



## University of Pittsburgh University-wide Closure and Class Cancellation Policy

**Implementing Executive:** Senior Vice Chancellor for Business and Operations  
**Responsible Unit(s):** Department of Public Safety and Emergency Management  
**Effective Date:** November 11, 2019  
**Status:** Interim Policy

### I. Purpose

This Policy provides the standard for both University-wide class cancellation and closure of the University and establishes the roles and responsibilities in the rare instance in which the entire University is closed. The objective is to establish standard operating procedures that are clear in direction during the cancellation of all classes and/or events or activities at the University. By adopting this Policy, the University seeks to ensure the safety and well-being of University Members, to enhance the timely communication of class cancellations and University closure, and to standardize the efficiency and effectiveness of cancellation and closing procedures.

For purposes of this Policy, the use of “University” refers only to the Pittsburgh Campus. The presidents of regional campuses are authorized to make decisions on closure and class cancellations for their respective campuses.

### II. Scope

This Policy applies to the cancellation of all classes and/or the closure of the entire University for part of a day or for a full-day. All University Members (as defined below) are governed by this Policy. This Policy replaces University Policy 07-04-02, Extreme Weather Conditions.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with other related University protocols, procedures, and guidelines. Specifically, for emergency evacuation procedures and closures isolated to specific buildings, grounds, etc., please refer to Appendix D and Appendix G of the Department of Public Safety and the Emergency Management Guidelines.

### III. Definitions

Closure, full-day: A closure that encompasses the entirety of a calendar day that necessitates the cancellation of all classes, activities, and events.

Closure, partial-day: A closure that is restricted to a portion of a calendar day that necessitates the cancellation of all classes, activities, and events during impacted hours.

Essential personnel: An individual officially designated, in accordance with this Policy, as critical to the operations of a particular unit, such that their presence is required regardless of an emergency situation and/or closure. Essential personnel are designated by the Chancellor and/or a member of Senior Leadership, or their designee(s). A listing of essential personnel will be maintained by each Responsibility Center head for their respective areas and by the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Management. Individuals may be designated as essential on a situational basis.

Staff, Exempt: Staff not eligible for overtime pay according to federal and state law.

Staff, Non-exempt: Staff eligible for overtime pay or compensatory time off according to federal and state law and University designation.

University Members: All full-time and part-time faculty, staff, students, visitors, volunteers, postdoctoral fellows, fellows, trainees, and interns at the University.

#### **IV. Policy**

It is the policy of the University to remain open. In rare instances, circumstances beyond the University's control may necessitate a closure of the University which could include cancelling all classes and/or events or activities during the affected period. The Chancellor will make that decision in consultation with appropriate members of the University's administration. The presidents of Regional Campuses are authorized to officially close their respective campuses, including classes held at those locations.

When executing this Policy, the Chancellor may decide to either: (1) close the entire University, including cancelling all classes, events, and activities; or (2) cancel classes at the University, but allow certain University events and activities to continue.

In both cases (closure and class cancellation), faculty and students are not required to report to the University; Section IV.B below provides the requirements and responsibilities of those communities. In both cases, only essential personnel are required to report to the University; Section IV.C below provides further information to staff. The number and type of essential personnel may vary depending on the circumstances. In both cases, the Director of Athletics must consult with the Chancellor on the continuation of home and/or away athletic competition activities. The Chancellor will consult with relevant administrators about the continuance of other activities. Employees covered by collective bargaining agreements will be governed by the terms of those agreements.

In instances of extreme weather or natural disaster when the University is not closed, University Members (including all faculty, staff, and students) are urged to use their own discretion in deciding whether they can safely commute to the University. If personal health or safety is at issue in that decision, responsible judgment should be used in accordance with this Policy. For the purposes of this Policy, Deans, faculty, instructors, supervisors, and others with similar authority should honor the reasonable use of personal discretion. Section V of this Policy outlines responsibilities related to honoring the use of discretion. University

Members who would like to report noncompliance with this standard may do so as outlined in Section VI.

Further information regarding faculty and student responsibilities is found in Section IV.B below. Further information regarding staff responsibilities is found in Section IV.C below.

#### **A. Closure or Class Cancellation Announcements**

During the rare instance of a University closure or class cancellation, University Members will be informed by the following communication methods: University emergency notification service (ENS), University main webpage (pitt.edu), University social media channels, and the emergency website (emergency.pitt.edu). In addition, the University will update local news outlets about its operating status.

Unless the period of closure is defined, when it is deemed safe for the University to return to normal operating procedures, communication will be channeled through the same methods as listed above.

In instances of closure or class cancellation that are foreseeable (e.g., extreme weather), the University will strive to make its determination to close the University by 6:00 A.M. for a full-day closure or a morning partial-day closure; or by 12:00 P.M. for an afternoon/evening partial-day closure.

In instances of closure or class cancellation that are not foreseeable (e.g., extensive power outages), the determination to close the University for a full-day closure or a partial-day closure will be made as circumstances dictate, and as efficiently and effectively as possible, to ensure the safety of University Members and the community.

#### **B. Academic Activities (Faculty and Students)**

When classes are cancelled, including when the University is officially closed, Deans will provide direction to instructors and students regarding how cancelled classes and other instruction time will be addressed in their respective Schools.

If the University remains open and classes are not cancelled, faculty and other instructors who are unable to meet a scheduled class must contact their School or Department to inform them that the class is cancelled because of the instructor's inability to arrive on campus pursuant to this Policy. If the University is open, students who are unable to meet a scheduled class should contact the faculty member or instructor for that class, if they are unable to arrive on campus. Instructors must follow guidance provided by their respective Dean in these instances.

University-affiliated academic experiences that occur off-campus (e.g., student teaching, research, internships) during a University closure will operate in accordance with guidance provided by Deans. University Members are urged to use their own discretion in deciding whether they can safely commute to the host location. If personal health or safety is at issue in that decision, responsible judgment should be used in accordance with this Policy.

In consultation with the Provost, Deans are authorized and encouraged to provide further direction on the application of this Policy to their respective schools.

### **C. Staff Employees**

If the University is officially closed, essential functions must be maintained, and essential personnel may be required to report to work to perform those functions. Essential personnel at the University will be designated by the Chancellor and/or a member of Senior Leadership, or their designee(s). A listing of essential personnel will be maintained by each Responsibility Center head for their respective areas. A listing of all essential personnel must also be maintained by the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Management. Essential personnel at the Regional Campuses will be designated by the respective Regional Campus president.

- i. Non-Exempt Staff. When a partial-day or full-day closure is announced, non-exempt staff who are not essential personnel will be authorized to be absent from work and will be compensated at their regular rate of pay for the hours they are scheduled to work. The hours for which such employees are paid but do not work because of a partial-day or full-day closure will result in a reduced workweek and will not be counted as hours worked for overtime purposes.

When a partial-day or full-day closure is announced, non-exempt staff who are also essential personnel and are required to work during such closures will be compensated at 1 ½ times their regular rate of pay during the period of the closing. Such employees will not be given time off at a later date for hours worked during the period of closing. If such essential employees do not remain at their place of work and perform duties as assigned, they will not be paid for the hours they would normally have worked during such period, unless there is a valid and compelling reason for such absence.

- ii. Exempt Staff. When a partial-day or full-day closure is announced, exempt staff who are not essential personnel will be authorized to be absent from work and will not be penalized in salary or required to use personal, vacation, or sick leave.

When a partial-day or full-day closure is announced, exempt staff who are essential personnel and are required to work during such closures will be eligible for compensatory time.

- iii. All Employees. All employees on pre-approved vacation, personal, or sick leave when a partial-day or full-day closure is announced will be charged with the designation of such leave (e.g., vacation, personal, sick).

**V. Responsibilities**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
Chancellor	Makes the determination to cancel classes and/or close the University in consultation with appropriate members of University administration. Designates essential personnel with Senior Leadership Team.
Provost	Consult with Deans about application of this policy to their schools and communication procedures.
Office of University Communications	Assists with the coordination in communicating the University’s operating status to University Members and general public.
Deans	Provide and publicize supplemental guidance in accordance with this Policy to respective school instructors and students, in consultation with the Provost.
Faculty	Complies with supplemental guidance issued by respective school Dean, including when exercising the use of personal discretion and honoring the use of that discretion by students.
Staff	Complies with expectations set forth by respective supervisor/responsibility center head, including when exercising the use of personal discretion.
Students	Complies with supplemental guidance issued by respective Deans, and requirements set by faculty/instructor assigned to their classes, including when exercising the use of personal discretion.
Supervisors/Responsibility Center Head	When appropriate designates essential personnel. Maintains a list of essential personnel and notifies the designated staff as well as relevant University administration, consistent with this Policy. Complies with the standard of honoring the use of personal discretion by staff, and/or requests to use

	accrued time (e.g., vacation) for the purposes of this Policy.
--	--

## **VI. Reporting Non-compliance**

University members who would like to report potential noncompliance with the standard of honoring reasonable use of personal discretion for the purposes of this Policy may do so through the following channels:

- Faculty should contact their school Dean.
- Staff should contact Employee & Labor Relations, Office of Human Resources.
- Students should consult Section III of the Academic Integrity Guidelines.

## **VII. Contact Information/Public Accessibility**

This policy is posted on the Office of Policy Development & Management website: <https://www.policy.pitt.edu>.

University Members are encouraged to contact the Department of Public Safety & Emergency Management with questions regarding this policy. Contact information for that Department is available at <https://www.emergency.pitt.edu>. A University Member who wishes to report potential noncompliance must do so pursuant to Section VI.

### **Appendix A: Related Authorities**

[University of Pittsburgh Emergency Management Guidelines](#)  
[Academic Integrity Guidelines](#)