

7.2 Common Examination Policy

A unified “common” exam policy fulfills several objectives, providing for equal assessment of all students in several sections across one course, providing exam seating that exceeds normal classroom setup in number of seats, encouraging cross-section coordination in teaching, accommodating competing programmatic needs, reducing temptations for academic dishonesty, providing predictable and transparent guidelines for faculty and administration, and being respectful of the busy and demanding lives of our students.

This policy covers out-of-class midterm exams for all undergraduate courses with the exception of take-home exams, as noted:

- The evening common exam period is Monday through Thursday evenings, with one exam period each evening. The common hour exam start and end time will be determined by the registrar. Exams are limited to these 90 minutes.
- No course may request more than 3 evening common exam periods in a single semester. (Final exams are not included as part of this limitation.)

Common hour exams will be scheduled for first year (100 level) and sophomore (200 level) courses with multiple sections having a total enrollment of greater than or equal to 125 students. All other undergraduate courses with multiple sections that do not meet the aforementioned criteria will be considered based upon space availability.

- Generally only 100-level courses are allowed to schedule an exam on Wednesday evenings.
- Priority for limited space goes to courses (or courses bundled) with largest enrollment.

Common hour exams must be accompanied by a day off during the scheduled meeting time, ideally right after the exam or as close to the exam as possible to compensate students for their time. The registrar makes the final decision on approving requests.

STUDENT CONSIDERATIONS

Given the numerous scenarios and arguable disadvantages inherent to evening exams that include: (a) schedule conflicts with evening courses, (b) student commitments to important non-academic opportunities such as intramural and intercollegiate sports and student programs, and (c) the increasing prominence of student financial and family evening responsibilities (e.g., working on- or off-campus to subsidize the cost of education), faculty are kindly asked to judge the rationale for an evening exam against the aforementioned challenges.

Testing Center PROTOCOLS

Mines Testing Center will prioritize faculty requested times for tests administered through the Testing Center. At times, such requests are not possible due to student schedule conflicts and Testing Center operations (e.g. occupancy or availability of private testing rooms). In such instances, the Testing Center is authorized to schedule the accommodated exam after the regularly scheduled exam as soon as possible.

COURSE CONFLICTS

Regularly scheduled evening courses that meet partially or completely during the time of the common exam, Monday through Thursday, have priority over evening exams covered by this policy. Any course that schedules an out-of-class exam during the evening exam times assumes all responsibility for arranging make-up exams for students who have conflicts with regularly scheduled classes including courses that are part of the McBride Honors Program.

EXAM CONFLICTS

If a student is scheduled in two exams on the same evening, the course or bundle of courses with the lower total enrollment will be required to provide the make-ups for affected students. The Registrar's Office will provide a list of the students with two exams in one time slot to the professor of the course with the lower enrollment with the reminder that make-up exams are the responsibility of that professor.

FINAL SCHEDULE AND HARD DEADLINES

The initial schedule will be posted after all of the requests have been slotted or time slots are full. All requests must be submitted by the deadline as stated in the call for exams from the registrar's office.

Under no circumstance will requests be granted to use the evening common exam period for an out-of-class exam if requested after 5:00pm on the day before the first day of class (for the semester being scheduled). There are two reasons for this policy. First, faculty need to make the appropriate exam arrangements with the Registrar's Office before the beginning of the semester. Second, syllabi for courses that utilize the evening common exam period need to include the common exam times as part of the syllabus. This is the only way to ensure students are aware of such non-standard class meeting times so they can make appropriate arrangements. Mid-semester decisions to administer exams outside of the regularly-scheduled class time are unfair to students, and not permitted, even if all students appear to approve of the change in schedule.

The final schedule of all out-of-class exams included under this policy will be published in the first week of the semester. No additional out-of-class exam requests will be considered after the above stated deadline. Faculty may not administer exams outside of regular class periods (with the exception of take-home exams) if the exam was not listed on the final schedule.

All out-of-class exams must be noted on this final list, even if the exam is being administered in a departmental room or other room not scheduled by the Registrar's Office.

POLICY NOTES

Questions pertaining to policy, processes and administration of common hour exams should be directed to the registrar's office at registrar@mines.edu.

Last Revision:

July 6, 2023

Next revision due – January 2025 to go in to effect Fall 2025.