



# Policy on Weather and Other Emergency Response

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## Office of the President

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[Comment (to be removed after approval): This document was adapted from the current employee handbook to reduce the number of policy statements in the handbook. It has been slightly revised for clarity and to align with the format of the policy on policies.]

**Policy Purpose:** This policy ensures the safety and well-being of the community by allowing for schedule adjustments or closures during severe weather or other emergencies.

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## POLICY STATEMENT

New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology (NMT) is committed to balancing its educational, research, business, and support activities with the safety and well-being of its students, faculty, and staff. In the event of severe weather or other emergencies, the President or their designee may temporarily close, suspend, or alter University operations to protect the campus community.

### GENERAL POLICY

The intent of this policy is to provide a consistent and cohesive process in the instances where there is a need to close the campus due to inclement weather or other emergencies. The policy does not include all instances that may arise, causing the University to take closure actions.

#### Inclement Weather and Emergency Closure Policy

1. **Closure or Suspension:** The President or their designee has the authority to suspend University operations or close the University during severe weather or emergencies. This policy applies to all hours, including both regular business hours (8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.) and times outside of them. Closure or suspension may also occur due to non-weather-related emergencies such as chemical leaks, fires, or other critical incidents.
2. **Coordination with Local Schools:** NMT, after consultation with appropriate members of the emergency preparedness team, may coordinate campus delays and closures with actions taken by local K-12 schools.
3. **Communication:** NMT will promptly communicate closures, delays, or other emergency measures to the campus community through official channels, including the University website, email, and Emergency Notification System.

#### Employee Expectations

During inclement weather, employees are expected to report to work as scheduled. However, they are encouraged to prioritize their safety when fulfilling their employment obligations.

- **Teleworking Staff (See OP-02-Policy on University Flexible Work):** Employees on hybrid or fully remote teleworking arrangements will continue their regular duties during campus closures unless otherwise notified of changes to their work plan.
- **Non-Teleworking Staff (Excluding “Essential Personnel”):** Supervisors will assess whether non-teleworking staff can perform appropriate duties remotely and, where feasible, may assign telework tasks during closures. Staff without teleworking options may be assigned alternative duties, such as online training or administrative tasks, to ensure equity during closures.
- **Essential Personnel:** Essential personnel, designated at various levels, are required to report to work to ensure the safety and operational continuity of the campus.

- **Institutional Leave:** At the discretion of the President, regular full-time and part-time staff may be granted institutional leave during closures or delays. In such cases, employees will not be expected to perform work duties for the duration of the leave. Emergency and temporary staff employees will receive leave without pay unless otherwise directed.

### **Instruction During Inclement Weather**

1. **Flexibility in Instruction:** Faculty and students are expected to exercise flexibility and responsibility regarding classes and assignments during inclement weather. Instructors should be prepared to adjust assignments/grading and make alternative arrangements for affected students. Similarly, it is the responsibility of the student to immediately contact each faculty member if they decide not to travel to campus to explain the circumstances and to determine the need to complete any missed assignments. Any changes in due dates, or completion of missed assignments, are at the discretion of the faculty member.
2. **Final Exams:** If closure, abridgments, or delays occur during final exam week, the Provost and VP of Academic Affairs will provide options and guidelines on how to make final class assessments. These options may include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - Assign students' current grades as final grades.
  - Arrange for make-up exams or alternative assignments, such as take-home exams, projects, or reports.
3. **University Closure or Suspension of Operations:** If the University closes or suspends on-campus operations due to inclement weather, faculty, if feasible, should offer voluntary, online instruction (including help sessions) through NMT's online capabilities. Faculty should recognize that not all students may have access to appropriate technology to participate. Assignments that were due shall be extended to when the University re-opens or at the next class meeting, as determined by the instructor. It is incumbent upon both the faculty to communicate the change and for students to monitor their official NMT student email account so that they can receive notifications.
4. **Missed Assignments and Coursework:** Students are responsible for all missed assignments during inclement weather (in situations where the University remains open) within a timeframe to be determined by the professor. When notified by a student, professors are asked to honor the absence as excused and not count against any attendance penalty for the coursework.

### **Delayed Opening**

1. **Class Schedule Adjustments:** If a delay is announced:
  - Classes scheduled to begin and end before the delayed start time will not be held and may be rescheduled.
  - Classes scheduled to be in progress at the delayed start time will begin at the delayed start and end at their regular time.
  - Classes scheduled to begin at or after the delayed start time will proceed as usual.

2. **Faculty Communication:** Faculty members unable to travel or conduct on-campus classes should promptly notify their chairperson, academic dean, and students of any changes to regularly scheduled events (e.g., colleague coverage, canceled, temporarily moved online).
3. **Event Status Communication:** University departments and offices hosting events are responsible for advising participants about the status of events during declared closures or delays.

### **Responsibilities and Preparedness**

1. **Emergency Preparedness Team:** An appointed group of administrators is responsible for reviewing and updating emergency procedures. This team includes key University personnel, such as the President, Vice President of Student Affairs, Provost and VP of Academic Affairs, VP of Administration and Finance, VP of Research, Chief Information Officer, Chief of Police, Director of Environmental Safety, Director of Research Compliance, Director of Communications, and other subject matter experts (e.g., lab safety) as designated.
2. **Essential Personnel:** Essential personnel, designated at various levels, are required to report to work to ensure the safety and operational continuity of the campus.

### **DEFINITIONS**

- **Disaster:** Major fires or natural catastrophes, such as floods.
- **Emergency:** Situations requiring immediate attention, including severe weather, chemical leaks, or security threats.
- **Closure:** The University will not be open for the day or will close before the end of the regular workday. When the university is closed, classes are not held, administrative offices are closed, and events are canceled.
- **Suspension:** The University may temporarily suspend some or all operations within the institution. When university operations are suspended, classes are not held, administrative offices are closed, and events are canceled unless otherwise noted.
- **Delay:** The University will open at a specified delayed time. Classes and operations will begin at this time.

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