

## **Committee on Educational Policy Policy on Final Assessments**

Final examinations, projects, performances, or other final assessments are required in all undergraduate courses unless the department or other agency sponsoring the course has obtained permission from the Committee on Educational Policy to evaluate students in another manner. Final assessments are only given during the examination-week period at the time announced in the *Schedule of Classes*, usually in the same room used for class meetings during the quarter. No change in the time or date of a final examination may occur unless the course sponsoring agency has obtained the approval of the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP). Requests must be received by CEP not later than the first week of the quarter in which the course is occurring. Completion or submission of final assessments for undergraduate courses is not allowed during the regular term's period of instruction, including the closed week before final examinations. When finals are administered (not during week 10), they must be completed at the scheduled examination time and may not require more than the scheduled three-hour time block. Any take-home exam or final project that is assigned in the last week of classes or during finals week should require no more than an equivalent in-class exam. This does not apply to projects or assessments that are assigned at the start of the quarter and for which work may begin well before finals week.

Instructors may bar students from taking the examination if they arrive late. If a student misses an examination due to an unavoidable emergency, the instructor may agree to give an Incomplete and schedule a makeup examination provided that the student's work is passing up to that point. When a final examination is one of the regular requirements in a course, no one taking the course may be individually exempted from it. Travel plans for vacation are not an emergency, and should not be made without checking the final examination schedule.

### Closed Week

The purpose of closed week (for fall, winter, and spring quarters only) is two-fold: (1) to ensure that the full 11 weeks of the quarter are used for instruction (10 weeks) and assessment (1 week of finals) and (2) to provide students time to complete coursework and prepare for their final assessments.

To meet these goals, no examinations, tests, assignments, papers, final projects, presentations, or final performances that result in more than 12.5% of the final grade (other than individual makeup exams) may be due during the last week of instruction. Portfolios or collections of previously assessed work may be collected during the closed week, as long as any newly assessed work does not account for more than 12.5% of the final grade.

Take-home exams or short projects assigned in the last week of instruction and due during finals week should equate roughly to the amount of work required in a traditional three-hour exam time slot. (The three-hour limit for completion of a take-home exam or short project does not include the time required for studying or preparing to complete the assignment.) Larger projects or assignments that students have had several weeks to work on may be due during finals week.

For courses that have a final performance as a main assessment of the course, especially where scheduling students' performances entirely during finals week is infeasible, presentations may be spread over the final weeks of the quarter including the use of the final exam time slot during week 11. If this is done, instructors should both make clear that students should be preparing for these performances weeks ahead of time and provide complete assignment instructions for how to do so well in advance.

Assignments and exams due during finals week should not be due earlier than the [exam slot scheduled](#) for the course by the Office of the Registrar (this includes Non Standard Times 1 and 2 for courses outside of standard time blocks).

### Examination Retention

An instructor may release to individual students the original final examinations (or copies). Otherwise, the instructor will retain final examination materials at least until the end of the next regular term. During that time students will be allowed to review their examinations.

### Religious Observance for Tests and Examinations

Given the diversity of religious practice within the campus community, academic and administrative units are encouraged to make reasonable accommodation when the schedule of a required campus event conflicts with an individual's religious creed. It is the official policy of the University of California, Santa Cruz, to accommodate, without penalty, requests for alternate test or examination times in cases where the scheduled time for the test or examination violates a student's religious creed, unless the request cannot be reasonably accommodated.

Requests to accommodate a student's religious creed by scheduling tests or examinations at alternative times should be submitted directly to the instructor in charge of the course as soon as possible after the test or examination is announced. Students who are unable to reach a satisfactory arrangement with the instructor should consult the head of the unit sponsoring the course. If the unit head feels that the request cannot be reasonably accommodated, the unit head should consult with the Dean of Graduate Studies or the Dean of Undergraduate Education as appropriate.

### Accommodations for Disability

Students with documented disabilities that require examination modifications will be accommodated in compliance with state and federal laws. Reasonable accommodations will be made based on recommendations from the [Disability Resource Center](#).

In response to recent inquiries from faculty, CEP would also like to clarify the policies regarding the scheduling of final examinations. The final exam schedule is determined by the Office of the Registrar in consultation with course-sponsoring units. The final exam for each course is scheduled for a specific three-hour block, with only thirty minutes to one hour between exams. Students frequently have two or more final exams in a single day.

Three hours represents the maximum duration of an exam given to students without testing accommodations approved by the DRC (see below). However, faculty are permitted to give a

shorter final examination if they wish to do so, as long as the starting time and length of the exam is clearly stated in the course syllabus distributed at the beginning of the quarter. By choosing to give shorter examinations, instructors can reduce the burdens placed on students who have multiple exams in one day.

It should also be noted that, in some cases, students with documented disabilities are given extra time to complete exams by the Disability Resource Center. CEP understands the necessity of these accommodations: these students have documented disabilities that are independently diagnosed. Nonetheless, scheduling final exams for students who require extra time to complete an exam poses clear logistical challenges. Departments and divisions must find rooms and proctors for these exams, and, depending on the nature of the DRC accommodations, the students taking these exams may spend a great deal of time taking final examinations. This problem, too, could be made somewhat less severe by scheduling shorter exams.

If an instructor were to decide to give a shorter exam he or she must be explicit about the length of the exam in writing and enforce it when given; if an exam is to be two hours, for example, then students should be informed of this on the syllabus, and any students who do not require an accommodation must have their exams collected after two hours. If a student is allowed to take twice the amount of time to complete an exam due to a disability, this would be twice the time relative to the amount of time allotted to a student without an accommodation. Thus, if a student is allowed to take twice as long to complete a test, and the exam is announced as a two-hour exam, then he or she could be given four hours (rather than six) to complete the final examination.

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