Guidelines for Online Final Examination Scheduling

Spring 2021 Covid-19 Response

Key Takeaways:

- State clearly and post broadly your expectations.
  - State your expectations regarding the date, time, and format of your final assessment as clearly as possible and post these expectations broadly through official UNCW channels and forms to your class, e.g., Canvas and your syllabus.
- Final exams should not begin before April 30 and should conclude by May 6.
- For classes using an online final exam format, the instructor should keep access to the exam open for a total of 15 hours, minimum.
- Consult the sections below for guidance and links to support offices and materials.

Guidelines:

The primary purposes of Final Exam scheduling include avoiding room duplication, minimizing faculty and student conflicts, and supporting students by not having three or more exams in one calendar day. While moving to asynchronous instruction obviates the need to coordinate physical space, guidelines that systematically avoid exam conflicts (and the ensuing individual petitions, parent complaints, and unproductive rework and one-off assessments) are necessary. This is especially true in our current environment where significant accessibility and technological challenges may present themselves during what is already a high-stress time due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

To help with the successful implementation of online final assessments, the University Associate Deans Group with input from the Center for Teaching Excellence and the Office of Distance Education and e-Learning (DEeL) has developed a list of recommended guidelines for faculty to consider when planning their final assessments of student knowledge for the spring 2021 semester.

1. **Identify Alternative Assessments to Exams** – What tools are necessary to assess the students’ competency in the relevant student learning outcomes? Must it be a timed and/or proctored exam or is there a viable alternative method (e.g., research paper, final project, and individual or team presentation)? Where scale and academic integrity concerns are paramount, (e.g., large classes with coordinated examination across multiple sections) timed and/or proctored exams may still be the best path forward. Otherwise, consider alternative authentic assessment tools that are more flexible wherever possible.

2. **Modify Final Exam Time Periods** – For classes using an online final exam format, the instructor should keep access to the exam open for a total of 15 hours, minimum. For classes already assigned exam times, this equates to opening the final exam in Canvas a minimum of 12 hours prior to the official final exam start time assigned by the Registrar and closing the exam at the end of the scheduled exam period. For online asynchronous classes (OLASY) without an assigned time, the 15-hour window remains the same; determining the start date and time is addressed in point 5 below.
• This creates a minimum 15-hour opening that provides flexibility to our students who are in different time zones (e.g., international students) and those who may have other scheduling challenges, (e.g., child/elder care, work, military deployment).
• This 15-hour minimum window is a reduction from the 27-hour window based on feedback we have received from faculty and Dean of Students’ reporting on the increase of academic dishonesty cases.
• Please note that the faculty member has the discretion of opening their exams earlier and keeping them open longer than the 15-hour window. Scenario A provides such an example.

3. Manage Length of Exam – Within the window of time an exam is open, instructors should still determine the length of time students have to complete the exam.
• The length of the final examination, up to a maximum of three hours, is at the discretion of the instructor:
  http://catalogue.uncw.edu/content.php?catoid=56&navoid=7333#Final_Examination_Policy
• Online exams must consider any accommodations (including extra time) to which the student is entitled based on guidance from the Disability Resource Center.
• Online exams and other assessments must be delivered in compliance with ADA requirements. Faculty may contact the Distance Education and eLearning or DEeL(elearning@uncw.edu) for assistance in developing ADA compliant assessments or they can use the bookings tool to create an appointment that fits their personal schedules:
  https://outlook.office365.com/owa/calendar/UNCWOeLOOneoneoneAppointments@uncw4.onmicrosoft.com/bookings/
• Providing additional time for an online version of an exam may be helpful to all students as they take the test on a new platform.

4. Mitigate Academic Dishonesty—Remember that online exams may discourage academic dishonesty by:
• Reminding students of their pledge to uphold the Honor Code https://uncw.edu/odos/honorcode/facultyresources.html already posted in the syllabus.
• Making the first question of the exam an acknowledgement of the Honor Code implications for the exam, e.g., that all work on this exam must be one’s own.
  o For example, provide crystal clear instructions regarding the acceptable use or prohibition of outside resources such as chegg.com.
• Using the "Respondus LockDown Browser" screen lock function, proctoring software, plagiarism review (Turnitin) and/or other tools.
  o If incorporating a proctoring/monitoring solution to final exam and the faculty member has not done so in their courses up to this point, it’s recommended that they provide a sample or practice assessment/quiz with the features enabled to avoid technical issues on the day of the exam.
  o If planning to use UNCW-supported "Respondus LockDown Browser," please visit this site for more information prior to creating your online exam:
    https://uncw.edu/oel/resources/respondus.html
Consider other exam design and settings features that help reduce cheating:
https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Admin-Group/Quiz-Settings-to-Maximize-Security/ba-p/259456

5. Schedule Final Exams in Advance for Asynchronous Courses without an Assigned Exam Time:

- Finals for asynchronous online courses should be scheduled well in advance, communicating the time and date to students via official UNCW channels, and documented in an addendum to or revision of the syllabus no later than March 15.
- Final exams should not begin before April 30 and should conclude by May 6.
- Please note that students have the right to reschedule a final exam if they have three or more scheduled on any one, calendar day. (See Final Examination Policy below.)
  - Departments may want to proactively offset the days when certain exams are opened to avoid this conflict.

V Hypothetical Examples:

Scenario A:

Faculty A was teaching SPN 411 from 12:00 – 12:50 pm MWF. As such, the time assigned for the final exam is Monday, May 3 from 11:30 am – 2:30 pm. Faculty A had already decided to assign the 15 students in the class a 15-page research paper. Since this is not a timed exam, Faculty A opened and released the assignment in Canvas on April 30 and closes submission at 2:30 am on Tuesday, May 4.

Scenario B:

Faculty B was teaching REC 311 from 8:00 – 9:15 am TR. Time assigned for the final exam is Thursday, May 6 from 8:00 – 11:00 am. With over 100 students in the class, Faculty B decides a multiple-choice and short-answer final exam is the most appropriate tool.

  - Faculty B opens the exam on Thursday, May 6, at 8:00 am and closes it at 11:00 pm on Thursday, May 6.
  - Faculty B calculates that the exam should take one hour to complete but provides a two-hour window.
  - Students may start the exam at any time within the 15-hour period and will have 2 hours to complete it. In this case, only one attempt is allowed and once the student begins the exam, the timer begins and cannot be stopped.
  - Students who are allowed extra time don't get a longer window, but are allowed an extended time limit (e.g., still 15-hr window, but 4-hour time limit if allowed 2x time).

V Current, pre-Covid-19 Final Examination Policy and Matrix.

Final Examination Policy

University policy requires the scheduling of final examinations. Under this policy, the final examination schedule provides a three-hour period for each examination and allows a maximum of four examinations per day. The length of the final examination, up to a maximum of three hours, is at the discretion of the instructor.
The final examination schedule is published at the beginning of each semester. Courses offered during the day have final examinations during the day. Night courses have final examinations at night.

A student who is scheduled to take three or more final examinations in one calendar day may have one or more rescheduled so that no more than two per day are required. To reschedule an exam the student must notify the three (or four) instructors and the appropriate dean(s) of this desire at least two weeks before the beginning of the final examination period. It will be the responsibility of the instructors, working with the student, to reschedule the exam(s) and so inform the student and the appropriate dean(s) at least one week before the beginning of the final examination period.

Rescheduling of a final examination for an entire class may be done only with the approval of the appropriate dean:
[http://catalogue.uncw.edu/content.php?catoid=56&navoid=7333#Final_Examination_Policy](http://catalogue.uncw.edu/content.php?catoid=56&navoid=7333#Final_Examination_Policy)


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXAM DAYS/TIMES</th>
<th>8:00 - 11:00</th>
<th>11:30 - 2:30</th>
<th>3:00 - 6:00</th>
<th>7:00 - 10:00</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Friday, April 30</strong></td>
<td>10:00am-10:50am MWF</td>
<td>1:00pm-1:50pm MWF</td>
<td>5:00pm-5:50pm MWF</td>
<td><strong>MAT 111</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Saturday, May 1</strong></td>
<td>Saturday classes will have final exams on this day starting at the regular class meeting time.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Monday, May 3</strong></td>
<td>9:00am-9:50am MWF</td>
<td>12:00-12:50pm MWF</td>
<td>3:00pm-3:50pm MWF</td>
<td>4:00pm-4:50pm MWF, ACG 201, MAT 105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tuesday, May 4</strong></td>
<td>9:30am-10:45am TR</td>
<td>11:00am-12:15am TR</td>
<td>3:30-4:45pm TR</td>
<td>5:00-6:15pm TR</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Wednesday, May 5</strong></td>
<td>8:00am-8:50am MWF</td>
<td>11:00am-11:50am MWF</td>
<td>2:00pm-2:50pm MWF</td>
<td>6:00pm or later MWF</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Thursday, May 6</strong></td>
<td>8:00am-9:15am TR</td>
<td>12:30pm-1:45pm TR</td>
<td>2:00pm-3:15pm TR</td>
<td>6:30pm or later TR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All students enrolled in ACG 201, MAT 105, or MAT 111 must take exam at the designated time.