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**Policy: GCSU Modified Operations Policy**

**Approval Date:**

**Effective Date:**

**Contact Information: GCSU Human Resources, (478) 445-xxxx**

**Purpose:**
This policy outlines the procedures and guidelines to ensure that students, faculty, and staff can effectively manage academic responsibilities and operations during inclement weather conditions or other emergencies that may cause the university to delay opening or move to modified operations.

The Office of the President, in consultation with the GCSU Office of Public Safety and other institutional officials will determine when inclement weather or an emergency impacts GCSU’s normal operations. Per the USG *Inclement Weather or Other Emergencies Policy*, when the university is **closed** due to weather conditions or an emergency, all classes will be canceled, and non-essential personnel will not be expected to work. This policy herein describes the university in a state of modified operations, not university closure.

**Scope:**
This policy applies to all students, faculty, and staff, covering instances when inclement weather (such as snowstorms, hurricanes, extreme heat, flooding, etc.) or other emergency forces the university to modify or delay operations. This policy is implemented at the university level and applies to the institution as a whole and does not apply to individual cases.

**Associated Policies/Regulations:**

University System of Georgia’s [Human Resources Administrative Manual; *Time Away From Work: Inclement Weather Or Other Emergencies*](https://www.usg.edu/hr/assets/hr/hrap_manual/HRAP_Inclement_Weather_or_Other_Emergencies_Time_Away_from_Work.pdf)

**Definitions and Terms:**

*Inclement weather:* Inclement weather is a term used to describe harsh weather conditions that are dangerous or undesirable.  Examples of inclement weather can include blizzards, floods, hurricanes, hail, high winds, snow, and extreme temperatures. Inclement weather is often accompanied by conditions that make it unsafe or unreasonable for work or travel to campus.

*Emergency:* a situation that may place the health or safety of students, employees, or citizens

at risk requiring immediate action, or conditions or events that prevent the performance of regular university operations.

*Modified Operations:* Temporary changes to university operations in response to an emergency

which may include early closure, delayed opening or a shift to remote work

*Essential Personnel:* Faculty and staff who must report to their designated work location to

ensure the operation of essential functions or departments during an emergency or when the

institution has suspended operations**.** Departments or positions that are considered essential are

designated by the appropriate Cabinet member, Vice President, Vice Provost, or Academic Dean.

*Non-essential Personnel:*Employees not expected to report to campus during emergencies.

*Synchronous and Asynchronous Learning:* Synchronous learning is when students and instructors learn and interact together in real-time, even if they're in different locations. This can happen in person or online. Asynchronous learning describes a situation in which instruction and learning do not necessarily occur in the same place or at the same time.

**1. Modified or Delayed Operations:**

Modified operations are temporary changes to university operations in response to inclement weather or other emergencies which may include early closure, delayed opening, or a shift to remote work and remote learning. In the event of inclement weather or an emergency that requires the university to operate on a modified schedule, an official announcement will be made through the following channels:

* **University Website**
* **GC Alert (email, text messages, and phone calls)**
* **University social media accounts**

Once a decision has been made, updates will be communicated as early as possible to allow students, faculty, and staff to make necessary arrangements.

**2. Class Continuity and Remote Learning:**

When the university is in modified operations due to inclement weather or other emergency, the USG expects GCSU faculty and students to maintain academic continuity. GCSU will maintain such academic continuity using GeorgiaVIEW(GCSU’s LMS), most preferably, or other communication and collaboration online platforms such as Teams, Zoom, or Google Meet. The following guidelines apply, as conditions allow:

**2.1 Faculty Responsibilities:**

* **Communication:** Faculty members should notify their students about the shift to remote learning and provide clear instructions for continuing course activities.
* **Course Delivery:** Instruction may be delivered synchronously or asynchronously. If possible, faculty should post all relevant materials (e.g., lectures, reading assignments, discussion forums, and assessments) on GeorgiaVIEW (preferred).. These materials should be designed to maintain the learning objectives of the course for the duration of modified operations, allowing students to complete assignments in a timely and reasonable manner.
* **Office Hours:** Faculty should be available for virtual office hours through GeorgiaVIEW, email, or video conferencing tools to assist students with any questions or concerns.
* **Assessment Adjustments:** If any exams or assignments were scheduled during the time of modified operations, faculty may reschedule or move assessments online. Faculty should communicate these changes clearly through GeorgiaVIEW or other form of communication with the students.
* **Syllabus Notification:** At the beginning of each semester, faculty should provide a contingency plan in their syllabus describing expectations to students during a time of modified operations.

**2.2 Student Responsibilities:**

* **Accessing GeorgiaVIEW or other learning/collaboration platforms:** Students should log into GeorgiaVIEW and/or email regularly during times of modified operations to check for updates, assignments, and announcements from instructors.
* **Engagement:** Students are expected to participate in any scheduled online discussions, submit assignments through GeorgiaVIEW or other modality, and complete assessments within the provided deadlines.
* **Communication:** If students experience difficulties accessing course materials, or have communications or technology interruptions, they should promptly reach out to their instructor or the appropriate department for assistance.

**3. Employee Responsibilities:**

[GCSU HR might want to add a paragraph here and will most likely want to include a subsection here regarding pay during an emergency]

**3.1 Non-Essential Employees:**

For non-faculty, non-essential staff, the university will make decisions regarding on-campus presence based on operational needs during the closure. Non-essential employees should:

* **Work from Home (if possible):** If remote work is feasible, employees are expected to perform their duties remotely, with tasks assigned via email or through the university’s communication systems.
* **Attendance Reporting:** Non-essential staff who are unable to work remotely must notify their supervisor as soon as possible regarding their availability.

**3.2 Essential Employees:**

Essential employees will be required to report to work unless otherwise notified by their unit head or supervisor. Essential employees are those whose job functions are critical to the university’s operations during an inclement weather event. These employees are expected to report to work even when the university is closed or operating under limited services.

Essential employees may include:

* Facilities staff (e.g., maintenance, custodians)
* Campus safety and security personnel
* Health services personnel (e.g., nursing staff)
* IT support for critical services
* Other personnel as designated by their department head

**4. Exceptions and Special Circumstances:**

In certain cases, specific courses, programs, or departments may require in-person attendance (e.g., labs, clinicals, practica, etc.) for course-based experiences. Deans, department chairs, and faculty are responsible for determining appropriate alternative arrangements and communicating them to students.

**5. Communication During Extended Closures:**

In the event of extended inclement weather or other emergency conditions, the university will provide regular updates regarding the status of campus reopening, course adjustments, and campus operations, and other important information. These updates will be communicated through the university’s website, GeorgiaVIEW, GC Alert, email, and other university social media sites.

**6. Conclusion:**

The safety and well-being of the university community are paramount. Continuity of instruction during inclement weather conditions or other emergencies ensures that academic progress can continue without significant disruption. All members of the university are encouraged to stay informed and adapt to the university’s remote learning infrastructure during these times. By working together and following the guidelines of this policy, we can navigate weather-related or emergency challenges effectively, ensure the continuation of essential academic and operational activities, and comply with the university’s accreditation requirements.