

Resolution 2017-5.1. On Clarifying the Policy Regarding Final Examinations

The Faculty Executive Committee, acting on behalf of Faculty Council, amends the Academic Regulation concerning final examinations in the Undergraduate Catalog to read as follows, beginning with Fall Semester 2017, for all students:

Final Examinations

This policy applies to all undergraduate courses across the University.

Undergraduate courses taught on campus must include a final assessment of students' mastery of course material (i.e., final examination) unless the provost grants an exception. A traditional final examination is administered at a predetermined time as specified in the official final examination schedule, and takes place at a designated location in Chapel Hill. Any other type of final examination is considered nontraditional.

The final examination schedule, announced prior to the beginning of the semester, sets the day and time for each examination. No examination may start later than 7:00 p.m. Once having been established, the schedule cannot be changed. Traditional final examinations must be held at the day and time shown on the schedule unless an exception is granted as described below.

Only the provost can grant exceptions to the scheduled day or time of a traditional examination, after review and approval by the appropriate department head and the dean. No examination (except for laboratory sections) may be held at a time other than that specified in the general schedule except with the advance approval of the provost.

A course instructor may, due to highly unusual circumstances, petition for a change in the examination schedule. The instructor must submit the request in writing to his or her chair no later than the last day of late registration for that term, and it must be cleared by the chair and the appropriate dean (e.g., Associate Dean, Academic Advising) before consideration by the provost. If the petition is approved, the course instructor assumes responsibility for making special arrangements to give the examination to any student who has a schedule conflict as a result of the change. This process only applies to requests to change a day or time for an individual section.

Requests to combine all sections of a specific course into one final exam day and time (regardless of the number of sections involved), is considered a request for a Common Hour exam and has an earlier deadline for submission. Requests for all common hour exams must be cleared by the chair or appropriate dean and approved by the provost. Requests for common hour exams must be made to the registrar the first week of February for fall semester final examinations and the first week of September for spring semester final examinations. There is no exception to this deadline.

No graded quizzes or exams (excluding in-class presentations) may be given during the last five days of the semester (last two days of the session for summer school) before the beginning of the final examination period.

For a standard three credit hour course, the University has a required three hour final examination period, which ~~adds an additional~~ includes 180 minutes of instruction ~~to the~~ in each semester (see UPM #29 – Definition of a Credit Hour). Thus, the University requires instructors to provide a full three hours of instruction for final assessment purposes (e.g., written final examination, presentations, portfolio review, performance, review and evaluation, or some combination of these assessments). ~~for students to complete the final examination. However, it~~ It is up to the discretion of the instructor of record to determine the form, content, and function of the final examination (e.g., whether it is cumulative; whether it is a three-hour exam or a shorter exam preceded or followed by a period of review; etc.). A traditional final examination should not exceed a period of three hours. Only examinations requiring an exceptional portion of practical work should be longer than three hours (e.g., student teaching).

Chairs (i.e., heads of instructional units) must give permission for faculty members to use nontraditional examinations. Examples of nontraditional examinations include those requiring more than three hours to complete; or other final assessments such as a portfolio of a semester's work, a final project, or a take-home examination. For multidisciplinary and cotaught courses, permission to give a nontraditional examination must be granted solely by the chair of the instructional unit in which the course is based. Even when faculty members have permission to administer nontraditional final examinations, the scheduled examination period must be utilized for instructional hours. The chair should submit to their academic dean's office an annual summary of the exceptions that were granted.

Students who are absent from an examination receive a course grade of AB (absent), which is equivalent to F (zero quality points), or FA (absent and failing regardless of performance on the final examination). When students are unable, for reasons clearly beyond their control, to take a traditional final examination at the scheduled time, they can be excused only by the director of Campus Health Services or their academic dean (who can issue an "examination excuse"). An absence may be excused for severe health problems leading to the student's placement on the Infirmary List by either Campus Health Services or Counseling and Psychological Services, for significant personal or family circumstances, for religious observances required by the student's faith, for a scheduling conflict involving multiple examinations at the same time, or when a student has three or more final examinations scheduled in 24 hours. In cases of illness, personal or family emergency, or religious observance, additional documentation may be required by the dean. Primary holy days for religious observances are noted on a Web-based [interfaith calendar site](#). Students are responsible for providing the course instructor and the dean a written request for an excused absence from a final exam for a religious observance or for a scheduling conflict involving multiple examinations no later than the last day of classes. Students must be given the opportunity to make up final exams missed due to an excused absence.

For any University undergraduate courses offered entirely online or via other distance modalities, exams will be offered and must be completed during the scheduled final examination period, but requirements concerning the time of day and place of the exam will be appropriate to the course's mode of delivery. Self-paced courses are exempt from both the time and place requirements of the exam policy and the requirement that exams be held during the scheduled final examination period.

[Submitted by the Educational Policy Committee; amended and passed on May 15, 2017.]