

# UNIVERSITY COUNCIL REGULATIONS ON EXAMINATIONS

(Effective July 1, 1996, revised December 1997)

These regulations are also on the web at [www.usask.ca/university\\_council/reports.shtml](http://www.usask.ca/university_council/reports.shtml)

## 1.1 GENERAL

### 1.1.1 Levels of Authority and Responsibility

All regulations covering student evaluation and examinations should be developed into a framework with three levels of authority and responsibility: University, College and Department. The Extension Division functions as the College for students in Unclassified Studies. In Colleges where there is an alternate approved academic schedule, regulations covering student evaluation and examinations shall be developed by the College in a manner consistent with these University regulations.

### 1.1.2 Information Exchange

Colleges and Departments must develop procedures for evaluation of student performance and these must be communicated annually to instructors and students. Expectations must be clearly articulated and communicated to students at the beginning of each class.

### 1.1.3 Availability of Regulations

Regulations at all levels should be made accessible to all members of the University community.

*a. & b. University and College levels:* University and all College regulations should be made available at the commencement of each Regular Session to all students and instructors. There should also be provisions made at each level of authority for periodic review and amendment of these regulations.

*c. Department level (or College in nondepartmentalized Colleges):*

i. Departmental regulations should be assembled and submitted to the College. The College will make available the regulations to all instructors of the College and all students taking classes in that College.

ii. At the beginning of each class the instructor must indicate: the type and schedule of term assignments, with approximate due dates, as well as the type and schedule of term examinations; a policy for use of calculators, microcomputers, or word-processors in examinations; relative marking weight of all assignments and examinations; conceptual objectives of the course and the examinations; attendance expectations and their contribution to the evaluation process;

the evaluation procedures and their application to the literal descriptors.

iii. The instructor must make course outlines available to the students and to the Department Head at the beginning of the class.

## 1.2 UNITS OF MEASUREMENT

Except in the case of the College of Graduate Studies and Research, percentage evaluation is expected to be based on the literal descriptors (see "Grading System" in the General Information section of the *Calendar*). This is intended to provide consistency in grading among Colleges. Literal descriptors for Graduate Studies classes are printed in the College section of the *Calendar*.

*a. University level:*

i. The Registrar will record and report final grades in all classes on a percentage system unless an exception has been approved.

ii. Council will receive and evaluate requests from Colleges desiring exceptions, such as pass/fail, to the percentage system of evaluation. Required non-credit seminar courses need not be referred to Council for exemption from the percentage unit of the evaluation grade system. Examples are orientation courses, honours or graduate seminar courses, fourth year and graduate thesis courses. Normally, formal examinations are not held in such courses and they may be reported on a P/F (pass/fail) or CR (completed requirements) basis.

*b. College level:*

i. Any College requesting a change or addition to these regulations is to prepare and submit a properly documented and supported proposal to the University Council.

ii. Each nondepartmentalized College has the responsibility for ensuring, at the beginning of each class, that students are familiar with the evaluation procedures and their application to the literal descriptors.

*c. Department level:*

i. All student grades in all classes must be reported according to procedures established by the Office of the Registrar. These grades shall be reported as percentage grades except when some other grading method has been approved.

ii. Each Department has the responsibility for ensuring, at the beginning of each class, that students are familiar with the evaluation procedures and their application to the literal descriptors.

## 1.3 FAIRNESS IN EVALUATION

In its Mission Statement, the University identifies human dignity and fairness among its values. Colleges and Departments are therefore called upon to put in place mechanisms to ensure fairness in evaluation. It is expected that these mechanisms will involve a collegial process for determining evaluation procedures, and will address matters of both procedural and substantive fairness.

*a. University level:*

The University shall periodically review methods of evaluation and grading patterns across the University.

*b. College level:*

i. Colleges should review guidelines developed by Departments to assist in overcoming possible unfairness in student evaluation within the College and to avoid marked inconsistencies within the College.

*c. Department level:*

i. Each Department or nondepartmentalized College will develop guidelines to ensure fairness in evaluation, regardless of section or course, and will ensure that these guidelines are communicated to instructors and students each year.

ii. Departments and nondepartmentalized Colleges shall periodically discuss grading patterns and try to reach a common understanding about what appropriate grades at all levels of their discipline should be. Discussion should include appropriateness of various types of examinations, and the possibility of vetting of drafts of examinations. Grading patterns should be published and made available to instructors and students.

## 1.4 PROCEDURAL ASPECTS OF EVALUATION

### 1.4.1 Method of Examination

The University Council, while retaining the final authority over evaluation of student achievement, should normally delegate to Colleges the responsibility of establishing general policies concerning the methods and types of evaluation which may be employed by the departments of that College, and each department should establish any further instructions and policies for its members.

### 1.4.2 Examination Practice and Weighting

In its Mission Statement, the University asserts the goal of advancing education equity through its practices. Colleges and Departments are therefore called upon to consider how evaluation practices might serve this goal by accommodating students with special needs.

*a. University level:*

i. The Council delegates to each College the responsibility and authority for establishing regulations and guidelines concerning examination practice, and weighting of individual examinations or term work in computing a student's grade.

ii. The Registrar shall schedule all final examinations.

*b. College level:*

i. Each College will set out regulations and guidelines for the College governing methods of evaluation permitted, final or any other examination requirements and any limits on the relative weighting of final examinations or any other term work. Each College should establish adequate procedures for setting these guidelines and assessing applications for exceptions.

ii. Unless the College and the Department have decided otherwise, a final examination will be given in each course. With the approval of the College and the

Department, the final examination in an individual course may be replaced by an approved alternative form of evaluation that provides a percentage evaluation consistent with the literal descriptors.

iii. Colleges shall approve Departmental regulations established under the College regulations and guidelines to promote procedural consistency within the College.

iv. Students with special needs may request alternative arrangements for final examinations. For more information, students may consult a College office or the appropriate student services office.

*c. Department level:*

i. Each Department will establish, within the regulations and guidelines set out by the College, whatever methods of evaluation are permitted, final or any other examination requirement, and any limits on the relative weighting of final examinations or any other term work. These Department limitations must be approved by the College.

ii. In courses provided by a Department of one College for students of another College, the evaluation regulations of the teaching Department will have precedence unless alternative arrangements have been negotiated between the teaching Department, its own College and the other College.

### 1.4.3 Invigilation and Conduct of Final Examinations

*a. University level:*

i. Before leaving the examination room, students are required to sign a tally sheet indicating their attendance at the final examination and submission of examination materials. The tally sheets are to be retained according to procedures defined by the College.

ii. Students are required to have suitable identification (Student I.D. card or other picture I.D.) available during examinations. Invigilators may request students to produce such identification during examinations.

iii. Council delegates to each College and Department responsibility for setting responsibilities of invigilators.

*b. College level*

No additional regulations.

*c. Department level*

No additional regulations.

### 1.4.4 Reporting, Recording and Issuing Examination Results and Grades

It is the responsibility of the instructor and Department Head to report final grades to the Office of the Registrar in accordance with the regulations outlined here. The final grade report, prepared by the instructor, must be approved by the Department Head, or Dean in nondepartmentalized Colleges.

*a. University level:*

i. Recording Final Grades:

It will be the responsibility of the Registrar to record the final grades for all classes on the official student record. Final grades will normally be recorded as percentage units, with the following alternatives: absent

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(ABS), incomplete (INC), pass (P), failure (F), withdrawal (W), deferred (DE), audit (AU), withdrawal from audit (WAU), withdrawal-failure (WF), incomplete-failure (INF), supplemental authorized (SA), no mark reported (NR), absent-failure (ABF), aegrotat (AEG), completed requirements (CR).

## ii. Reporting of Grades by Instructors:

Reports of final grades for all one- and two-term classes and for 100-level, two-term classes examined at midyear will be submitted according to procedures established by the Office of the Registrar:

- no later than the end of the official examination period, for those classes with no examination in the official examination period;
- within five working days (counting Saturday, but not Sunday) after the examination date, for those classes with examinations within the official examination period.

Grades for supplemental, deferred and special examinations should be reported according to procedures established by the Office of the Registrar.

## iii. Reporting Final Grades to Students:

Only the Office of the Registrar may release official grades. Transcripts of students' records shall be issued on the payment of the required fee.

## iv. Alteration of Grades:

Where a mechanical error and not an error in judgment is involved, the Registrar will accept a change of grade submitted according to procedures established by the Office of the Registrar. Changes of grades for any other reason will be subject to normal appeal procedures.

### *b. College level:*

Colleges may establish policies which allow instructors to release/post unofficial final grades but only after the marks have been approved by the Department Head, or Dean in nondepartmentalized Colleges, and providing this is done in a way which ensures confidentiality.

### *c. Department level*

No additional regulations.

## 1.4.5 Deferred Final Examinations and Aegrotat Standing

A deferred final examination may be granted to a student who is absent from a final examination through no fault of his or her own for medical or other valid reasons. The regular deferred examination periods are as follows:

- Term 1 courses, "Student Mid-term Break" in February;
- Full year and Term 2 courses, the week immediately following the First Quarter final exams in Term 1 of Spring and Summer Session;
- Spring & Summer Session Term 1 courses, the week before Labour Day;
- Spring & Summer Session Term 2 courses, the third week in September.

**Note:** For 2001-2002 deferred and supplemental examination periods please refer to the Academic Schedule in the *Calendar*.

For courses which do not conform to the usual academic schedule, deferred final examinations will be scheduled by the Registrar in consultation with the College.

Deferred final examinations may be granted provided the following conditions are met:

### *a. University level:*

i. A student who is absent from a final examination through no fault of his or her own for medical or other valid reasons may apply to his or her College for a deferred examination. (Students in Unclassified Studies apply to the Coordinator, Unclassified Studies Advising, Extension Division.) To apply a student must submit satisfactory documentary evidence to the College within three days of the missed examination.

ii. A student who becomes ill during a final examination must notify the invigilator immediately of the inability to complete the examination. To apply for a deferred examination, the student must submit, to his or her College, within three days of the interrupted examination, satisfactory documentary evidence of the illness.

iii. A student who has sat for a given final examination and handed the paper in for marking will not be granted a deferred final examination.

iv. A student, who by reason of continuing illness or other valid considerations, is unable to write during the regular deferred examination period may apply to his or her College for permission to write a special deferred examination. The College must consider all requests for special deferred examinations and notify the Registrar and student of its decision within ten working days of receipt of the application.

v. A deferred final examination shall be accorded the same weight as the regular final examination in the computation of the student's final grade.

vi. The Registrar may arrange for deferred examinations to be written at centres other than Saskatoon.

vii. In exceptional circumstances, a student may be offered aegrotat standing (AEG) in lieu of writing the deferred final examination, provided: the student has obtained a grade of at least 65 percent in term work in the class(es) in question (where such evaluation is possible); or, if there is no means of evaluating term work, the student's overall academic performance has otherwise been satisfactory; and the instructor of the class recommends, along with the Department Head, or Dean in a nondepartmentalized College, and the student's College approves the award of aegrotat standing.

### *b. College level:*

The College must consider all requests for deferred examinations and notify the student and instructor of its decision within ten working days of the close of the final

examination period. The College must also notify the Registrar if permission is granted.

### *c. Department level:*

With the approval of the Department Head and the consent of the student, the instructor of a class is allowed some flexibility about the nature of the examination to accommodate the particular circumstances which created the need for the deferred exam. The Registrar must be notified of any departures from the regular form of examination.

## 1.4.6 Supplemental Final Examinations

Supplemental final examinations are a limited substitute for the final exam. Such examinations may be granted only according to the following conditions.

### *a. University level:*

i. The student must make formal application for a supplemental final examination to his or her College.

ii. Supplemental final examinations shall be accorded the same weight as the original final examination in the computation of the student's final grade.

iii. The Registrar may arrange for supplemental examinations to be written at centres other than Saskatoon.

iv. Special supplemental examinations which are written at a time other than the regular supplemental examination period are granted only in unusual circumstances and an additional fee is charged; otherwise, they are subject to the same regulations as supplementals.

v. A student is entitled to a routine inquiry on a supplemental examination. A reread will be granted upon receipt of the appropriate application.

vi. Supplemental final examinations may be granted under regulations established at the College level except that any student who is otherwise eligible to graduate and who fails one class in their graduating year shall be granted a supplemental examination, provided that a final examination was held in that class. A student who fails more than one course in the graduating year may be considered for supplemental examinations according to the regulations established by his or her College.

### *b. College level:*

i. In consultation with the teaching Department concerned, a College may grant a supplemental examination to a student registered in the College. Within the limits defined in this section, the College shall determine the grounds for granting supplemental (and special supplemental) examinations and the criteria for eligibility. This applies to all students regardless of year. (Students in Unclassified Studies are not eligible for supplemental examinations.)

ii. Factors to be taken into consideration include but are not limited to: the subsequent availability of the course or an appropriate substitute; the grades obtained by the student in term work; the weighting of the final examination in determining the final grade; the class schedule of the student in the subsequent session.

### *c. Department level*

No additional regulations.

## 1.4.7 Incompletes

### *a. University level:*

When a student has not completed the term work in a class by the time of the submission of the final grades to the Department Head, or Dean in nondepartmentalized Colleges, one of the following grades will be assigned:

i. INC, if the student has been granted an extension of time to complete term work. Such extensions must be approved by the Department Head, or Dean in nondepartmentalized Colleges, and may exceed thirty days only in unusual circumstances. The instructor in consultation with the Department Head, or Dean in nondepartmentalized Colleges, will also submit the final grade which should be recorded in case the outstanding work is not completed. This may be INF (incomplete, fail), or a computed percentage grade. If the deficiency is made good within the allotted extension, the instructor will submit a final percentage grade.

The student must apply to the instructor for such an extension as described above and furnish satisfactory reasons for the deficiency.

ii. INF, if the student has not been granted an extension and is deemed to have failed the course but the instructor in consultation with the Department Head, or Dean in nondepartmentalized Colleges, considers it inappropriate to assign a percentage grade.

iii. A numeric grade, if the student has not been granted an extension and the instructor, in consultation with the Department Head, or Dean in a nondepartmentalized College, considers it appropriate to assign a percentage grade.

*Note:* None of the above are to be assigned to a student who has been absent from a final examination; the proper grade in this case is ABS.

### *b. College level*

No additional regulations.

### *c. Department level*

No additional regulations.

## 1.4.8 Absence from Final Examinations

### *a. University level:*

In the event that a student is absent from a final examination, the instructor, in submitting the final evaluation report, will record ABS in lieu of a final mark. If within thirty days of the close of the examination period, a student marked ABS has not been granted a deferred examination, (DE), the Registrar will record an absent fail (ABF) grade.

### *b. College level*

No additional regulations.

### *c. Department level*

No additional regulations.

## 1.4.9 Final Examination Period

### *a. University level:*

i. At least 48 hours (2 days), and preferably 72 hours (3 days), should be allowed between the last day of lectures and the first

day of final examinations. Under usual circumstances, final examinations in evening courses will occur one week from the last scheduled lecture in that class. Intersession and Summer Session final examinations may be scheduled immediately after the close of lectures. For courses which do not conform to the usual academic schedule, final examinations will be scheduled by the Registrar in consultation with the College.

ii. Final examinations must be scheduled during the regular examination period.

iii. No examination, quiz or major assignment is to be newly assigned during the last week of lectures, i.e. students must be made aware of all required evaluation procedures at the beginning of the course as outlined in 1.1.3.c.ii.

iv. In very unusual circumstances, the Registrar may schedule a final examination outside an examination period on the recommendation of the instructor and Department Head, or Dean in a nondepartmentalized College.

v. The Registrar must post the schedules of final examinations as early as possible.

vi. The Registrar should arrange the schedule so that no student writes more than two final examinations in one 24 hour period.

vii. Six credit-unit courses will have final examinations of three hours duration. Courses of fewer than six credit units will have final examinations of two to three hours.

#### 1.4.10 Mid-Year Examinations

Mid-year examinations and other required class activities are not to be scheduled during the final examination period, but will be scheduled by instructors based on scheduled class times. Students who have more than three mid-year examinations in one day will be dealt with as special cases.

Mid-year grades in 100-level six credit-unit courses are to be reported to the Office of the Registrar.

#### 1.4.11 Accessibility of Examination Papers

a. *University level*

No additional regulations.

b. *College level:*

For details regarding accessibility of examination papers please refer to the

policy on Student Academic Appeals, Section II, subsection 1, Consultation With the Instructor. This policy is available through the Office of the University Secretary, or at college dean's offices, or on the web at: [www.usask.ca/university\\_council/reports.shtml](http://www.usask.ca/university_council/reports.shtml).

c. *Department level:*

i. All unreturned copies of marked final examination papers, together with the tally sheets, shall be retained in the Department, or College in nondepartmentalized Colleges, for at least three months after the expiry of the reread period following the official examination period.

ii. Copies of all examination question papers of all courses offered by the Department in any year should be retained in the Department, or College in nondepartmentalized Colleges, for a period of at least one year.

#### 1.5 GRADE DISPUTE MECHANISM BETWEEN INSTRUCTOR AND DEPARTMENT HEAD OR DEAN

In the absence of any other approved mechanism to resolve grade disputes between an instructor and Department Head, or Dean in a nondepartmentalized College, the following steps, to be completed in a maximum of 10 working days, shall be followed:

Step 1. Members of each Department or nondepartmentalized College shall agree ahead of time on a conciliation mechanism that the Department will follow in the event of a grade dispute.

Step 2. If five working days following the last day of examinations pass and the Department Head, or Dean, in a nondepartmentalized College, has not approved the grade report for a class, the Department or nondepartmentalized College shall immediately commence the conciliation procedure referred to in Step 1 above. The Department or nondepartmentalized College has five working days to complete this conciliation process.

Step 3. If, after five working days the conciliation procedure does not resolve the dispute, the matter shall be immediately referred to the Dean, or the Vice President (Academic) in the case of

non-departmentalized Colleges, who will see that an arbitration committee is set up within two working days. The committee shall consist of three members: one member nominated by the instructor, one member nominated by the Department Head, and a chairperson. In the event that one of the parties does not nominate a member, the Dean or Vice-President (Academic) shall do so. The chairperson shall be appointed by the mutual agreement of the nominees for the instructor and the Department Head or, if the two nominees cannot agree, by the Dean. In nondepartmentalized Colleges, the chair will be appointed by the Vice-President (Academic) if the Dean and the instructor cannot agree.

Step 4. Within two working days of the failure of the conciliation process, the Department Head, or Dean in a nondepartmentalized College, must list in writing what material was considered in conciliation. A copy of this list shall be sent to the instructor who must immediately report in writing to the Dean, or Vice President (Academic) for nondepartmentalized Colleges, as to the accuracy of the list. Within the same two working days, the Department Head, or Dean in nondepartmentalized Colleges, and the instructor shall forward written submissions with supporting documents to the Dean, or Vice President (Academic) in nondepartmentalized Colleges.

Step 5. These submissions and all material considered in the conciliation (including the list drawn up by the Department Head, or Dean in a nondepartmentalized College), and the response of the instructor are to be forwarded to the arbitration committee.

Step 6. The arbitration committee shall follow a strict set of deadlines and shall consider only the submissions and supporting documents as submitted by the Department Head, or Dean in a nondepartmentalized College, and instructor. To the extent possible, the arbitration committee will use the same relative weighting of final examination and term work as was used by the instructor in arriving at the final grades.

Step 7. The arbitration committee shall be given a maximum of three working days to complete its deliberations and reach a final

decision about the disputed marks. The committee shall immediately submit a written report to the Registrar, with copies to the Dean, Department Head and Instructor.

Step 8. If after three working days, the arbitration committee has not submitted a final decision about the disputed marks, the Dean or Vice-President (Academic) will assign provisional pass/fail grades until the arbitrated grades have been submitted. Final grades must be available for students by graduation deadlines. This applies whether or not the student is graduating. An unofficial pass grade cannot be changed to a failing grade, regardless of the result of the arbitration. Likewise, a student will not lose any scholarship, admission status or the like even if the arbitrated mark lowers the student's grade to the point where the student would otherwise have been ineligible.

Step 9. In the event that a provisional pass/fail grade is assigned, the Registrar will attach an explanatory note to any transcripts of the affected students explaining that an unresolved grade dispute has arisen between the instructor and the Department Head or Dean and that through no fault of the student, a mark is not currently available. Once the arbitration is completed, the Registrar shall issue, free of charge, corrected transcripts to replace any previously ordered by the affected students.

#### GRADE DISPUTES BETWEEN INSTRUCTOR AND STUDENT

A student who is dissatisfied with the assessment of their work or performance in any aspect of course work, including a midterm or final examination, should consult the University Council policy titled *Student Appeals in Academic Matters*. This policy describes the process to be followed in appealing the assessment. Appeals based on academic judgement follow a step-by-step process including consultation with the instructor and re-reading of written work or re-assessment of non-written work. The policy is available from the Office of the University Secretary, your college dean's office and online at [www.usask.ca/university\\_council/reports.shtml](http://www.usask.ca/university_council/reports.shtml).