

SCS Guidelines for MID-TERM and FINAL EXAMS/ASSESSMENTS during Remote Delivery

Since courses offered by McGill continue to be delivered primarily remotely, remote completion of exams (and other assignments) continue to impact both instructors' ability to administer exams/assessments and students' ability to complete them.

Challenges under these conditions continue to include increased childcare responsibilities and other family obligations, lack of private space in which to study or complete work for extended periods of time without interruption, different time zones, technological constraints and disruptions, and limitations to guaranteeing academic integrity remotely. We must therefore continue to take these challenges into account when planning mid-term and final exams/assessments for the duration of the remote delivery period.

The policies and guidelines below are intended to support instructors as they try to navigate these issues as best they can under remote delivery conditions.

Note that since *myCourses* is McGill's official learning management system, all SCS instructors are expected to use the system and the associated tools it provides, including those required for particular courses and programs. We recognize that some of you might not have used these tools before, so please be assured that ample support is available for those who need it through ISET, IT, and TLS. You are also encouraged to seek support from the relevant Academic Program, Area, or Course Coordinator.

A. MCGILL POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Proctored, secured live online exams are still not supported. However, the University continues to explore options.
2. The University recommends that mid-term and final exams/assessments take the form of either **take-home exams** distributed and submitted via *myCourses*, or **time-limited exams** using tools in *myCourses*, such as the Quiz and Assignment tools.
3. If you receive an email from the **Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD)** indicating that there are students in your course who require accommodations for assessments, please consult this [OSD webpage](#) and follow the instructions under "*What do I need to do if students require accommodations for their exams in a remote learning and assessment environment?*"
4. If a student reports that they have encountered **insurmountable technical difficulties** while trying to submit their exam/assessment, please advise them to send an email to itsupport@mcgill.ca (copy to you) with the title and subject code of the course, the time that they were attempting to submit, and a description of the difficulty.

B. SCS POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A copy of your final exam(s) must be sent to instructors.conted@mcgill.ca.
2. If you opt for a **take-home** mid-term or final exam/assessment, the exam/assessment must be available to students for a period of between **48 and 72 hours**. Please confer with the relevant Academic Program Coordinator(s) to determine how long the exam/assessment should be made available to students for your particular course(s). *Note that the University continues to recommend a minimum of 48 hours.*

3. If you cannot avoid a **time-limited exam**, we ask that you schedule a **12-hour window in which students can access the exam**, as this will accommodate the student constraints mentioned above.

With rare exceptions in some special programs, the exam should **be of no more than 3 hours duration**: Students can start the exam at any time during the 12-hour window, but a time-limit of 3 hours should be set. **Ensure that students understand that they have only 3 hours in which to complete the exam once they have accessed it.**

For **mid-term exams**, the 12-hour window must be scheduled so as to **encompass class time**.

In order to avoid exam conflicts, time-limited **final exams** must be held on ***the day and time indicated in the official SCS Exam Schedule***.

4. **Invigilation of Exams:** The School recognizes that it is not possible for instructors to continuously invigilate exams that have an access and completion window of 12, 48, or 72 hours. Instructors must therefore clearly communicate to students **the hours during which they will be available to answer valid questions in their capacity as exam invigilators**. This is similar to the established practice that examiners or associate examiners are available to answer questions during an in-person mid-term or final exam.

For this purpose, SCS has created an **“Instructions for Final Assessments”** form, which you can find on the [SCS Instructor Resources](#) webpage. This form should be sent to students far enough in advance of the date of the exam to allow enough time for students to ask questions—preferably before classes end so that all students can benefit from the Q&A.

Please also communicate your hours of availability in one or more of the following ways:

- through the Announcements tool in *myCourses*
- via the email tool in *myCourses*
- via instructors’ regular McGill email to students’ McGill email addresses ([McGill’s official means of communication between instructors and students](#))
- for courses in Destiny/Athena, via instructors’ regular McGill email to students’ non-McGill email addresses

Note that the time-slots during which you will be available must be ***scheduled so as to ensure that students in different time zones, or with other constraints, can reach you.***

5. **Communication with Students:** To limit confusion, we ask that instructors inform students **in advance** how they can be reached (e.g., via the *myCourses* email tool) and what types of questions will (and will not) be answered. **Please use the “Instructions for Final Assessments” form for this purpose.**

If a student contacts you directly with a legitimate question, please send your response to all students.

6. **Preparing Students to Write an Exam:** Ask students in advance to ensure that they
 - have established a stable Internet connection
 - have access to required technology (e.g., any software necessary to complete the exam; access to a scanner to upload the exam)
 - are able to write the exam during the dedicated period of time

Students who anticipate difficulties in establishing any of these conditions should be encouraged to **notify the instructor/examiner in advance**.

As above, if a student reports that they have encountered **insurmountable technical difficulties** while trying

to submit their exam, please advise them to send an email to itsupport@mcgill.ca (copy to you) with the name of the course, the time that they were attempting to submit, and a description of the difficulty.

Students should be encouraged to **start the exam as far in advance of the submission deadline as possible**: just because the window is 12 or 48 or 72 hours does not mean that they should leave it until the last minute.

If students will need to download or upload the exam, or enter responses in a fillable document, encourage them to **practice in advance of the exam**.

7. **File formats for uploading** are best determined by individual instructors in consultation with their Academic Program/Area/Course Coordinator and Director.

Note that a recent update to the Quiz tool now allows students to provide **written responses** and attach documents in a wide variety of formats (Word files; pdfs; jpegs; audio files; etc.). The written response feature permits greater flexibility in the design of questions/tasks; the document upload feature may act as a deterrent against plagiarism, cheating, and other academic offences. Should you wish to learn more about this feature, please send an email to instructors.conted@mcgill.ca

8. **Late Submission of Exams or Final Assignments:** Given the constraints mentioned above, some students might have a legitimate reason for submitting an assignment after the submission “window” (12, 48, or 72 hours). SCS therefore recommends that a **one- to two-hour window** be enforced. *We also recommend that the late submission period **not be communicated to students in advance**, as this may inadvertently “encourage” some students to take extra time.*
10. **Deferred Exams due to Ill Health:** During the remote delivery period, the University will accept medical notes from licensed health practitioners from OUTSIDE Canada from students who request a deferral of a mid-term or final exam.

C. EXAM DESIGN AND TOOLS

1. Assessments (both take-home exams/assessments and time-limited exams) should be administered via *myCourses*, McGill’s official learning management system. **Required modes of delivery will be communicated to instructors by Academic Program, Area, or Course Coordinators.** These modes may include:
 - Online assessment using the *myCourses* Quiz tool. Note that this tool also allows for randomized questions provided that instructors have created a sufficiently large bank of questions. In answering quiz questions, students can upload images or files containing scanned text.

Two video tutorials about the Quiz tool are included in the *Zoom and myCourses Essentials* workshop developed by ISET. Click on one of the following links to access the workshop depending on whether you are teaching [credit courses](#) or [non-credit courses](#).

 - Construction of assessments via Crowdmark, distributed via *myCourses*. Note that this is recommended by TLS *only* if instructors have previous experience with Crowdmark.
 - Distribution of the assessment via pdf download by each student, with student uploading completed work. The Assessments tool in *myCourses* allows students to upload work.
 - To manage student access times, use either the Assignment or Quiz tool in *myCourses*. Instructions for using these tools are available in a convenient [Guide](#) prepared by TLS.

D. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

1. The new “Instructions for Final Assessments” form also serves to remind students that academic integrity remains paramount. Students should be encouraged to review the document and follow-up with you if they have any questions. It is strongly recommended that instructors set aside class time to underscore the importance of academic integrity in the remote context.
2. The following McGill policy statement **must** be added to all mid-term and final exams and other forms of final assessment:

English Version: McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the McGill Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information).

French Version: L’université McGill attache une haute importance à l’honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l’on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l’étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/).

3. SCS Honour Pledge

If your exam involves the use of the Quiz or Assignment tool in *myCourses*, one of the following statements must be added to the “Instructions” that appear when students access the exam:

Statement for Quiz tool

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism, and other academic offences under the *Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures* (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information).

By starting and submitting this exam, I pledge that I have not received any unauthorized help to complete it. The work I am submitting is my own and has not been copied from any other sources. I confirm that I understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism, and other academic offenses under the *Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures*, and that I am aware of my responsibilities under the *University Student Assessment Policy*.

Statement for Assignment tool

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism, and other academic offences under the *Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures* (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information).

By submitting this assignment, I pledge that I have not received any unauthorized help to complete it. The work I am submitting is my own and has not been copied from any other sources. I confirm that I understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism, and other academic offenses under the *Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures*, and that I am aware of my responsibilities under the *University Student Assessment Policy*.

4. **Reporting an alleged violation of academic integrity:** If an instructor suspects that a student may have committed an academic offence under the McGill [Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures](http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/), **they**

must follow University guidelines. Please consult these two webpages:

- <https://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/staff>
- <https://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/staff/student>

Note that academic offences cannot be dealt with “at the local level” by instructors, coordinators, or directors. Attempts to deal with academic offences at the local level violate students’ rights.

If an instructor wishes to follow-up on a suspicion that a student has committed an academic offence, they must contact the Disciplinary Officer (DO) of *the student’s home Faculty*. The home Faculty of most students who take SCS courses is SCS. In these cases, reports should be sent to **Dr. Sue Laver, the DO for SCS** (sue.laver@mcgill.ca). If the home Faculty of the student in question is not SCS, the report must be sent to the DO of that Faculty. A list of Faculty/School DOs is provided here:

<https://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/disciplinary/officers>.

More detailed information about the reporting and disciplinary process can be found in the [SCS Guide to Reporting Alleged Violations of Academic Integrity](#).