



Guidelines for formal examination (final exams), in-term examinations (midterms), and regular weekly or bi-weekly tests, and practices in laboratories

(Prepared by Dr. Davide Elmo, Associate Professor and Undergraduate Advisor, Department of Mining Engineering)

Purpose and Goals

This document is designed to:

- Ensure consistent practices for managing and scheduling examinations across the Mining Engineering Department; and
- Establish the methods by which students can request academic concessions.

Applicability

- All undergraduate level credit-bearing MINE-courses in Mining Engineering for which the instructors did not provide the students (within the first week of class, in paper or digital format) with specific guidelines for In-Term Examinations and regular weekly or bi-weekly tests or practices in laboratories.

Limitations

- Instructors outside of the Mining Department may use their own guidelines for In-Term Examinations and regular weekly or bi-weekly tests or practices in laboratories.
- The document was prepared in August 2018 and all external links were active at the time of writing. It is the responsibility of students to check that all external links are still active at the time of reading the document. No responsibility is accepted for the cancellation or discontinuance of any of the external links or any of the information included in this document.

General Definitions

For the purposes of this document:

- Course shall mean course of instruction.
- Instructor and course instructor shall mean the member of the University's teaching staff who has primary responsibility for the organization and operation of a course.
- Syllabus shall mean the document provided by the course instructor which communicates the course instructor's course design to students including organization, policies, expectations, and requirements.
- Examinations are generally defined as oral, written, or practical assessments that contributes toward the determination of an examination candidate's final grade or standing in the respective course.

1. Different Forms of Examinations

The UBC Calendar and UBC Policies for Examinations make an important distinction between Formal Examinations (final exams) and In-term Examinations (midterms):

- a) **Formal Examinations (final exams)** are oral, written, or practical assessments scheduled by the Registrar during the Formal Examination Periods, and time-limited, with invigilation provided. Requests concerning academic concessions for Formal Examinations are managed by Faculty (e.g. ESS office).
- b) **In-term Examinations (midterms)** are oral, written, or practical assessments scheduled by instructors during term time (please note that instructors are under no obligation to provide In-term Examinations as part of a course syllabus). Requests for absences and academic concessions for In-term Examinations are managed by the instructors.
- c) **Regular weekly or bi-weekly tests or traditional and current practices in laboratories represent a separate type of In-term Examination.** Request for absences and academic concessions for regular weekly or bi-weekly tests or traditional and current practices in laboratories are managed by the instructors.

2. Course Assessment Format/Type, Attendance and Pre-Requisites

- a) A new draft UBC policy (Policy V-130: Content and Distribution of Course Syllabi) will be discussed by the UBC Senate in the Fall of 2018. This new draft policy aims to develop consistent practices of the distribution of course syllabi and content areas therein across the University, and to establish the method by which information on the course syllabus can be changed. These guidelines include key aspects of the draft UBC Policy V-130.
- b) Instructors are required to provide a syllabus to the students within the first week of class in paper or digital format, outlining the methods used to assess achievement of learning outcomes, and including the weighting of each component in the final grade, the schedule, the late penalty policy and the policy on re-grading of marked work.
- c) There is no policy in place at UBC governing the weight of Formal Examinations and In-term Examinations. This document does not infringe on the instructor's ability to develop the approved course topic within the context of the discipline. However, it is recommended that the condition "students need to pass the Formal Examination (final exam) to pass the course" should not be adopted unless the Formal Examination represents 50% or more of the final grade.
- d) Instructors should inform students of any related policies such as arrangements that may be made for students who are unable to complete a test or other graded work because of illness, extreme personal distress, and other reasons. Guidelines (e.g. this document) made available in paper or digital format meet this requirement (students who are unable to access the Web should ask their instructor to provide these guidelines in an alternative format).
- e) Regular attendance is expected of students in all their classes (including lectures, laboratories, tutorials, seminars, etc.). Students who neglect their academic work and assignments may be excluded from final examinations. Students who are unavoidably absent because of illness or disability should report to their instructors on return to classes. Any request for academic concession must be clearly expressed (see Academic Concession).
- f) Students are responsible to know the pre-requisites of the courses they are registered for. Students registered in courses without having completed the pre-requisites (e.g. STT registration may sometimes waive pre-requisites, or students may sometimes be granted registration in courses

even if they do not have the pre-requisites) are responsible to read and learn the content of the material included in the pre-requisite courses.

3. UBC Senate Policy V-103: Use of the Formal Examination Periods

Faculties are urged to make full use of the formal examination periods as scheduled in either Winter or Summer Session. Unless the relevant Dean and Head, for sound academic reasons, grants an exemption, all courses designed for first- and second-year students shall be examined in the scheduled formal examination period.

- a) The holding of any examination, formal or in-term, is forbidden during:
 - the two (2) weeks preceding the formal examination periods of the Winter Session, usually held in December and April; and
 - the one (1) week preceding the formal examination periods of the Summer Session, usually held in June and August.
- b) This restriction does not apply to regular weekly or bi-weekly tests or to traditional and current practices in laboratories.

4. Academic Concession (i.e. illness or extreme personal distress)

Faculty and instructors can grant academic concessions when extenuating circumstances (beyond a student's control) directly affect a student's ability to meet academic obligations. Such circumstances include:

- Family matters (e.g. death of a relative); and
- Medical conditions.

The definition of extenuating circumstances does not include travel for holidays, conferences, travel to events related to departments activities, and participation in sport events.

5. Plan Ahead

Students should not expect instructors or the Faculty to help with situations that are the results of poor planning and poor time management habits.

- a) Formal Examinations (final exams):
 - i. Formal Examinations occur during the Formal Examination Periods (normally, in December, April, June, and August) as delineated in the Academic Year by the Registrar. Students should not make travel plans until the final schedule has been posted. Students should be mindful that dates of Formal Examinations may be postponed to the next Sunday should the campus be closed for extreme weather conditions (e.g. snow).
- b) In-term Examinations (midterms):
 - i. Instructors should include the dates of In-term Examinations in the course syllabi distributed to the students within the first week of class in paper or digital format.
 - ii. Instructors should not change the date of In-term Examination after the last day by which students are permitted to drop the course without receiving a 'W' on the transcript.

- iii. If the need arises for changing the date of a In-term Examination, the course instructor must explain the rationale to the class. The course instructor must provide the new date to the registered students in a timely manner in digital or paper format. Any student who sees the change to the date as detrimental is entitled to discuss the case with the course instructor and seek an academic concession. Where student and instructor cannot agree, students are encouraged to take their protest to the head of the department concerned and then to the dean of the faculty responsible for the course in accordance with the Academic Calendar regulations on protests for academic standings.
 - iv. To be granted a deferred In-term Examination date, students must give two weeks' notice of their intention to absent themselves on the dates of the scheduled In-term Examination. Acceptable reasons include religious holidays, travel to conferences, travel to events related to departments activities (not limited to activities related to the Mining Department) and participating in sports competitions.
 - v. Absences for days in addition to the date(s) during which a religious holiday, a conference, an event or a sport competition is scheduled will not be justified unless directly related to reasonable travel time (students are required to provide a copy of the travel arrangements). Requests made post event will not be considered.
 - vi. To the extent possible, instructors should not schedule In-term Examinations outside of normally-scheduled class hours to prevent conflicts with students' other obligations and other colleagues' courses. However, if concerns exist about invigilating an In-term Examination due to the limited seating capacity of the room normally assigned to a course, and no alternative (larger) room is available during the normally-scheduled class hours, then instructors could schedule In-term Examinations outside of normally-scheduled class hours provided that:
 - A. Dates and times are announced on the first week of class to allow students to make arrangements to accommodate this extra obligation.
 - B. If a conflict exists between a course holding an In-term Examination (Monday to Friday) outside its normal class hours and an In-term Examination or other required obligation for a class regularly scheduled into those hours, the regularly-scheduled academic obligation has precedence.
 - C. Holding In-term Examinations outside of normally-scheduled class hours is not permitted after 6pm.
 - D. Holding In-term Examinations outside of normally-scheduled class hours on Weekends and Statutory Holidays is not permitted.
- c) Regular weekly or bi-weekly tests or practices in laboratories:
- i. Instructors should include the dates of regular weekly or bi-weekly tests or practices in laboratories in the course syllabus distributed to the students within the first week of class in paper or digital format.
 - ii. Instructors should not change the date of regular weekly or bi-weekly tests or practices in laboratories after the last day by which students are permitted to drop the course without receiving a 'W' on the transcript.
 - iii. If the need arises for changing the dates of regular weekly or bi-weekly tests or practices in laboratories, the course instructor must explain the rationale to the class. The course instructor must provide the new dates to the registered students in a timely manner in digital or paper format. Any student who sees the change to the date as detrimental is entitled to discuss the case with the course instructor and seek an academic concession.
 - iv. To be granted attending a regular weekly or bi-weekly tests or practices in laboratories on a deferred date, students must give the instructors two weeks' notice of their intention to be absent. Acceptable reasons include religious holidays, travel to conferences, travel to events

related to departments activities (not limited to activities related to the Mining Department) and participating in sports competitions.

- v. Absences for days in addition of the date(s) during which a religious holiday, a conference, an event or a sport competition is scheduled will not be justified unless directly related to reasonable travel time (students are required to provide a copy of the travel arrangements). Requests made post event will not be considered.

6. Procedures for Missed Examinations Due to Illness or Extreme Personal Distress

- a) Students who miss a Formal Examination (final exam) due to illness or extreme personal distress and would like to apply for a deferred exam (Deferred Standing) must do so through Engineering Student Services (ESS).
 - i. The application and all relevant documentation must be submitted to ESS as soon as possible. In order to be eligible for a Deferred Standing, students must both be in good academic standing going into the final exam, confirmed by the instructor, and have appropriate rationale and documentation to support the missed exam. Students who have not regularly attended classes or completed class assignments/labs, or are failing the course will not be granted a deferral.
 - ii. Students are not permitted to rewrite a Formal Examination. Once a student decides to write a Formal Examination, it is assumed the student did so in good conscience and the student will not be allowed to apply for a deferred exam (other than for emergency medical conditions requiring the intervention of paramedics during the exam). A student not feeling in the proper condition to write the exam would have the option of not writing the Formal Examination and then request Deferred Standing. Please note that a student must be in good standing in the course and have a valid reason (documented) for missing the Formal examination for the request to be considered.
- b) Students who miss an In-term Examination (midterm) due to illness or extreme personal distress must contact the instructor within 48 hours.
 - i. Instructors may allow students to take a deferred In-term Examination (midterm), or ask the students to complete a supplemental assignment, or allow students to have the weight of the In-term Examination transferred to the Formal Examination (final exam). Please contact the course instructor directly. Faculty (ESS) and the Undergraduate Advisor rarely get involved with missed In-term Examinations.
- c) Students who miss regular weekly or bi-weekly tests or practices in laboratories due to illness or extreme personal distress must contact the instructor within 48 hours. Students are required to follow the policies set up by the instructors. Faculty (ESS) and the Undergraduate Advisor rarely get involved in this case.

7. Participation in Sport Events

- a) When actively participating in sports competitions conflicts with class schedules, a Sport Club member can request a letter of academic concession from the Sport Clubs Office.
- b) All requests for letters must be made as soon as the student is aware of the scheduling conflict. Please note that instructors may require a two weeks' notice reporting the intention of a student to be absent on the dates of scheduled In-term Examinations (midterms).

- c) The decision to grant a deferred exam (Deferred Standing) for a Formal Examination (final exam) due to active participation at sports competitions rests with the Faculty (ESS).
- d) Requests made post event will not be considered.

8. Religious Holidays

- a) Students must give two weeks' notice of their intention to absent themselves under the terms of the University policy on religious holidays. You must either inform the instructor of each course or, where this is not possible, the Head or Director of the unit concerned.
- b) Requests made post event will not be considered.

9. Examination Hardship

An examination hardship is defined as three or more Examinations scheduled within a 24-hour period.

- a) For Formal Examinations students must talk to the instructor of the second exam at least one month prior to the Examination date for courses in the Winter Session, or no later than two weeks prior to the Examination date for courses in the Summer Session. Students are responsible to review the important information on Exam Hardships in the UBC Calendar.
- b) For In-terms Examinations students must talk to the instructor of the second In-Term Examination at least two weeks prior of the scheduled date.
- c) Regular weekly or bi-weekly tests or traditional and current practices in laboratories are excluded for consideration under Examination Hardship.

11. Viewing Marked Work

- a) Any examination, essay, problem set, laboratory report, or other assignment, should be marked in a reasonable time and although the work may be retained by the University, the student will receive feedback on expected and achieved outcomes. *In other words, instructors will provide feedback on any marked examination, marked essay, marked problem set, marked laboratory report, or other marked assignment, but instructors may choose to retain any marked work.*
- b) A Formal Examination becomes the property of the University and must remain in the possession of the University for one year from the date of the examination, after which it should be destroyed or otherwise disposed of in accordance with UBC Policy 117.
- c) See also <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,41,93,0>

Link to Related Material

- Policy on Academic Freedom
<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,33,86,0>
- Use of the Formal Examination Periods and Other Important Dates
<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,41,89>
<https://facultystaff.students.ubc.ca/enrolment-services/student-records-systems-management/scheduling-services/exam-scheduling/exam-dates>
<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?page=deadlines>
- Academic Concession
<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,48,0,0>
- Deferred and Supplemental Examinations
<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,41,94,0>
- Attendance
<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,36,0,0>
- Grading Practices
<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,42,0,0>
- Student Conduct and Discipline
<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,0,0>
- Academic Honesty and Standards
<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/?tree=3,286,0,0>
<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/Vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,41,0,0>
- Religious Observances
<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,48,0,0>
- Accommodation for Students with Disabilities
<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,34,0,0>
- Participation in Sports Events
<http://www.recreation.ubc.ca/sport-clubs/home/forms-and-resources/ubc-tsc-letter-of-request-for-academic-concession/>