

This guide is intended to clarify how academic concessions are administered in the Faculty of Law to support JD and JD/JID law students.

This guide outlines:

- The difference between academic accommodation and academic concessions
- The university policy governing concessions
- Why academic concessions are managed differently at the Faculty of Law
- The various types of concessions
- When to contact Law Academic Services staff and when to contact your instructor about concessions
- How to request a concession

2. The Difference between Academic Accommodation and Academic Concessions

Academic accommodation plans are managed by the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) and are in place to promote educational accessibility for students with disabilities and chronic health conditions. Once registered with CAL, a student's accommodation is ongoing for the duration of their legal studies, unless an end date has been noted by CAL. Please see the separate *Guide to Academic Accommodation at the Faculty of Law*.

Academic concessions for all JD and JD/JID law courses are managed by Law Academic Services and may be requested in individual cases if your course requirements are affected by unexpected and unavoidable circumstances, or conflicting responsibilities.

Academic Concession	Academic Accommodation	Accommodation of Religious Observance
Academic Concessions provide flexibility to students who face an inability to complete course requirements due to unexpected and unavoidable circumstances or conflicting responsibilities.	Accommodations reduce barriers and provide different ways of meeting essential course or program requirements. Barriers may be established as long-term and/or chronic. To access academic accommodations, a student must register with the Centre for Accessible Learning .	Observance of holy days may conflict with the academic requirements of a course or program. Students may request, with reasonable notice, an accommodation from their instructors. See Accommodation of Religious Observance .

3. Academic Concessions at UVic

Academic concessions are governed by university policy that applies to all UVic students. The [Academic Concessions Regulation](#) and accompanying [Guidelines](#) allow for alternate academic arrangements for students experiencing unexpected and unavoidable circumstances, or conflicting responsibilities, that affect their ability to complete course requirements.

Please note that in the event of a conflict between the information in this guide and university regulations, university regulations will govern.

The Academic Concessions Regulation identifies the following grounds for receiving an academic concession:

1. Unexpected and unavoidable circumstances, including, but not limited to,
 - a. Illness, trauma or bereavement,
 - b. Personal or family affliction, including responsibility to care for a family member, or
 - c. Indigenous cultural or community obligations; and
2. Conflicting responsibilities, including, but not limited to,
 - a. Service in the armed forces or emergency services,
 - b. Representing the university, the province or the country at an academic event, an athletic competition or an artistic performance

The Academic Concessions Guidelines outline a series of key values that guide their processes and use. Specifically, they provide that:

- requests for academic concessions will be treated as confidential and in an equitable, fair, consistent, transparent and timely manner;
- the process for requesting and granting academic concessions will be grounded in an assumption of good faith on the part of students, instructors, administrators, and staff, in the absence of compelling evidence to the contrary;
- the right of the student to request a concession is balanced with the responsibility of the instructor to ensure that course requirements and academic standards are met.

Once a student identifies that they need an academic concession, the student is responsible for requesting a concession as soon as they are able. The student should indicate on which grounds they are requesting an academic concession and explain how their ability to complete course requirements has been impacted. A student does not need to share any information that is sensitive, confidential or that may make them feel uncomfortable.

There are certain circumstances where alternate academic arrangements may not be possible or appropriate, such as when a student is registered in a clinic or field school or when there are considerations related to accreditation, fairness, equity and/or academic standards.

Dates for expected completion of missing coursework must be set to ensure that grades are submitted in a timely manner. If a student is unable to complete outstanding course requirements before the submission of final grades for the course, existing policies and procedures governing deferred (DEF) grades and the approval of grades will apply.

4. Centralization of Accommodation and Concession Support in the Law Faculty

Law Academic Services (the front office) provides centralized support for and administration of academic accommodations and concessions. This means, instead of a student contacting their course instructors for most concession and accommodation needs, a student's primary contact will be Law Academic Services staff.

This centralization is in place for three main reasons:

- i. The Faculty of Law's anonymous grading policy and the use of codenames: To protect student anonymity in the grading process, assignments and exams worth more than 10% are graded under codename. For this reason, Law Academic Services manages the exam process, including exam accommodation and academic concessions for all students. Where assignments are graded under codename, students requesting extensions directly from their instructors would lose their anonymity in the grading process. For this reason, students must contact Law Academic Services instead of their instructor.
- ii. Minimizing the impact on students of having to make multiple requests: Students can contact Law Academic Services for any requests or questions they may have regarding accommodation or concessions. For example, students who become ill during a final exam period contact Law Academic Services, rather than contacting each of their instructors individually. This reduces the burden on students to make multiple requests and disclosures.
- iii. Ensuring consistency and fairness: Central administration of accommodation or concessions allows the Faculty to take a consistent, fair and equitable approach for all students.

5. Common Types of Academic Concession

The most common forms of academic concession are an extension for submitting an assignment or take-home exam or the deferral of an exam to a later date. Where circumstances do not allow a student to complete a course, a student can seek a withdrawal under extenuating circumstances (WE). In other circumstances, the Associate Dean and instructor may identify alternative academic arrangements that will allow the student to complete the course.

6. When to Contact your Instructor Regarding your Academic Concession

You can contact your instructor to request an academic concession with respect to course requirements that are not being completed under codename. For example, if you are not able to submit course work (an assignment, paper, blog post) on the scheduled due date or make a presentation on your assigned day, you can speak to your instructor to request an extension or to reschedule. For classes with mandatory attendance or participation requirements, you can speak with your instructor about being excused from a class and/or completing a make-up assignment for a missed class.

Please note that if you are uncomfortable raising an academic concession request directly with your instructor you may always make your request through Law Academic Services (the front office). This may be preferable where the circumstances require arrangements to be made in multiple classes and where you do not want to have to approach multiple instructors.

7. How to Submit a Request an Academic Concession During the Academic Term

As noted above, if you require an academic concession for course work that is **not to be submitted under codename**, you may request the concession from your instructor directly.

If you require a concession for course work that is to be **submitted under codename**, the request must be made to Fran Blake at lawcaa@uvic.ca to preserve your anonymity.

When submitting a written request for an in-course concession, please include the following details:

- Your full name and UVic student number
- Course and sections (e.g., "LAW 301-1 or LAW 109 A02")
- Justification
- You should explain the basis for your request (for example, illness) and the impact of your circumstances on your ability to complete the assignment or exam in question. You should explain how much of the assignment or exam you have already completed to date.
 - Explain what course requirements you need to extend or modify, with proposed dates to complete the course work.
- Please see an example request in the appendix.

The instructor or the Coordinator, Academic Administration, will respond to confirm or deny the request, or to propose an alternate length of time for an extension.

8. How to Submit a Request for a Deferral of an Exam

If you are unable to write an in-person or online exam at the scheduled time, you can request an academic concession to defer the exam to a later date.

When submitting a written request for a deferral, please include the following details:

- Your full name and UVic student number
- Course and sections (e.g., “LAW 301-1 or LAW 109 A02”)
- Justification
 - You should explain the basis for your request (for example, illness) and the impact of your circumstances on your ability to write the exam on the scheduled date.
- Please see an example request in the appendix.

If your request for a deferral is approved, you will be required to complete and sign an exam deferral undertaking that prohibits you from seeking or receiving any information from other students with respect to your deferred exam.

9. Checklist for academic concession requests

Before a student submits their request, they should make sure they have completed the following:

- Consider if you need to consult with the financial aid officer to understand the impact that the request may have upon finances.
- Provided all of the required information for the courses included in this request.
- Attached supporting documentation, **only if** your request is due to conflicting responsibilities.
- Reviewed your justification to ensure that you only provide information you are comfortable sharing with your course instructor or the Law Academic Services team.

10. When Will I Hear Back about my Request?

Law Academic Services will provide a response to your request within 48 hours. If you make your request on a Friday or during the weekend, you will hear back on Monday. The Law Academic Services office is not staffed on weekends or outside of regular business hours (Monday to Friday, 8:30am-4:30 pm).

If your request is with respect to an online exam or assignment you are in the process of writing, you can expect to hear back very quickly if it is during business hours. If you have not heard back within two hours, please call Fran Blake directly at 250-472-4793. If she is not available, please call 250-721-8152 for assistance.

If your request is outside of regular office hours and relates to an online exam, please consult the exam instructions.

If you have not received a response to your request within 48 hours, please forward your request to the Associate Dean, Academic and Student Relations (lawassoc@uvic.ca).

11. What to Do if a Request is Denied

If a request for academic concession is denied, a student may seek to have the decision reconsidered. They should provide reasons with their request for reconsideration and submit the request to the Associate Dean, Academic and Student Relations (lawassoc@uvic.ca). Reconsideration decisions will be made within 48 hours.

Students may [appeal](#) final decisions on an academic concession request to the Senate Committee on Appeals.

12. Who Will Have Access to my Personal Information?

Fran Blake, Coordinator, Academic Administration (lawcaa@uvic.ca), administers all academic concessions requests. She regularly consults with Yvonne Lawson, Associate Director, Academic Services and Andrew Newcombe, Associate Dean, Academic and Student Relations, on academic concessions requests. All three have access to your request.

Law Academic Services staff have access to student communications on a need-to-know basis. Other law faculty staff may be consulted with respect to an academic concession request if necessary. Your instructor may be consulted to obtain information about the type of academic concession that can be granted in light of the course requirements. Your instructor will be informed when a concession has been granted but will not be informed of the reasons for your request, unless you have agreed to disclosure.

13. Supports

There are a range of supports available to you at UVic. Please see the supports available through UVic Law's [Amicus Program](#), the [Student Wellness Centre](#) and [Indigenous Academic & Community Engagement](#).

In addition, students can seek assistance through the [UVic's Office of the Ombudsperson](#) and [Equity & Human Rights](#). Indigenous students can also seek support from a support coordinator with [Indigenous Academic & Community Engagement](#).

For a more extensive listing of supports and resources, please see the *Guide to Wellness Resources and Supports for Students at the Faculty of Law*.

14. Questions?

If you have any further questions regarding academic concessions, please email Fran Blake at lawcaa@uvic.ca, or call directly at 250-472-4793 or drop by the front office to ask Fran a question.

This guide will be updated to reflect current practice and guidelines.

Last updated, 19 October 2023

Appendix – Sample Requests

1/Examples of Submitting a Request for an ACADEMIC CONCESSION:

**Please remember in the subject line of your email to include the following: V#, your name, concession request*

The grounds for academic concessions are as follows:

1. Unexpected and unavoidable circumstances, including, but not limited to,
 - a. Illness, trauma or bereavement,
 - b. Personal or family affliction, including responsibility to care for a family member, or
 - c. Indigenous cultural or community obligations; and
2. Conflicting responsibilities, including, but not limited to,
 - a. Service in the armed forces or emergency services,
 - b. Representing the university, the province or the country at an academic event, an athletic competition or an artistic performance

Hi Fran,

I have an **assignment/exam** due in **LAW XXX** for **Professor NAME** on **dd/mm/yr** at 0:00.

[Provide details of the assignment/exam here (a paper due on Brightspace, or a 3 hr in-person exam, 24 hour take home exam, etc... and how much, if any, of the work you have completed for it]

I am requesting a concession on the grounds of **[insert category of concession here (categories are listed above)]**. I need a deferral because I **[explain your circumstances in as much detail as you feel is necessary but only within your personal comfort to disclose. You do not need to share any information that is sensitive, confidential or that may make you feel uncomfortable.]**

My codename is **XXXXXXXXXX**.

Thanks,

NAME