

June 4, 2020

Department Chairs
Program Chairs
College Provosts

Re: Final Examinations in Spring 2020 Courses

Dear Colleagues,

The Committee on Courses of Instruction (CCI) and the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) are approving **a one-time exception** to the requirement that undergraduate courses must have final examinations: instructors of Spring 2020 undergraduate courses are permitted to offer students the option of not taking the final exam in their course, if they feel that they can properly evaluate students on the basis of work completed, and if they have the approval of the department or other course-sponsoring agency.¹ Instructors who offer an optional final exam should specify how the final grade will be determined for students who choose to not take the final assessment. A final assessment must continue to be available for other students.² This is a one-time exception. **It does not apply to courses after Spring 2020.**

Under systemwide Senate regulation SR 772 and Santa Cruz Divisional regulation SCR 8.3.1, **final examinations are required in undergraduate courses** unless an exception has been approved by the Committee on Courses of Instruction. We have received numerous inquiries from instructors asking if they can waive the final examinations in their Spring 2020 courses. Some instructors have already done this without Senate approval, either because they were unaware of the regulations or because they misconstrued [our letter](#) of March 6, 2020. We are approving this one-time exception in view of the exceptional circumstances and the burden that a substantial use of Incomplete grades would put on students and instructors, as well as possible confusion created by our previous letter³.

When students face circumstances that make them temporarily unable to continue coursework, an instructor may approve an Incomplete grade. (For Spring 2020, the “Removal of Incomplete” fee has been waived.) Course grades must be based on student achievement, to preserve the integrity of our academic programs and to comply with Regents’ Policies.

We request you to circulate this to all instructors in your department, program or college.

¹ In this paragraph, a final examination refers to a final examination, paper or project.

² Unless the course was already approved by CCI as not having a final examination.

³ To avoid any confusion about the validity of some of our other recent letters: [our letter](#) of April 3, 2020 about P/NP grades applies for courses taught in any term through Fall 2020 (even if remote instruction continues longer). Pages 2 and 3 of [our letter](#) of March 22, 2020 — discussing contact hours, course synchronicity, technology and absence due to illness — apply to courses that are taught through remote instruction in Spring 2020 and in any subsequent term.

Sincerely,



Lindsay Hinck, Chair
Committee on Course of Instruction



Onuttom Narayan, Chair
Committee on Educational Policy

cc: Divisional Deans
Richard Hughey, Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education
Kimberly Lau, Chair, Academic Senate
Don Smith, Chair, Graduate Council