

Examinations — Undergraduate Courses

Carnegie Mellon University Policies on Undergraduate Examinations (<https://www.cmu.edu/policies/student-and-student-life/examination-policies.html>)

Preamble

The Faculty Senate adopted the following policies on the administration of examinations for the undergraduate courses (defined as courses that are numbered 6xx or below). These policies represent an understanding between faculty and student concerning an important but often stressful period, especially at the conclusion of each academic semester and at mid-semester. There should be no expectation that the following points will cover every conceivable situation. The student should anticipate the demands of the exam schedule, plan accordingly and early, and be prepared. The faculty should recognize that the student is encumbered with many tightly orchestrated and intensive obligations during this period over which he or she has no control: expectations should be reasonably consistent with the number of course units and, of course, should be made known to the student well in advance of the final examination period, preferably as part of the course syllabus.

In order to help students plan their time and study optimally for examinations, this document lays out in some detail the policies regarding final and in-term examinations. Instructors are requested to provide notification of the major in-term examinations in the course syllabus. The final examination date is posted early in the semester. It is the responsibility of the student to give his or her instructor sufficient notice and to work with the instructor to re-schedule examinations if this is needed.

Definitions

- **Final examination period.** The university's official final examination period begins on the Monday immediately following the last day of classes and continues through the last day of scheduled final examinations, with the exception of reading day(s).
- **Scheduled final examinations.** Scheduled final examinations are those scheduled by the University Registrar's Office.
- **Self-scheduled examinations.** An instructor may choose not to fix a schedule for the final examination, but instead allow each student to choose the examination time; such exams are called self-scheduled examinations.
- **Final examinations.** Final examinations can either be comprehensive, covering all course materials, or non-comprehensive, covering only a part of the course.
- **In-term examinations.** Major examinations during the semester are referred to here as in-term examinations.

Policies

I. In-term Examinations

1. All in-term examinations should be given during the regularly scheduled class time. However, if the exam requires additional time to complete, then examinations may be administered outside of regularly scheduled class time.
2. No examinations given outside of class time (excluding make ups and self-scheduled examinations) shall be administered on a Friday after 4:30 pm, or at any time Saturday or Sunday.
3. The instructor administering an exam (or another required class event) that falls outside class time must make any and all reasonable accommodations to provide an alternative time to students who have conflicts with the proposed time period, including those conflicts due to activities, meetings, other classes, etc. (provided that the instructor is notified of such conflict in a timely manner).
4. No student shall be required to take more than two full-period in-class or out-of-class examinations on the same day. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor in a timely manner of his/her circumstance so that appropriate accommodations can be made.

II. Final Examinations

1. All scheduled final examinations are held at the end of the semester during the university's official final examination period. Comprehensive final examinations are not required for each course, but are given at the option of the department or instructor. The reading day and weekend preceding the examination days shall never be used for examination purposes of any kind, unless a student opts to take a

self-scheduled examination during this time. Non-comprehensive final examinations or final projects (but not both) are allowed during this final examination period only in courses that do not give a final comprehensive examination.

2. Instructors are expected to return all work assigned no later than the last regular day of classes in courses for which there is a final examination. In cases when this is not possible, an answer key, solution sets or equivalent feedback should be provided unless the final examination will not cover material in work that has not been returned.
3. No other coursework, including laboratory or studio work, will be due during the final examination period unless it is assigned in advance and in lieu of the course's final examination. Regardless of whether there is a final examination in the course, no classes other than review sessions shall be held during the final examination period. Review sessions should be scheduled for optimal attendance, and a serious effort should be made to accommodate students who cannot attend. In appreciation of the time required to prepare for final examinations, no other examinations, portfolio reviews, critiques or juries shall be scheduled for the last class day of a course with a final examination.
4. Instructors shall never exert or submit to pressures to move an examination so that people can leave earlier nor pressure students to take an examination on a reading day or weekend preceding examinations.
5. No student is required to take more than two scheduled examinations that start within a 25-hour period. A student who has more than two examinations scheduled within a 25-hour period or has two examinations scheduled at the same time should first contact the instructors of the courses for assistance in resolving conflicts. If the problem cannot be resolved by that means, the student should contact the associate dean of his or her home college.
6. Take-home final examinations shall be given for any 24-hour period of the student's choosing during the final examination period.
7. Students are expected to present themselves at the place assigned at the start of the examination; late arrival will reduce the total time a student has to complete the examination, unless instructor's course policy indicates otherwise. Instructors reserve the right to require attendance within a specific time period. Students who miss an examination with a reasonable excuse and wish to petition for a make-up final examination should check with the instructor. Instructors are encouraged to include late arrival policy and make-up exam policy in the course syllabus.
8. Any student shall be permitted to review his or her corrected, graded final examination in the presence of an instructor or a teaching assistant. Any controversy arising from this review shall be dealt with in accordance with the university procedure for the appeal of grades and academic actions. A final examination that is not returned to a student will be kept available for a year for review. In the event that the instructor or teaching assistant is not available for the review, the responsibility shall rest with the department head of the instructor offering the course or his or her designee. Since instructors are expected to return all work assigned before the final examinations, they are not responsible for retaining unclaimed coursework.
9. Concerns related to final examination, complaints about violations of the final examination policy or alterations of the final examination schedule should be directed to the department head of the instructor offering the course or to the associate dean of the student's home college.