



September 2, 2020

## MEMORANDUM

To: Deans, UBC Vancouver campus  
Associate Deans, Academic, UBC Vancouver campus

From: Andrew Szeri, Provost and Vice-President Academic, UBC Vancouver

Copy: Murali Chandrashekar, Vice-Provost, International  
Simon Bates, Associate Provost, Teaching & Learning  
Christopher Eaton, Associate Registrar for Academic Governance & Director, Senate & Curriculum  
Kate Ross, Associate Vice-President, Enrolment Services and Registrar

Re: **Statement regarding online learning for international students**

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The COVID-19 pandemic has created challenges with respect to online and remote learning, particularly for international students who will not be residing in Canada this fall. There exists potential restriction and/or censorship of online course content by the governments of some foreign countries where international students reside. The Provost's office has developed the following statement pertaining to the potential restrictions to international students' online learning experiences as a result of remote learning:

*During this pandemic, the shift to online learning has greatly altered teaching and studying at UBC, including changes to health and safety considerations. Keep in mind that some UBC courses might cover topics that are censored or considered illegal by non-Canadian governments. This may include, but is not limited to, human rights, representative government, defamation, obscenity, gender or sexuality, and historical or current geopolitical controversies. If you are a student living abroad, you will be subject to the laws of your local jurisdiction, and your local authorities might limit your access to course material or take punitive action against you. UBC is strongly committed to academic freedom, but has no control over foreign authorities (please visit <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,33,86,0> for an articulation of the values of the University conveyed in the Senate Statement on Academic Freedom). Thus, we recognize that students will have legitimate reason to exercise caution in studying certain subjects. If you have concerns regarding your personal situation, consider postponing taking a course with manifest risks, until you are back on campus or reach out to your academic advisor to find substitute courses. For further information and support, please visit: <http://academic.ubc.ca/support-resources/freedom-expression>*

We request that all instructors in all Faculties include this statement in their syllabus.

To anticipate potential requests for academic concessions for students who do postpone courses owing to the above, the Registrar is preparing a memorandum to Deans and academic advisors to expand the type of concessions in light of these challenges.

In any UBC course, students should be mindful that when they partake in class discussions or communicate to the members of the class, that for some students living abroad, sensitive material might result in repercussions. Please note that while a Virtual Private Network (VPN) may make it more difficult to access personal information, it does not make it impossible, and students' identity may be known to



other students in your class regardless.

If you have any questions, please contact:  
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