

**Final Examination Guidelines  
from the Academic Standing Committee**

These guidelines are meant to uphold the purpose of the final examination period as a special time following the end of classes during which students study for and complete substantial, often cumulative, course work. Faculty cooperation with these guidelines will help protect students from the undue burden that can result from deviations from the official final exam schedule. Exceptions to these guidelines should be carefully considered, checked with Faculty Regulation C.15, made in consultation with the Dean of the College, and clearly communicated to students from the beginning of the term.

1. Course syllabi should indicate whether there is a final examination or final assignment in each course. In the case of a final exam or any final assignment due during the final examination period, all members of the class should be notified of the due date once the Registrar has determined the exam schedule.
2. As Faculty Regulations state, each course is assigned a scheduled time during the term-end examination time period directly following Reading Day, and no final examination should be given prior to its scheduled time. While faculty may not, without the approval of the Dean of the College, move the entire final exam to a time that deviates from the scheduled exam period, a faculty member may allow an individual student to take the exam at an alternate time without consulting the Dean. The decision to allow or deny a student such an alternate exam time rests with the faculty member alone, not with the student or with a dean.
3. In keeping with the spirit expressed in Faculty Regulations, course work done *in lieu of a final examination* (labs, essays, presentations, etc.) should also not come due prior to that course's scheduled examination period. Since it is difficult to find a universal definition of what is meant by a "final examination or work in lieu of it," faculty should exercise good judgment when scheduling due dates for the last several class meetings of the term. A main goal should be to keep the integrity of the three-day examination period and to resist, for instance, the temptation to assign due dates for final papers or projects in the last week of class so that one's own task of grading can commence all the sooner. Normally, work due for a class in the final three or four class meetings of the term should not count for more than 20% of the student's final grade in the course.
4. If the last exam given in a course focuses on material that has been covered *throughout* the term (i.e., it is a *cumulative* exam), it is probably best to give such an exam during the scheduled final exam period even if (as suggested above in #3) the exam counts for less than 20% of the student's final grade.
5. No final examination or work in lieu of it may be given on Reading Day. Similarly, unless absolutely necessary, Honors Committee meetings and Honors Exams should not occur on Reading Day. As a general matter, Department- or course-related social activities (senior major parties, etc.) should also not be held on Reading Day. Review sessions on Reading Day are

permissible as these keep to the spirit of allowing students to prepare for final exams. Honors examinations may— *if the student is enrolled for Honors course work in that term*—be scheduled for a particular slot in the exam period that the student has open.

6. When scheduling students to participate in non-traditional end-of-course experiences (e.g., take-home exams, oral exams, final presentations), faculty should take into account that students have other examinations in the three-day final exam period. In the case of take-home final exams, faculty should consider giving students a set number of hours for completing the exam or making the take-home exam due on the last day of the entire three-day exam period. If students are expected to spend more than three hours to complete a take-home exam, they should probably be given the exam at least one or two days before Reading Day. In the case of oral final exams or final presentations, faculty should consider devising a blind selection system for determining the order in which students are scheduled so that there is no real or perceived sense of faculty giving preference.

7. Students who present proper documentation to the Center for Teaching and Learning may require accommodations for taking an exam at an alternate place or time or in an alternate manner. If the student states that he or she requires academic accommodations for an exam, contact one of the CTL staff members. (Note: This certification should be in place well before the actual examination period arrives.)