



Cornell University

College of Arts and Sciences

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To: Faculty and Instructors in the College of Arts and Sciences
Department Recordspeople and Managers

From: David DeVries, Associate Dean

Re: Teaching Evaluations, Final Examinations, and Grading

Date: April 25, 2011

The end of the semester is at hand. We are writing to remind you of the regulations for course evaluations, grades, and final exams. Questions and problems regarding grades may be referred to Sue Downes, 172 Goldwin Smith (255-3386 /255-4833 or SMD63).

Teaching Evaluations:

College faculty legislation requires departments to evaluate their teaching. Check with your department to determine what type of evaluations you are using. If your department is participating in online evaluations, please remind your students to fill them out between May 2 and May 11 (ending at 7:00pm). If you are not, please have your students complete departmental course evaluations during the last week of classes, and arrange for their being collected and held by someone other than you until after you submit final grades. Course evaluations must be collected in ways that preserve anonymity.

Final Examinations and Other End-of-Semester Exercises:

Advances in pedagogy and variations in practice across fields have broadened the range of commonly used end-of-semester evaluative exercises beyond traditional sit-down final examinations. The rules and guidelines that follow aim to protect students from unreasonable demands on their time while simultaneously providing instructors the flexibility necessary to design evaluative exercises appropriate to their courses.

The Academic Calendar sets aside after the last week of classes a four-day study period followed by a period for final examinations. The Registrar's Office assigns to every course a specific day and time during final examination period at which time the course's final exam, if any, will take place. The designated final-exam days and times are scheduled carefully to minimize conflicts and spread students' workloads as evenly as possible over the exam period.

It is university policy to discourage more than two examinations for a student in one twenty-four hour time period. Members of the faculty are urged to grant student requests for a make-up examination, particularly if their course is the largest of the three involved and thus has the strongest likelihood of offering a makeup for other valid reasons, e.g. a student's illness or a death in a student's family.

Legislation of the University Faculty governing study period and final examinations and other end-of-semester exercises is as follows:

1. No final examinations may be given at a time other than the time appearing on the official examination schedule promulgated by the Registrar's Office without prior written permission of the dean of the faculty.

2. No permission will be given, for any reason, to schedule final examinations during the last week of classes or the study period preceding final examinations.
3. Permission will be given by the dean of the faculty to reschedule examinations during the examination period itself if requested in writing by the faculty member, but only on condition that a comparable examination also be given for students who wish to take it at the time the examination was originally scheduled. The faculty member requesting such a change will be responsible for making appropriate arrangements for rooms or other facilities in which to give the examination.
4. The final due date for a take-home final examination can be no earlier than the date appearing on the official examination schedule promulgated by the Registrar's Office without prior written permission of the dean of the faculty.
5. A course that requires a culminating end-of-semester exercise (for example, a paper, project report, final critique, oral presentation, or conference) in lieu of or in addition to a traditional final examination must advertise at the beginning of the semester the nature of the exercise.
6. A course that requires a culminating end-of-semester exercise and does not offer a final examination must allow students at least until the date appearing on the official examination schedule promulgated by the Registrar's Office to complete submission of materials associated with the culminating exercise.
(For example, a student making a presentation during the last week of classes or during study period will have at least until the scheduled final-exam date to submit a final write-up or equivalent.)

Grading:

Per university regulations, grades must never be transmitted via e-mail.

Please assign everyone on your grading sheet a grade of the kind the computer expects. When you do not, the computer rejects your submissions and causes difficulties for students and advisers and additional paperwork for you. Do not allow any student (except the TA) to handle grading materials. All the forms mentioned below are available from your department.

1) Letter or S/U

Please assign grades that match the grading option selected by the student.

2) Mistakes on the grading sheet

If the grading option or number of credits is incorrect or a student's name is missing, please submit a Manual Grade Form with the correct information.

If a student listed never attended or stopped attending during the semester, you must submit an F or U (depending on the option) and note non-attendance and the date after which the student stopped attending on the form, "Explanation for Reporting a Failing Grade." The F or U will be removed if the student petitions successfully to drop the course retroactively.

3) Assigning Incompletes

An *Incomplete* is only appropriate when two basic conditions are met: (1) The student has substantial equity at a passing level in the course with respect to work completed; **and** (2) the student has been prevented by circumstances beyond his/her control, such as illness or family emergency, from completing all of the course requirements on time. **An *Incomplete* may not be given merely because a student fails to complete all course requirements on time.** Such a practice would be open to abuse; by deferring completion of some major course

requirement, a student could gain advantage over his or her classmates by obtaining additional time to do a superior job. This is not an option that may be elected at the student's own discretion.

If you do submit a grade of INC, you must fill out the form, "Report on a Grade of Incomplete", to document the conditions for assigning and making up the course and instructions for the registrar if the course is not completed. When a student completes the course and you assign the final grade on a Manual Grade Form, an asterisk on the transcript indicates the grade is a make up of an incomplete. Any student making up an incomplete should **not** sign up for the class again.

4) Assigning failing Grades

Submit a form, "Explanation for Reporting a Failing Grade", with your grading sheet. The information on the form is useful to advisers and to the Committee on Academic Records. It is not a control on your grading policies.

5) Grades of R

An R is a temporary grade and must be assigned after the first half of a two-semester course. The grade assigned at the end of the whole course is the final grade for both halves.

6) Changing Grades

The college accepts grade changes only when you explain on the Manual Grade Form that the original grade was assigned in error. It is not permissible to allow a student to complete a course or hand in additional work after you have submitted a grade for that student. See page 88 of the 2010 Faculty Handbook, *Changes in Grades*.

Resist pressure to change grades unless the grade you assigned was wrong. If necessary, refer persistent students to me.

Grade Deadlines:

Per faculty legislation all grades, for graduate and undergraduate students, must be submitted no more than 72 hours after the final exam date or final paper deadline. (See final exam schedule at: <http://registrar.sas.cornell.edu/Sched/EXSP.html>). If you are not submitting your own grades, be sure your department office has your grades in time to meet the 72 hour deadline. Please check with your department office for the date you need to submit grades to them. Any spring 2011 grades received after the deadline will create problems for graduating seniors and college records committees. If you are unable to submit your grades by your department's deadline, you must contact Associate Dean David DeVries in 172 Goldwin Smith Hall.