

FAQs re Fall 2020 Semester at the Faculty of Law, Common Law Section

Will the law school be holding in-person classes this Fall?

All classes for all years will be available via distance and online format, for the entire Fall 2020 semester. If public health authorities permit, we will consider holding in-person gatherings, including classes, but we emphasize that we will not be holding classes that will be exclusively in-person during the Fall 2020 semester.

Will we be starting at a distance or online and then moving to in-person when the restrictions are relaxed?

For the Fall 2020 semester, all classes in the Common Law Section will be delivered via distance and online format for the entire semester. It may be possible later in the term to have in-person gatherings, depending on public health restrictions. However, any course that starts via distance or online will continue to provide a distance option for all students. Moreover, any decision whether or not to return to in-person teaching, if permitted, will be the decision of the individual instructor.

Do I have to reside in Ottawa to attend class?

No. You do not have to reside in Ottawa for the Fall 2020 semester. You will not be required to attend any in-person classes or meetings during the Fall 2020 semester at the Common Law Section.

Will I have access to campus libraries?

The University will follow public health guidelines and applicable legislation regarding social gatherings and the opening of workplaces. It is not clear when the libraries will be open for in-person use by students. All students have and will continue to have online access to the library's digital collections.

Will I be able to come to Fauteux or to campus to work if I want?

The University will follow public health guidelines and applicable legislation regarding social gatherings and the opening of workplaces. We are unlikely to know whether the law school buildings and other University buildings will be open for in-person use by students until later in the summer.

What will happen in January 2021?

We do not yet know the plans for January 2021 and beyond. We will follow the lead of public health authorities and the broader University community and will make decisions as early as we can. We will be in a better position to evaluate the January 2021 term and the Winter 2021 term in September 2020.

How will I buy my textbooks?

Professors are encouraged to rely on online resources and e-books where possible. Many publishers have e-versions of their textbooks available for purchase (e.g. Emond and Irwin Law). You can also order a hard copy directly from the publisher. Some texts may be available on commercial sites like Amazon. Your professor will provide you with the information you need on textbook purchases prior to the start of classes in September.

How will courses be delivered through distance and online formats?

We are working with our professors to transition to distance and online teaching and learning. Professors will use a variety of methods, depending on the pedagogical aim of their course and teaching style. Examples include synchronous lectures (“live” lectures that will occur at a scheduled class time) and asynchronous lectures (pre-recorded and available to be watched at the student’s convenience; narrated PowerPoint slides; etc.).

Do I have to attend online lectures?

Yes. Students are expected to attend all assigned lectures and watch all assigned material. Professors will communicate attendance policies in their syllabi.

Will I have the chance to participate in class?

Yes. Distance learning platforms have “chat” features or other options that allow students to raise their hand and participate orally as you would in person or by sending in written questions. You will have the chance to ask questions as you would in person and you will often have additional ways to participate through distance and online courses.

How will I be evaluated and graded for the Fall 2020 semester?

All evaluation in Fall 2020 will be online. This includes assignment distribution and return, tests, oral advocacy, student presentations, final examinations. No in-person evaluation will take place. Grading will be on an alphanumeric scheme and the Faculty Grading Guidelines will apply. You can access the Guidelines [here](#).

What if I cannot regularly attend online classes because of childcare or other responsibilities?

In the coming months, we will provide you with more information about accommodation requests. Please note that students will be expected to attend class but may be given excused absences in some circumstances.

What if I have unreliable internet service?

As a rule, students are responsible for their own technology and internet connection. However, if you have serious concerns about internet access and reliability in your community, we ask that you contact the Vice Deans at VDCMLevaluations@gmail.com. The Vice Deans are working to develop solutions and design accommodations to address specific student challenges. In the coming months, we will provide you with more information about this process. Issues will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Will student clubs continue to operate?

The Common Law Student Society (AÉCLSS) will be working to create a vibrant online community for students. More information will follow from student leadership. For more details, keep an eye on the AÉCLSS [website](#).

Will there be any change in tuition fees?

Tuition for all programs is set by the University’s Board of Governors. The Board of Governors has approved tuition for the JD program for the 2020-2021 academic year at the same level as 2019-2020.

What if I live in the Ottawa area and want to meet with other students or my professor?

Our top priority is the health and well-being of our students, staff, and faculty. At the moment, physical distancing measures do not support meetings between individuals who do not reside in the same household. If restrictions are eased, students are of course welcome and encouraged to make social arrangements with other students. Meetings with professors will depend entirely on the professor.

For the Fall 2020 semester, no meetings will be required and no evaluation or grading will depend on any in-person meetings.

Other law schools are saying they may move to in-person classes if allowed. Why didn't uOttawa take that approach?

Our primary concern is the health and well-being of our students, staff and faculty. We fully respect the advice of public health experts and government officials who warn that physical distancing measures will be in place for the foreseeable future. We recognize that times are uncertain and made the decision to offer a concrete plan to our students. Our plan allows students to choose to remain in their place of primary residence and not incur rental and other costs of moving to Ottawa for the Fall 2020 term. Given that we have no date yet as to when physical distancing measures will be relaxed, we decided that the economic impact of uncertainty should not be borne by our students.

We will be as relieved as our students once restrictions are eased. The return to campus will be a moment of true celebration.

How will you make sure that my education isn't compromised by an online model? Will professors receive training on how to deliver online courses?

We have a committee of experts on online teaching models that is preparing our Faculty. Many professors already have considerable experience in online teaching environments. We are sharing best practices and taking advantage of all available training. Tech support will be added to make sure that courses run with few glitches.

Professors are prepared to offer courses that are just as challenging and interesting as they would be in person.

Will I have access to the University gym to work out?

The University will follow public health guidelines and applicable legislation regarding social gatherings and the opening of workplaces. We are unlikely to know whether University athletic facilities will be open until the late summer.

I already signed a lease for September 2020. Can I cancel it?

We cannot give you legal advice about your lease or any other matter. All uOttawa students can get legal advice through the University of Ottawa Community Clinic, which can be accessed [here](#).

I was planning on going on an exchange program in the Fall 2020. What is happening with those? Are they proceeding or are they cancelled?

Our primary consideration is student health and safety. The University has not yet made a decision regarding international exchange programs for the Fall 2020 semester. We are

awaiting guidance from the University this month and we will provide more information to you by the end of May, in advance of course registration in June for the 2020-2021 academic year.

What about full-year exchange programs and programs for the January 2021 term or Winter 2021?

Our primary consideration is student health and safety. The University has not yet made a decision regarding international exchange programs for the 2020-2021 academic year. We are awaiting guidance from the University this month and we will provide more information to you by the end of May, in advance of course registration in June for the 2020-2021 academic year.

I am an incoming student. Can I defer my offer of admission if I am unable to begin classes in September?

Each year, we can only grant a limited number of deferrals. Our policy is to prioritize deferrals for students with the most compelling grounds, such as medical reasons that make it impossible to begin classes in September. We can only grant deferrals for a one-year period, i.e. until September 2021.

To request a deferral, please email the Admissions Committee at comlaw@uOttawa.ca no later than July 31, 2020. Unfortunately, we will be unable to consider requests placed after this date. Students seeking a deferral should clearly lay out the reasons for their request, providing supporting documentation if available.

I am a returning student. Can I take a leave of absence if I am unable to resume classes in September?

Under our [Academic Regulations](#), leaves of absence (up to 24 months) must be authorized by the Assistant Dean, JD Program. In deciding whether to authorize a leave of absence, the Assistant Dean will consider whether the student has compelling grounds for the request, such as health or compassionate grounds. If you need to request a leave of absence, please email your request to the Common Law Student Centre (clawacad@uOttawa.ca) to the attention of the Assistant Dean, JD Program.