

Policy Name:	University Closure		
Policy No:	8.2	Approval Authority:	Senior Management Team
Volume:	8. Facilities Management	Responsible Executive:	Director of Facilities
Chapter:	2. University Closure	Responsible Office:	Facilities Management
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Policy Statement

The safety of our students, staff and faculty is of utmost importance. NSCAD may change its operating status when adverse conditions such as severe weather conditions or power outages which could put staff, faculty and students at risk and require the university to restrict or reduce its normal activities or services.

Reason for Policy

The University wishes to protect the safety of its community members, research, and facilities in periods of severe weather or other emergency conditions. Toward that end, the University is committed to operational consistency and efficiency when a change in operating status is warranted.

Policy Applies to

- All Departments and Divisions of the University

Who Should Read this Policy

- All members of the University community
- Chairs, Directors and Supervisors
- Students

Contacts

The meaning and application of this policy: Director of Facilities Management, 902-494-8215, rturple@nscad.ca

Definitions

Curtailement: For the purposes of this policy “curtailement” means a reduction or restriction of activities and services on some or all of NSCAD’s campuses. The extent of any such reduction or restriction may differ depending on the particular circumstances and the nature of the division, unit or service area. In effect, it is rare that the University would close completely, it may be decided that classes are cancelled. Some operational units have responsibility for maintaining Essential Services, restoring services or securing the campuses.

Closure: In some circumstances, the university may be closed for part of a day or a full day. Closed for the purposes of this policy means classes during this period are not held, meetings or other scheduled events during this period are cancelled, scheduled examination are cancelled, studios are closed, buildings are secured and closed, staff, other than those providing Essential Services are not expected to be at work for the part of the day the University is closed.

Essential services: Those services that have been specifically and formally identified as essential to the ongoing operation of the University and its facilities and which are required during curtailment of operations or closure of the University. These include Security and Facilities Management. Also if and as required, designated staff in the Office of Student Experience, Marketing & Communications, Studio and Shop Technicians (if shops and studios are opened) and Computer Services.

Reasonable effort: To try to the best of their ability, using the resources available to them, to get into work safely based on the weather conditions.

Severe weather conditions: Intense or extremely poor weather conditions including but not limited to heavy blowing snow and wind, ice and freezing rain, blizzard-like conditions, and conditions for which police are recommending people stay off the roads and highways.

The Policy

1. Principles

- 1.1. The University will curtail/cancel classes and/or curtail operations or close the University as a result of severe weather conditions or power outages. The following factors are taken into consideration when deciding upon a curtailment or closure:
 - 1.1.1 state of emergency or impending state of emergency;
 - 1.1.2 availability of public transport;
 - 1.1.3 ability to maintain campus roadways, parking lots, paths, stairs and building emergency egress exits in safe condition;
 - 1.1.4 ability to access and use the campus safely;
 - 1.1.5 police reports advising to stay off the roads and highways;
 - 1.1.6 severe weather conditions (current and forecast) and warnings issued by Environment Canada.
- 1.2. When classes are cancelled but the University is not closed, offices and service areas will remain open provided some staff members are present and provided all emergency exits from the buildings can be maintained in a safe manner. If students are using the studios, it is expected that regular studio technician staffing will be in place for safe operations.
- 1.3. As much notice as possible will be given regarding a curtailment or closure.
- 1.4. In the case of a full closure, those employees and units that have responsibilities for maintaining Essential Services, restoring services, securing the campus or providing needed support for NSCAD students and staff will be required to report for duty. Also, because operations in particular areas will be resumed as feasible and necessary, all employees are deemed to be “on call” for what would otherwise be a normal work day and available to return to work upon notification by their supervisor or through media announcements.

2. Responsibilities

- 2.1. The Vice-President, Finance and Administration in consultation with the Director of Facilities Management, is responsible to ensure the policy and processes described herein are observed.
- 2.2. The Vice-President, Finance and Administration and the President under advisement by the Director of Facilities Management, are responsible to decide whether to curtail or cancel classes, and curtail operations or close the University as soon as possible, between to 6:00 and 7:00 am.
- 2.3. The Director of Facilities Management is responsible to:
 - 2.3.1. Monitor weather conditions via Environment Canada and similar reports and communicate regularly with other Halifax Universities on potential plans for closure or curtailment.

- 2.3.2. Notify the Vice-President, Finance and Administration, President, and Vice-President, Academic and Research or designate of any potential weather issues;
- 2.3.3. Communicate curtailment/closure quickly including prompt linkage with the Office of University Relations.
- 2.4. The Office of University Relations is responsible to:
 - 2.4.1. Communicate curtailment/closure promptly via radio and online methods such as the NSCAD website, NSCAD Mobile App, Facebook and Twitter and other social media as deemed appropriate. This is done between 6:00 and 7:00 am. These announcements will indicate whether it is classes only that are cancelled or whether the University or parts thereof are curtailed or closed.
 - 2.5. Members of the University community are responsible to monitor at least one of the following platforms for curtailment/closure notices: CBC Radio, Facebook, Twitter, the NSCAD Mobile App and the NSCAD website.
 - 2.6. Operation and academic units are responsible for determining which services will be required to operate in the event of a curtailment or closure, this will vary depending on the circumstances and safety requirements. Unless the campus(es) building is officially closed, Chairs, Directors and Managers are not authorized to close their units without expressed written authorization from the university President. If students are working in studios, regular staffing must be in place for safety requirements.
 - 2.7. When the University does not close or delay opening due to adverse weather conditions, in particular adverse weather conditions, student and employees are responsible for determining when these conditions make their travel unsafe.
3. Authority for curtailment or cancellation
 - 3.1. Individual campuses and departments cannot override a decision of the Vice-President, Finance & Administration and President to curtail operations or close the University (i.e., Departments and Divisions may not stay open if it is declared that the University is closed; similarly, Departments and Divisions may not declare themselves closed unless the University is closed).
 - 3.2. Faculty shall not cancel daytime or evening classes unless prior official notice has been given by the University that classes have been cancelled and/or the University is closed.
4. General
 - 4.1. In some cases, if the Director of Facilities Management determines, along with the other Halifax Universities and the Vice President Finance and Administration, in consultation with the President, that expected weather conditions will or could be severe, the decision could be made the night before to curtail or close the University for part or all of the next day. This would be re-evaluated by 6:00am.
 - 4.2. If severe weather conditions are such that drifting snow cannot be kept clear from emergency exits and sidewalks leading away from the exits, then for fire safety reasons the school or certain campus buildings may be closed until exits can be properly maintained. This would result in full lock down of the campuses so that only security and maintenance staff could gain access. In these circumstances, no employees or students are permitted to enter the buildings without the expressed written authorization of the Director of Facilities Management.
 - 4.3. If severe conditions develop during the day, a decision will be made whether to curtail/cancel classes and/or curtail operations or fully close the University. The decision will be communicated immediately by the Director of Facilities Management to the Vice-President, Academic and Research, Office of Student Experience, the Office of University Relations, and the Director of Human Resources, Security, and the Service Centre. The information will be posted on the web site and transmitted via Facebook, Twitter and the NSCAD Mobile App. Messages will be updated on the main switchboard and Student and Academic Services main line.

- 4.4. Students in evening credit classes should verify with the Office of Academic Affairs & Research whether evening classes will be held as scheduled. Students planning to work in studios should verify with the Office of Academic Affairs & Research whether technician staffing is in place for safe operations.
 - 4.5. The University may require or permit certain buildings, facilities or departments to re-open or provide limited operations, prior to a full re-opening of the University, at the discretion of the President.
 - 4.6. If there is no announcement concerning NSCAD, members of the University are to assume that the University will be open and operating as usual.
5. Essential Services
- 5.1. When a University closure has been declared due to severe weather conditions, those functions which the Senior Management Team has formally designated as Essential Services (including but not limited to Security and Facilities Management) will be staffed.
 - 5.2. Essential employees are those needed on campus to meet the needs of students, or general operations when the University and/or the local roads are closed.
 - 5.3. A supervisor or manager in an area where Essential Service employees must report to, or remain at work even when the University is closed must do the following prior to winter weather:
 - 5.3.1. Ensure that these staff members are identified as essential employees and that they are aware of their status;
 - 5.3.2. Verify that each essential employee who will be needed to report to work during a University and/or road closure understands the timing of his or her shift and has an opportunity to discuss any issues or concerns.
6. Attendance during inclement weather
- 6.1. When classes have been cancelled but the University has not been closed, all staff are expected to make every reasonable effort to reach the University, even though arrival may be delayed beyond the usual scheduled start of work.
 - 6.2. Services such as the Library, Student Services, Computer Services, Facilities Management, Student Accounts, Studios, Learning Commons, Service Centre, Art Supply Store, Metal Shop and Wood Shop are expected to remain open for use with appropriate staffing to ensure safety.
 - 6.3. Supervisors should be reasonably understanding and flexible regarding a staff member's individual needs during inclement weather, especially if the employee has a long commute to and from work.
 - 6.4. A faculty or staff member who believes that it is unsafe to travel should use his or her judgment and remain at home if that is the most prudent action. These individuals must contact their immediate supervisor to explain their particular circumstances. Absences should be reported in the normal way (i.e. via the Immediate Supervisor).
 - 6.5. All regular employees will receive their pay in the event of a closure which is of short-term duration. Payment is conditional upon being available to report to work and reporting to or remaining at work when requested to do so. Employees who are on vacation, sick leave or any other form of approved paid leave will receive their regular pay and are not entitled to equivalent time off at a later date. Should personal circumstances mean that an individual is unable to report to work or remain at work when requested to do so, the responsible supervisor may schedule vacation time for the employee so that regular pay is maintained. Casual and short term temporary contract employees will be paid from the time they report to work, if required to do so, and for the actual time worked.
 - 6.6. Faculty or staff absences from work when the University is open are to be managed as dictated by the prevailing collective agreement or University policy.

7. Processes

7.1. Communications of curtailment or closure

7.1.1. The Office of University Relations will relay the information to CBC Radio 90.5 FM, for broadcast between 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m and will update the NSCAD website, post notices via Facebook and Twitter and make a push notification on the NSCAD Mobile App.

7.1.2. Outgoing messages will be updated on the main switchboard and the main phone line of Student and Academic Services.

8. Compliance

8.1. Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination, in accordance with the relevant collective agreement or employment guidelines. NSCAD also retains the right to pursue any action, including criminal prosecution and civil remedies, when misuse of its information or resources is suspected either during the course of employment or after the termination of employment.

8.2. This policy is intended to be complementary to other policies and collective agreements governing the conduct of faculty and staff. In situations where this policy may be in conflict with Collective Agreements, the Collective Agreements shall prevail.

Forms and Tools

N/A

University Closure Policy <http://nscad.ca/site-nscad/media/nscad/8.2UniversityClosurePolicy.pdf>