

SCSD Assessments and Examinations Policy

Addendum to University Student Assessment Policy

Preamble

The purpose of this policy document is to provide policy and procedures for assessments and examinations that are adapted to the SCSD context. As such, it is meant to augment and not replace the [University Student Assessment Policy](#). This document is also informed by McGill University's expectations for student's [Rights and Responsibility](#), especially the information provided for students and instructors on [academic integrity](#). Ultimately, the purpose of the policy and the associated procedures is to ensure that students are assessed fairly in a context that emphasizes the achievement of clinical competencies. The document will not reproduce all the important policies and procedures because it is superseded by the relevant university-wide documents. However, SCSD-specific implementation of certain policy and procedures will be outlined in this document.

1. Responsibility

1.1 Instructors and students are responsible for being familiar with the relevant policies, especially the University Student Assessment Policy and the SCSD Assessments and Examinations Policy. Instructors and students must be also familiar with the guidelines and resources provided on the [Keeping it Honest](#) webpage. Students are responsible for familiarity with the course outline which must be provided on the first day of class.

1.2 A student who believes that any of the regulations or guidelines have been breached should discuss the situation with the course instructor and if necessary the School Director (Associate Dean).

1.3 An instructor who believes that a student has breached their responsibility for academic integrity must report the situation to the [Associate Dean of Graduate and Post-doctoral Studies for the FMHS](#).

2. Right to Fair Examination

2.1 The instructor must take steps to ensure that the assessment or examination fairly represents the content that was taught. Assessments must be aligned with learning outcomes as stated on the course outline. In the case of competency exams, generalization of taught skills to new circumstances is commonly assessed and therefore, the student's ability to generalize must be considered in the teaching of the course.

2.2 Each course must include several assessments, ideally of different types, to ensure a fair assessment of the student's competencies. University regulations for number, scheduling and weighting of assessments and examinations must be followed. Assessments and exams can be included in the [workload estimation](#) for the class.

2.3 The grading scheme must be described in detail in the course outline, including the nature and form of each assessment planned for the course and the weight assigned to each assessment. Where appropriate the grading grid for the assessment should be provided in advance.

2.4 In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the evaluation scheme in a course is subject to change, provided that there be timely communications to the students regarding the change.

2.5 The grading scheme may be changed for the convenience of students or the instructor when negotiated with the class. Unanimous consent should be obtained for changes to the course outline that are a matter of convenience rather than extraordinary circumstances. Efforts should be made to avoid conflict with other courses and other student activities (i.e., clinical practicum, study time for other exams, end of term travel).

3. Types of Assessments and Examinations

3.1 Final examination is administered during the final examination period. Completion time is not more than 3 hours. Weight is at least 25% but not more than 75% of the total course grade.

3.2 Midterm examination is administered during the term. Completion time is typically one to two hours. In-term examinations may not be scheduled during the last two weeks of class. Weight is typically between 25% and 50% of the total course grade.

3.3 Take-home examination is provided to the student for completion over a 48- to 72-hour window. Weight should be proportional to the length of the exam and the expected completion time.

3.4 Assignments are regularly occurring requirements and may be linked to in-class or laboratory experiences. Weight for each assignment is typically 5% to 35% per assignment with the total summing to 50% to 75% of the total grade for the course.

3.5 Participation grades may be given for participation in experiential events (labs, experiences in the community) or contributions to class discussion or on-line discussion boards. The grading scheme for participation grades must be detailed in the course outline.

3.6 In-class examinations are administered on campus with an invigilator or examiner present.

3.7 Remote exams are taken by the student off-campus without direct supervision. The exam is typically administered via technology such as myCourses.

3.8 Independent exams are completed by the student alone without consulting other persons such as classmates for support.

3.9 Group exams are completed by pairs or teams of students who collaborate to complete the exam questions.

3.10 Closed-book exams are completed by the student(s) without access to any sources outside the exam itself.

3.11 Open-book exams are completed by the student(s) with access to approved sources and materials while completing the exam.

3.12 Clinical competency assessments document the student's knowledge, skills, and attitudes with respect to the performance of a clinical activity. These assessments may be written assignments or observations of the student's performance with a simulated or live case or clinical situation (e.g., Entrustable Professional Activities, Simulation Centre Assessments, Role-Play Laboratory Assessments, and others). Students must be provided with a detailed assessment grid prior to the assessment.

3.13 Term papers/assignments are completed over weeks or months, often with guidance from the instructor. Due date should be during the regular term but may be during the final exam period if there

is no final exam in the course. These may be completed independently or in a group according to the instructor's written instructions.

4. Administration of Assessments and Examinations

4.1 Clear instructions must be provided for each assessment/examination. Students must have the opportunity to ask questions in order to clarify expectations subsequent to receiving the assessment or examination. These questions should be answered by the instructor who wrote the assessment/exam.

4.2 Students may ask questions about the exam and/or the exam questions while completing the exam in the case of timed, in-person exams.

4.3 Students may ask questions about the exam and/or the exam questions during the examination window in the case of take-home exams. The instructor must be available to students throughout the time window between assignment of the assessment/exam and the due date. The instructor must specify the mechanism for submitting question and the times that they will be available for answering questions. For example, a discussion board might be provided for exam questions. Zoom meetings might be scheduled as "open office hours" for exam questions. Questions might be submitted to the instructor by email with answers promised at specific intervals. Instructors are not required to be available continuously/at all times but the student must have at least one opportunity to ask questions of the instructor between receipt of the exam questions and submission of the completed exam.

4.4 An Associate Examiner will be named for each final examination to substitute for the Examiner (course instructor) in the event of extraordinary circumstances that prevent the presence of the course instructor on the day of the scheduled final exam. The course Examiner should recruit the Associate Examiner. If none can be found the School Director will serve as the Associate Examiner. The Associate Examiners will be named on the Final Examination schedule. The Student Affairs Coordinator will keep contact information for the Examiners and Associate Examiners.

4.5 When the exam is completed in-person, there must be an invigilator present in the class for the entire exam with no exception to ensure compliance with the rules and the safety of the students in the class. Normally the invigilator will be the Examiner or the Associate Examiner. The Student Affairs Coordinator or a doctoral student may be asked (with remuneration) to invigilate all or part of an exam. However, these persons may not answer student questions about exam content. They will need to relay questions to the Examiner or the Associate Examiner.

4.6 When a remote exam is completed on-line in timed format, the Examiner must be present at the beginning of the exam (or at the beginning of an extended 'time window') to ensure that students are able to log into the exam and to answer student questions. If students have to take the exam at a specific date and time, the Examiner must remain available to students for the duration of the exam. The Examiner may be available for email queries or the Examiner may open a zoom room that students can visit when necessary. Students may be asked to visit the zoom room at random intervals.

4.7 When a remote exam is administered at a specific date and time, the Student Affairs Coordinator and Associate Examiner should have a digital copy of the exam that can be distributed by email in the event of technology break down.

4.8 When an in-person exam is planned, the Student Affairs Coordinator and Associate Examiner should have an extra copy of the exam in case the Examiner does not arrive in time to distribute the exams.

4.9 When remote exams or assignments are administered, students should be allowed an additional one-half hour after the official end-time of the exam or assignment for the submission process.

4.10 When a take home exam or remote exam is administered, the due date should be at the end of the scheduled exam period or class period on the due date. For example, if a final exam is scheduled for Wednesday between 9 and 11 am, a take-home exam could be released to students on Monday at 9 am, with due date Wednesday at 11 am plus an extra half hour for submission.

4.11 It is possible that technical problems or external events will interfere with fair administration of an exam. Fire alarms have occurred during exams; instructors have been delayed during travel or fallen ill; technical tools have malfunctioned; any number of events might delay the start of an exam or prevent its completion. In these instances, only the Examiner or the Associate Examiner is authorized to decide on an appropriate remedy. The remedy must be fairly applied to all students including those who have been granted accommodations. The remedy cannot interfere with the students' other academic, clinical, or personal responsibilities unduly. Negotiation with the students is advised. Remedies may include revising and reweighting the grading scheme for the exam or the course.

5. Academic Integrity

5.1 Academic integrity is a joint responsibility of the students and the instructor. The instructor must communicate expectations clearly to students so that they know which practices are permitted with respect to any given assignment or assessment. Clear statements and infographics can be used to identify the kinds of supports that can be used when completing the assessment.

5.2 Remind students verbally or in writing that academic integrity is expected. A suggested statement is "Students are reminded that cheating in any examination is considered a serious offence that could lead to expulsion from the University. Students are not permitted to have, in their possession, any unauthorized materials during an examination."

5.3 Authorized materials during an in-class exam are writing implements and water. Students should be encouraged to leave other materials, especially backpacks and purses, in their lockers.

5.4 All examinations, including take-home examinations, are "closed book" unless expressly deemed to be "open-book" by the instructor/examiner.

5.4 Use of computers and other equipment, tools or aids, electronic or other, during the course of an examination is prohibited unless expressly permitted by the Instructor/Examiner. Where the use of such items is permitted in the course of an examination, students shall comply with all restrictions imposed on such use.

5.5 Students may not consider inappropriate practices to be cheating; in some circumstances they may believe that they are entitled to reinterpret the rules or adjust them to their own perception of those circumstances. It is helpful to have open conversations about any restrictions in the context of clinical practice and professionalism.

5.6 The instructor shall take steps to prevent cheating. For example at least two different versions of multiple choice exams must be prepared. Exam content must be changed from year-to-year. Exams should be based on content that cannot be plagiarized, for example, unique cases.

5.7 Exam questions are confidential. Examination papers including questions, case descriptions and other associated materials will be returned to the Examiner.

6. Accommodations

6.1 Students with disabilities have the right to request reasonable accommodation in fulfilling the Assessment requirements in a Course in accordance with the McGill University Policy Concerning the Rights of Students with Disabilities.

6.2 Students may request exam deferrals in accordance with the Policy for the Accommodation of Religious Holy Days.

6.3 Students may request exam deferrals in accordance with the [SCSD Absence Policy](#). Note that a limited number of absences are permitted without medical documentation. However, these absences must be requested, that is, there must be prior written notification of the absence with a reply indicating that the absence is approved. Otherwise the policy for unauthorized absences will apply to the missed exam or late assignment.

6.4 The policy for the grading of missed exams or late assignments must be detailed in the course outline.

6.5 When accommodations are granted to students who are registered with the Office for Students with Disabilities, these must be in accordance with the student's learning needs and the achievement of required clinical competencies. When extensive accommodations are required, the student's advisory team (Advisor, Coordinator of Clinical Educator, Director, and optionally a representative of OSD) may meet with the student to discuss the appropriate accommodations.

7. Grading

7.1 In-term assignments and examinations should be graded within two weeks after the submission deadline. Timeliness of grading is an important aspect of the right to fair assessment. For example students should receive grades and feedback on one assessment/exam before the next assessment or exam is assigned.

7.2 Final assignments and examinations must be graded in time for the grade submission deadline.

7.2 Each student has the right to view their exam and receive an explanation for their grade. Adjustment to grades is at the discretion of the instructor/examiner.

7.3 Any student may request a re-read of their examination (for review of the fairness of the grade) in accordance with [GPS guidelines](#).