




FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF FACULTY DEVELOPMENT AND ADVANCEMENT

December 3, 2020

MEMORANDUM

To: Academic Deans and Department Chairs

From: Janet Kistner, Ph.D. 
Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement

Subject: Undergraduate Final Examination Policy

Although many aspects of instruction have changed this year, the Final Exam Policy remains largely intact. Instructions specific to Fall Semester 2020 have been highlighted in bold throughout this annual memo. I applaud your efforts to adapt to the challenges presented by the current national emergency and thank you for your efforts to keep students safe and continuing to learn.

Please remind instructors in your units of the Florida State University Faculty Senate policy regarding final examinations. The policy is designed to ensure that students receive a full semester's worth of instruction, including regular class meetings during the weeks prior to exams, and that culminating course activities are held during exam week at the day and time specified on the Exam Schedule located in the *Registration Guide* on the University Registrar's website at (<http://registrar.fsu.edu/>). **Because the Testing Center is operating at limited capacity and all exams will be given at a distance this semester, the section entitled *Distance Learning Examinations* is currently particularly relevant. It is also important to remember that due to a number of impediments experienced by some students, providing greater flexibility, balanced with safeguarding the integrity of exams, is still crucial.**

This policy is in place to ensure fairness to students, adequate contact hours in each course, and consistency in scheduling. Violations of the policy place unfair burdens on students and can lead to disciplinary actions against faculty members. Please contact my office if you have questions regarding this information, and thank you for emphasizing this issue with your faculty. This memorandum is available on the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement website (<http://www.fda.fsu.edu/academic-resources/academic-policies>) under *Academic Resources*, and the full policy can be found in the *Florida State University General Bulletin* located at <http://registrar.fsu.edu/bulletin/undergraduate/>.

As the semester draws to a close, this is a good time to remind students about your expectations and due dates for their final assignments and/or exams. Do not hesitate to “repeat yourself.” This is a very good time to be intentionally redundant and to provide information to your students through multiple channels of communication. More than ever, students need a clear sense of what they are expected to demonstrate or accomplish, and practice to help them prepare. They also need some practice with any new tools or equipment they will need to use to take exams or complete their assignments. If your final assessment requires use of new tools and equipment, please offer opportunities for students to practice prior to exam week.

The Undergraduate Final Examination Policy provides:

1. The scheduling of a final examination at any time other than the regularly scheduled final examination period is prohibited by Faculty Senate policy. The final exam schedule is found in the Registration Guide located at <http://registrar.fsu.edu/>.
2. Unless an exam is given during the final examination period, no test, exam, or quiz may be given during the last week of classes.
3. Make-up exams are permitted for an undergraduate student when justified by illness, conflicting exams, three or more exams in a twenty-four hour period, or for certain emergencies.
4. Classes meeting every day at the same hour and classes meeting for more than one time period will hold examinations according to the time and day of the first scheduled class meeting of the week. For example, a class meeting at 8:00 a.m. on Tuesday and at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday will hold its examination at the exam time scheduled for Tuesday 8:00 a.m. classes.

Exceptions to the Examination Policy for an Individual Undergraduate Student:

Approval by the academic dean of the college in which the course is taught is required for any change in examination time for an individual undergraduate student. The student must first receive written permission from the instructor, if the instructor is willing to give a make-up examination at a specified time within the exam week. The student must then petition the dean of the unit in which the course is taught, giving the reason for the requested exception, and including the instructor's written permission. The dean will then notify the instructor and the student in writing if approval is granted. Make-up examinations are permitted for an undergraduate student when justified by illness, conflicting examinations, three or more examinations in a 24-hour period, or for certain emergencies. Arrangements must be made prior to the scheduled exam (except in cases in which prior notification is impossible).

In case of conflicting examinations, group examinations take precedence over examinations scheduled by class meeting time, and higher-enrollment classes take precedence over lower-enrollment classes. In the case of conflicts that cannot otherwise be resolved, the course meeting earlier (by day or time) takes precedence over a course meeting later. It is the student's responsibility to identify such conflicts as early as possible and to notify all instructors in advance to resolve those conflicts.

Courses that utilize the Office of Distance Learning (ODL) Assessment and Testing Center for a block exam, or which are otherwise limited to specific days and times because of seating and scheduling constraints, will take precedence in the case of final exam schedule conflicts. Again, it is the student's responsibility to identify such conflicts as early as possible and to notify all instructors in advance so that accommodations may be made.

Exceptions to the Examination Policy for an Entire Undergraduate Class:

No instructor of an undergraduate course may give a final examination to a class at a time other than that which appears online at <http://registrar.fsu.edu/> unless the instructor has obtained prior approval from the Undergraduate Policy Committee. This approval must be requested, in writing, at least three weeks prior to the scheduled exam. Please contact Dr. Daniel Mears, Chair of the Undergraduate Policy Committee, at dmears@fsu.edu. To reschedule a final examination without prior approval places the instructor in jeopardy of disciplinary actions.

Undergraduate Distance Learning Exams

If the instructor of an online course requires a final exam, the instructor shall have the prerogative to set the window during which a final exam is administered, provided that the window is within the University's official final exam period. In order to ensure that students' exam windows do not overlap substantially this semester, please schedule your course's exam window as closely as possible to your scheduled time for an in-class exam. (See: <http://registrar.fsu.edu/>.) **I also encourage each instructor to consult with their chair/director and with colleagues in their department/school to avoid setting up conflicting windows for courses taken by majors.**

A final exam window must be disclosed in the course syllabus. It is the student's responsibility to identify if an exam conflict exists and to make arrangements with the instructor immediately to take the exam at an alternate time during the University's official final exam period. If a student has such conflicts, the final exams of the student's non-online classes shall have priority and the time of the online exam will be the first exam subject to adjustment. If such agreement cannot be achieved between the student and the instructor, then the academic deans of the units housing the various courses will consult to achieve agreement.

This policy is intended only to clarify existing University exam policy for online classes and all provisions of University exam policy that do not conflict with this policy remain in effect.

Graduate Final Exams

If a final exam is given in a graduate course, the exam should be scheduled during the established final exam schedule unless clear arrangements are made with the students and the Registrar's Office.

Examination Papers

University policy requires that examination papers of students shall be kept in the faculty member's files for one year after the examination is given. Faculty members leaving the University before the completion of the year must leave the examination papers in the departmental files.

Student Perception of Courses and Instructors (SPCI)

Under normal circumstances, instructors may not administer official course evaluations during final exam week. However, the Evaluation Committee of the FSU Faculty Senate has approved a general exception to this policy. Specifically, instructors whose classes are performing field work instead of

meeting for the last few weeks of the semester and who are not administering a final examination will be allowed to have paper-based course evaluations administered during their exam-week meeting. Instructors who would like to exercise this option must send an email to Assistant Scanning and Evaluation Coordinator, Stephani Harrell at smharrell@fsu.edu to request a petition form that must be included in their course evaluation packet. **This semester, all student course evaluations will be administered online and requirements that they be used in evaluation of faculty have been suspended (See Coronavirus Faculty Resources at <https://www.fda.fsu.edu/teaching-during-covid>.)**

cc: President John Thrasher

Dr. Sally McRorie, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Dr. Eric Chicken, Faculty Senate President

Dr. Kimberly Barber, University Registrar

Dr. Daniel Mears, Undergraduate Policy Committee Chair

Dr. Mary Eichen, Interim Director, Assessment & Testing

Ms. Stephani Harrell, Assistant Scanning & Evaluation Coordinator