

Administration of Final Examinations
Committee on Elections, Rules and Jurisdiction
June 18, 2012

CERJ has been asked to advise a department chair concerning the administration of final examinations in undergraduate courses. The question is whether a final research project in a course would qualify as a take-home final examination, and if not, whether a final examination is required in the course.

CERJ advises that a final research project may be deemed by the instructor as being a take-home final examination. If it is so deemed, then the due date and time for submission of the project is ordinarily that published in the *Class Schedule*, but in any case no earlier than the first day of finals week. If the project is not deemed a take-home final, then a separate final examination is required for the course, subject to the same time constraints. The only exceptions are courses which the Committee on Courses of Instruction has approved as being exempt from the UC Academic Senate Regulation (SR) requirement that a final examination be administered in all undergraduate courses.

The Regulations of the Academic Senate govern the administration of final examinations on all campuses, including the Davis campus. The relevant Regulations are 770 and 772 (<http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/senate/manual/rpart3.html#r770>).

770.

No student shall be excused from assigned final examinations, except as provided in SR 772(D).

772.

- A. Final examinations are required in all undergraduate courses, except as provided elsewhere in this Regulation. Whenever practicable each such examination shall be written and must be completed by all participants within a previously announced time limit. Examinations in non-laboratory courses may not exceed three hours' duration.
- B. Examinations are normally not required in laboratory courses or their equivalent, as individually determined by the appropriate Committee on Courses. At its option, the department concerned may require a final examination in any laboratory course, subject to prior announcement in the schedule of classes for the term in question.
- C. With the approval of the appropriate Committee on Courses and upon recommendation of the department concerned, the final examination may be omitted in any undergraduate course or sets of courses either once or for a longer period.
- D. At the end of the term in which a student is expected to be graduated, the student's major department may examine the student in the field of the major, may excuse the student from final examinations in courses offered by the department during that term, and, with the approval of the appropriate Committee on Courses, may assign a credit value to such general examination.

SR 770 requires all students to complete all "assigned" final examinations, except in cases where a student takes a general examination in the major during the last term of study. SR 772 clarifies which final examinations are "assigned." In general, they are assigned to all undergraduate courses except where the Divisional Committee on Courses of Instruction has exempted the course from the requirement of a final examination.

Davis Division Regulation (DDR) 538 imposes specific requirements on the administration of final examinations on the Davis campus.

538. Examinations

(A) Except under certain specified circumstances, Senate Regulation (SR) 772 requires that final examinations be given in all undergraduate courses. Final examinations may be given in graduate courses. (Am. 4/26/82)

(B) At the instructor's option, a final examination in any course other than an on-line course may be wholly or in part of the take-home type. All examinations for on-line courses must be proctored to ensure that the person taking the examination is the student receiving credit. In accordance with SR 772(A), in undergraduate courses, the writing time of a take-home final examination and an in-class final examination together may not exceed three hours. (Am. 5/4/04)

(C) In each course for which a final examination is required, each student shall have the right to take a final examination (or, when the instructor has so opted, to submit a take-home examination) at the time and on the date published in the Class Schedule. For on-line courses, the University Registrar will offer to the instructor of each on-line class the option to have the final in the last time slot on the last day of finals or at a time on dead day to be negotiated between the University Registrar and the instructor. Students shall be notified of the time and place of the final on or before the first day of instruction. (Am. 5/4/04)

(D) In each course (other than in an on-line course) for which a midterm examination is required, each student shall have the right to take a midterm examination (or, when the instructor has so opted, to submit a take-home examination) during one of the scheduled meetings of the class published in the Class Schedule. (Am. 4/26/82; 5/4/04)

(E) Holding a final or midterm examination (or setting a deadline for submission of a take-home examination) at a time not specified in (C) or (D) requires the mutual consent of the instructor and all students involved in the change (other than in an on-line course). Any student who does not consent in writing to the different time must be permitted to take an examination (and/or submit a take-home examination) at the officially scheduled time. A student who consents in writing to the change of examination time waives the right cited in (C) or (D). (Am. 3/13/95 and effective 9/1/95; 5/4/04)

(F) Any departures from the published examination schedule should be carried out so as not to disadvantage students who are unable to accept the alternative examination schedule. An in-class final examination may not be rescheduled for a date earlier than the first day of final week. The due date for a take-home final examination may not be rescheduled for a date earlier than the first day of finals week. In the case of on-line courses, the published examination schedule is that announced no later than the first day of class in accordance with 538(C), and finals may be scheduled or rescheduled to occur on dead day. (Am. 10/26/87 and effective 9/1/88) (Am. 3/13/95 and effective 9/1/95; 5/4/04)

(G) A student who is improperly denied the right cited in (C) or (D) may file a petition with the Executive Council by the end of the next regular term, for appropriate action.

(H) In accordance with current law, students with documented disabilities may be entitled to in-class accommodations. The student shall provide a letter from the campus Student Disability Center (SDC) with a recommendation for those academic accommodations that the instructor is responsible for

providing. It is the student's responsibility to request accommodations as soon as possible; this notification must be made within a period of time which allows the university a reasonable opportunity to evaluate the request and offer necessary adjustments. The instructor has a legal obligation to provide recommended academic accommodations, unless the instructor can demonstrate that the accommodations will fundamentally alter the nature of the academic demands made of the student, or decrease the standards and types of academic performance. It is the responsibility of the University to provide recommended physical accommodations. No accommodation shall require facilities or personnel that can be demonstrated to result in undue financial and administrative burdens to the University. The instructor should consult with the student and the SDC if there are any questions or concerns. If the instructor and the SDC cannot arrive at a mutually agreeable accommodation, the matter shall be resolved by a committee convened by the Vice Chancellor - Student Affairs that includes the instructor, the department chair, and a representative from the SDC. (En. 6/8/87; Am 11/25/96; Am 4/14/08) (Am. 6/8/2012)

(I) An instructor may release to individual students their original final examinations (or copies thereof) at any time. Otherwise the instructor shall retain final examination materials, or a copy thereof, until the end of the next regular term, during which period students shall have access to their examinations. (En. 5/25/77; Renum. 6/8/87)

(J) Paragraphs (A) through (I) of this Regulation shall be printed in the General Catalog. (En. 5/24/76; Am. and renum. 5/25/77; 6/8/87)

As required by DDR 538(J) the remainder of the Regulation is reproduced in the *General Catalog* and thus is readily available to all faculty and students.

DDR 538(F) clearly states that final examinations may not be administered before the beginning of finals week, and that take-home final examinations may not be made due before that time.

CERJ adds that in any course in which a final project is thought by the unit offering the course to be pedagogically preferable to a final examination, the unit should request from the Committee on Courses of Instruction an exemption from the final examination requirement.