

Out-of-class "Common" Exam Policy
Colorado School of Mines
July 8, 2015

A unified "Common" Exam Policy fulfills several objectives, including: improving student mastery of learning outcomes, 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, allowing for more than one hour or seventy-five minutes for examination periods, accommodating competing programmatic needs, managing limited space, 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 exams for all undergraduate and graduate level 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 from 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm. Exams are limited to these 90 minutes.
- No course may request more than 4 evening common exam periods in a single semester. (Final exams are not included as part of this limitation.)
- 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.

Specific classes that are exempted from this policy are graduate courses that meet the following criteria.

- Graduate courses that are numbered 6xx.
Or
- Graduate courses that have fewer than 20 registered students. For these courses, outside-of-normal-class-time exams should be specifically scheduled in the course syllabi that are provided to the students at the beginning of the semester. If the exam is not scheduled in the syllabus, it should be scheduled a minimum of three weeks in advance and be at a time that does not significantly inconvenience any of the students registered in the class.

Any graduate course that is co-taught with an undergraduate course and schedules examinations for both the undergraduate and graduate versions of the course at the same time is not exempted from this policy.

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.

Course conflicts:

Regularly scheduled evening courses that meet partially or completely during this time of 7:30pm – 9:00pm, 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.

Scheduling common exams:

During the week immediately following pre-registration for the following regular semester, the Registrar's Office sends an open solicitation to department heads and schedulers, copying all faculty, asking if professors would like to take advantage of the evening common exam time during the following semester. This call for exam requests will be accompanied by the academic calendar for the upcoming term, along with other important dates that are normally avoided; a list of rooms used for common exams with seating capacities and furniture type; the actual current enrollment of the future courses; and the course enrollment of the previous parallel term for the purposes of accurately estimating total enrollment in courses, especially those that will be receiving enrollments from new freshmen and transfer students. For fall courses with large incoming populations (new freshmen and transfer students), the previous year's enrollment numbers will be used. New courses with no previous enrollment history will use actual enrollments.

Faculty who wish to utilize the common exam period have until Monday of Dead Week at 5:00pm to reply with the following information (for the fall 2015 semester, we will work with faculty to build the common exam schedule by early August):

- Course Name(s) and Number(s)
- Number and section identifiers of the specific sections that will take the common exam
- Total number of students in all sections taking the common exam (or close estimate based on previous parallel term for courses with large incoming student populations)
- If faculty wish to "bundle" courses, all courses bundled together should be submitted in a single request. For instance, if Calculus I (700 students) and Calculus II (600 students) wish to offer their exams on the same evenings using every other seat or other sharing scheme, then they should submit a single request, with a total number of 1300 students.
- Seating preference (exam seating every other seat, or regular seating at every chair)
- First, second, and third preferences for days and rooms.

This information will be collected by means of an electronic form or survey through a link provided by the Registrar's Office.

The Registrar's Office then begins the process of assigning common exam time slots, beginning with the course or bundle of courses with the largest number of students. Exams will be scheduled in the order of the highest enrollment to the lowest. This process continues until either (a) all evening common exam seats are full, or (b) all courses desiring the use of the evening common exam period have been scheduled, whichever comes first. The Registrar's Office will work diligently with

departments and professors in an attempt to minimize conflicts for students. If a conflict is recognized by the Registrar that affects a large number of students, the Registrar may decline to schedule an exam on a particular day.

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 priority requests have been slotted or time slots are full.

Faculty may make "late" (arriving after the Monday of Dead Week deadline) requests. All such late requests will be accommodated, as possible, in the order in which they are received, but only after all on-time requests have been filled.

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:

This Out-of-class "Common" Exam Policy was developed during the Spring 2015 semester with the following Exam Committee members participating:

Lara Medley Registrar, Exam Committee Chair

Tom Boyd	Associate Provost
Brendan Casias	CSM graduate student with BS in MME
Dahl Grayckowski	Associate Registrar for Operations
Gerrald Greivel	AMS Department
Tyrel Jacobsen	USG Representative and undergraduate student
Dan Knauss	Faculty Senate President
Ken Osgood	Faculty Senate and McBride Honors Program
Todd Ruskell	Physics Department
Colin Terry	CASA Director
Richard Wendlandt	FOCSA