



Memorandum

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TO: Senate

FROM: Ollivier Dyens, Deputy-Provost (Student Life and Learning)

SUBJECT: Proposed Revisions to the University Student Assessment Policy

DATE: March 23, 2016

DOCUMENT #: D15-43

ACTION REQUIRED: INFORMATION APPROVAL/DECISION

ISSUE Proposed revisions to the *University Student Assessment Policy*.

BACKGROUND & RATIONALE

A number of sections in the *University Student Assessment Policy* were altered or added for clarification and to provide a fairer and clear assessment environment for students.

3.1.5 – the proposed addition clarifies that students may not be penalized for not attending class during the add/drop period, bringing attendance based assessments into conformity with other forms of assessment.

3.1.7 – the proposed addition attempts to clarify how assessments with minor but crucial grade weightings can cause a student to fail a course while taking into consideration that some Faculties and programs have requirements that are integral to discipline and are not easily quantified as a percentage. The change reinforces the importance of these types of assessments.

5.8 and 5.8.1 – the amendment brings the language around in-class student response systems up to date and clarifies that they may be used as a participation assessment tool. Clarifying that this form of assessment should not exceed 10 percent brings the article into conformity with 3.1.6.

6.1.3 – the amendment clarifies that students must be treated as individuals and cannot be compelled to accept final examinations worth more than 75 percent as a result of class votes.

PRIOR CONSULTATION

Enrolment and Student Affairs Advisory Committee, Provost, P7, Dean’s Working Group, Committee on Enrolment and Student Affairs

**SUSTAINABILITY
CONSIDERATIONS** N/A

**IMPACT OF
DECISION AND
NEXT STEPS** If approved, the changes will be communicated to the faculties through the deans and associate deans. Furthermore, the Policy will be posted on the University website and students will be encouraged to familiarize themselves with their rights under the Policy.

**MOTION OR
RESOLUTION
FOR APPROVAL** *Be it resolved that Senate approve the proposed changes to the University Student Assessment Policy, as detailed in Appendix A.*

APPENDICES Appendix A: *University Student Assessment Policy* (with proposed amendments)

University Student Assessment Policy

Approved:
Senate

January 23, 2013

Minute 11B.3

Full history appears at the end of this document.

1. SCOPE

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to bring together into a single document all the disparate policies with regard to all types of Student Assessments. This policy is meant to protect the students from excessive workloads, and to ensure that all students are treated equally. Students should be able to write examinations in conditions that permit them to put forth their best effort.
- 1.2 This policy shall apply to all undergraduate and graduate Courses, offered by the University, that are evaluated by any form of Assessment. Except where otherwise indicated, this policy applies to all Faculties, including those which administer their own examinations.
- The principles enunciated in this policy shall be applied, appropriately modified, to Courses of less than a 13 week duration.
- 1.3 This policy was approved by Senate on February 16th, 2011.
- 1.4 Students may come forward in cases of perceived violation of the University Student Assessment Policy. The matter may, as appropriate, be confidentially referred to the Professor, Department Chair, Director or Associate Dean to ensure the spirit of the University Student Assessment Policy is respected.

2. DEFINITIONS

2.1 For the purposes of this policy:

- 2.1.1 "Assessment" means any form of student activity in a Course to which a grade is to be granted by the Instructor.
- 2.1.2 "Assignment" means any form of Assessment other than examinations.
- 2.1.3 "Chair" includes the chairs of departments, directors of Institutes and Schools, directors of departments in the School of Continuing Studies, and deans of faculties without departments.
- 2.1.4 "Conflict" means an academic conflict as defined by Enrolment Services.
<http://www.mcgill.ca/students/exams/conflicts/>
- 2.1.5 "Course" means any educational activity for which credit may be earned by a Student.
- ~~2.1.6 "Clicker" means an electronic hand-held device that records student responses.~~
- 2.1.7 "Deferred Assessment" means any Assessment provided a Student who for documented legitimate reasons could not complete a Course requirement by its due date.
- 2.1.8 "Examiner" means the member of the academic staff (including contract academic staff) who is responsible for the mode of Assessment and the grades to be granted in a Course.

- 2.1.98 “Faculty” means all faculties, the School of Continuing Studies, and the Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Office.
- 2.1.409 “Official Examination Period” means the examination period identified in the relevant University calendar.
- 2.1.4410 “Instructor” means the member of the academic staff responsible for a Course.
- 2.1.4211 “Related Party” means:
- (i) a member of an Examiner’s or Instructor’s immediate family;
 - (ii) a person living in an Instructor’s household;
 - (iii) a person with whom an Instructor has, or had, a close or intimate personal relationship;
 - (iv) a person with whom an Instructor shares, directly or indirectly, a financial or other interest;
or
 - (v) a person to whom an Instructor owes a financial or moral obligation.
- 2.1.4312 “Spanned-course” means a Course that is taught over more than one semester.
- 2.1.4413 “Special Examination” means any Deferred Examination held outside of the official deferred examination period.
- 2.1.4514 “Student” means a Student as defined in the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.
- 2.1.4615 “Supplemental Assessment” means any Assessment provided a Student who receives a grade of D, F, J or U in a course.
- 2.1.4716 “Take-home Examination” means an examination that is to be written by students outside of a regular examination setting.

3. GENERAL

3.1 Right to Fair Assessments:

- 3.1.1 The evaluation of a Student’s performance in a Course shall be fair and reasonable, and shall reflect the content of the Course.
(Article 12 of the Charter of Student Rights)
- 3.1.2 It is the responsibility of Students to exercise due diligence in familiarizing themselves with the provisions of this policy, the examination schedule, and other University, Faculty and Unit regulations governing the conduct of Assessments.
- 3.1.3 All forms of Assessment shall be conducted in such a manner as to preserve academic integrity.
- 3.1.4 There should be more than one Assessment for each Course.^{1,2}
- 3.1.5 Students registering for courses during the Add/Drop period shall not be penalized for missed Assessments (including attendance-based assessments) which were due during the course change period. This applies to full term/year courses for which there is an Add/Drop period.
- 3.1.6 Normally, participation will not exceed 10% of the final grade. If participation (which may include attendance) is to exceed 10%, instructors must include a clear rubric in the course outline.
- 3.1.7 In courses where failure to complete a specific assignment or activity, or failure to achieve a passing grade for that assignment or activity would prevent the student from passing the course, this stipulation must be stated clearly in the course outline. The assignment or activity in question, if it is assigned a

percentage value, must be worth no less than 20% of the final course grade. In the case of noncompliance, the matter may, as appropriate, be confidentially referred to the Department Chair, Director or Associate Dean.

3.2. Notification of Form of Assessment:

3.2.1 During the first week of class, Students shall be provided with a description of the means of evaluation to be used in the Course which shall include:

- (i) the number, nature and forms of Assessment to be used in the Course;
- (ii) the weighting to be accorded each Assessment;
- (iii) the Course pre-requisites;
- (iv) whether a form of Assessment to be used may be subjected to text-matching in accordance with the Policy on Text-Matching Software; and
- (v) the University's academic integrity policy.

3.2.2 It is the responsibility of Students to exercise due diligence in familiarizing themselves with:

- (i) requirements of the Assessments to which they will be subjected in their Courses;
- (ii) the due date of Assessments;
- (iii) the date, time and location of their examinations;
- (iv) the regulatory framework governing:
 - (a) academic integrity;
 - (b) the conduct of examinations;
 - (c) the format and substance of written forms of Assessment, especially graduate theses.
- (v) circumstances that would permit Reasonable Accommodation (see below Section 3.4)

3.2.3 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.

3.2.4 Assessments taking place outside of scheduled lecture time (i.e. tutorials, conferences, labs) should have their meeting times set by the end of add/drop period.

3.3 Language of Assessment:

3.3.1 Students shall be permitted to use either English or French in completing any form of Assessment other than

- (i) In-class oral presentations; and
- (ii) Assessments in Courses in which acquiring proficiency in a language is one of the objectives, where the Assessments shall be in the language of the Course.

3.3.2 Due to the bilingual nature of its program, exception is granted to Courses in the Faculty of Law.

3.4 Reasonable Accommodation of Students:

3.4.1 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.

3.4.2 Students who, because of religious commitment, cannot undertake or submit an Assessment in a Course have the right to request reasonable accommodation in fulfilling the Assessment requirements in accordance with the Policy for the Accommodation of Religious Holy Days.

3.4.3 Students, who for valid documented reasons (such as illness or family tragedy), cannot submit a required Assessment in a Course, on providing satisfactory proof of their inability, may apply in accordance with the Faculty procedures relating to Deferred Assessments for permission to undertake a Deferred

Assessment or receive another type of accommodation, provided the application is made within a timeframe that is in accordance with Faculty procedures.

If a student who has been granted permission to write a deferred midterm examination cannot write it for valid documented reasons, the instructor may accommodate the student in any manner deemed pedagogically appropriate by the instructor, including, but not limited to, increasing the weight of the final examination beyond 75%, notwithstanding article 6.1.3 of this policy.

Students registered for a Deferred Assessment must have access to all the relevant course material.

- 3.4.4 Students who without a valid documented reason fail to submit an Assessment shall receive a grade of F for the Assessment (or J in the case of a final examination).
- 3.4.5 Students who have already submitted an Assessment cannot subsequently request for the Assessment to be deferred.
- 3.5. **Supplemental and Special Examinations:**

- 3.5.1 In a Faculty which offers Supplemental Assessments, a Student who has received a grade of D, F, J or U in a Course may apply to undertake a Supplemental Assessment in accordance with the Faculty's procedures pertaining to such Assessments.

Students registered for a Supplemental Assessment must have access to all the relevant course material.

- 3.5.2 Students in very exceptional cases, and whose particular circumstances cannot be accommodated by a Deferred Assessment or Supplemental Assessment may apply for permission to undertake a Special Examination in accordance with Faculty procedures.

3.6 **Review of Assessments by Student:**

- 3.6.1 Subject to reasonable administrative arrangements and provided the request is made by a Student within a reasonable time after the notification of a mark, every Student has a right to consult any written Assessment for which he/she has received a mark and a right to discuss this Assessment with receive an explanation of this Assessment from the Instructor/Examiner.
(Article 14 (a) of the Charter of Students' Rights)

In the case of 600 and 700 level courses, the Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Reread Policy shall apply.

3.7 **Re-Read by Third Party:**

- 3.7.1 Subject to reasonable administrative arrangements, and provided the request is made by a Student within a reasonable time after the notification of a mark, Students have a right to an impartial and competent re-read of any written Assessment and, where warranted, a revision of the grade received.
(Article 14(b) of the Charter of Students' Rights)

- 3.7.2 Faculties shall establish administrative procedures governing the process relating to Students' right to a re-read.

3.8. **Associate Examiner:**

- 3.8.1 There shall be an Associate Examiner for each final examination, who shall be named in accordance with the procedures established by the Faculty.
- 3.8.2 Associate Examiners shall substitute for the Examiner/Instructor should the latter be unavailable when the examination is written.

3.9 **Examiner Conflict of Interest:**

- 3.9.1 No Examiner, Instructor, Teaching Assistant, or Grader may administer or mark any form of Assessment submitted by a Related Party unless prior written approval of the Chair is obtained in accordance with the Regulation on Conflict of Interest.

4. **WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS OTHER THAN EXAMINATIONS**

4.1 Submission of Written Assignments other than Examinations:

- 4.1.1 Instructors shall ensure that Students are provided with sufficient time to complete in-term written Assignments prior to the commencement of the final examination period.

- 4.1.2 Unless otherwise provided by the Unit/Faculty, the due date for in-term written Assignments shall be no later than the last day of classes as specified in the University calendar.

4.2 **Plagiarism:**

- 4.2.1 When the University has reasonable cause to suspect that a Student has represented the work of another person as his or her own, the University may take any reasonable means to verify the originality of the work including the use of text-matching software in accordance with the Policy on Text-Matching Software.

5. **EXAMINATIONS – GENERAL**

5.1 **Pre-requisites to Examination:**

- 5.1.1 A Student's right to take an examination is contingent on:
- (i) being registered in the Course;
 - (ii) being able to produce valid student identification before and during the examination; and
 - (iii) the fulfillment of any Course requirements, for taking of the examination.

5.2 **Nature:**

- 5.2.1 Examinations shall be "closed book" examinations unless otherwise specified by the Instructor.

5.3 **Content:**

- 5.3.1 The content of the examinations in a Course shall be changed significantly each semester.

5.4 **Language of Examination:**

- 5.4.1 Examination questions shall be set in the language in which:

- (i) the Course is taught; or
- (ii) the Student's proficiency is being assessed.

- 5.4.2 Due to the bilingual nature of its program, exception is granted to Courses in the Faculty of Law.

5.5 **Conflict of Examinations:**

- 5.5.1 Students are responsible for reporting any Conflict that may exist in their examination schedule:

- (i) to their Instructor, in the case of mid-term exams, and
- (ii) to the Examination Office, or to their Faculty for those

Faculties not administered by Enrolment Services, in the case of final examinations.

- 5.5.2 Where the existence of a Conflict is confirmed it shall be resolved;
- (i) by the instructor in the case of mid-term exams;
 - (ii) by the Examinations Office, in accordance with the University procedures for the resolution of such conflicts, and
 - (iii) by the Faculty, in accordance with Faculty procedures applicable to the resolution of Conflicts for those Faculties whose final examinations are not administered by Enrolment Services.
- 5.5.3 In case of conflicting applicable Faculty procedures, those of the Faculty in which the Student is registered shall apply.
- 5.6 **Invigilation:**
- 5.6.1 All written examinations other than take-home examinations shall be invigilated by the Instructor or designate, or by an individual appointed by the University.
- 5.7 Use of Computers, Equipment, Tools or Aids, Electronic or Other by Students:
- 5.7.1 Use of computers other equipment, tools or aids, electronic or other, during the course of an examination is prohibited unless expressly permitted by the Instructor/Department/Faculty.
- 5.7.2 Where the use of items referred to in section 5.7.1 is permitted in the course of an examination, students shall comply with all restrictions imposed on such use.
- 5.8 ~~Use of Clickers by Instructors:~~ **Use of In-Class Student Response Systems by Instructors**
- 5.8.1 ~~Instructors shall not use clickers for the purpose of administering any examination that will contribute to the final grade to be assigned to a Course.~~
Instructors may only use in-class Student Response Systems
1. to contribute to a participation grade.
 2. The use of in-class Student Response Systems should not exceed 10% of the final grade.
- 5.9 **Confidentiality of Examination Questions:**
- 5.9.1 All examination questions are confidential and shall be returned to the Instructor unless otherwise determined by the Instructor/Unit/Faculty.
6. **EXAMINATIONS – FINAL**
- 6.1 **Scheduling and Weighting:**
- 6.1.1 Final examinations in regularly scheduled Courses shall be held in the period designated by the University for such examinations, except for the Faculties of Medicine and Dentistry.
- 6.1.2 If a final examination is offered in a Course, it shall be worth at least 25% of the Course grade.
- 6.1.3 The maximum weight of a final examination in a regularly scheduled Course shall be no more than 75% of the Course Grade.³ Exceptions shall be made where a student has students have been offered the choice in advance to write a final examination worth more than 75% of the Course grade. In the case of documented extenuating circumstances with respect to a final examination worth more than 75 percent, the student must be given the choice of another assessment.⁴
- 6.1.4 Should written examinations in a regularly scheduled Course contribute 50% or more to the Course grade, one of the examinations shall be held during the final examination period, except for the Faculties of Medicine and Dentistry.
- 6.1.5 Faculties shall develop guidelines for the administration of take-home final examinations.

6.1.6 Penalties for late submitted assignments must be stated in the course outline.

7. EXAMINATIONS – IN-TERM

7.1 Scheduling:

- 7.1.1 Subject to section 7.1.2, no in-term Examination in a regularly scheduled Course shall be scheduled during the last 14 calendar days of classes as specified in the University calendar.
- 7.1.2 In-term Assessment may be scheduled during the last 14 calendar days of classes where the Assessment is:
- (i) part of a pattern of regular in-term Assessments in the Course and is not worth more than 10% of the final mark; or
 - (ii) an oral examination in a language Course; or
 - (iii) where an Assessment (exclusive of Examinations) was assigned as per 3.2.1.
- 7.1.3 Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions, mid-course examinations held in spanned-courses shall be held during the final examinations period.
- 7.1.4 Officially scheduled academic activities take precedence over any examinations scheduled outside of normal class time for the Course in which the examination is being given.
- 7.1.5 When a student has conflicting in-term examinations, scheduled outside of normal class time, the student shall be permitted to write a Deferred Examination in one (or more) of the Courses.
- The Instructors of the classes shall consult in an attempt to reach a mutual decision as to who shall offer the make-up examination.
 - In the event that a mutual decision is not possible, regulations concerning examination conflicts of the Faculty in which the Student is registered shall apply.

8. EXAMINATIONS – MULTIPLE CHOICE

- 8.1.1 Several versions of each multiple-choice examination shall be created by scrambling the questions so that no one is seated next to, in front of, or behind a student writing the same version. A minimum of two (2) versions is to be used. Where enrolment exceeds 200 and where it is not possible to seat students in alternate rows, four (4) versions are required. With everyone in the room writing the same examination, four (4) versions are also required.
- 8.1.2 Machine scored multiple-choice examinations in a Course may be subject to analysis by the McGill Exam Security Computer Monitoring Program.

9. PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCT OF EXAMINATIONS

- 9.1.1 The University/Faculty/Unit shall develop procedures governing the administration and conduct of examinations which shall include:
- (i) seating arrangement for Students;
 - (ii) the time constraints on entry to and exit from an examination room;
 - (iii) the circumstances for, and conditions under, which Students may leave and re-enter an examination room;
 - (iv) the personal items (electronic or other), if any, to which Students may have access during the taking of an examination;
 - (v) the interruption of any examination by an external event;
 - (vi) the administration of multiple-choice examinations.

10. FACULTY STUDENT ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

- 10.1.1 Faculties may develop student assessment procedures provided they are not inconsistent with this policy or any University regulations.

Notes:

1 Exception granted to the Faculty of Medicine for clinical evaluations.

2 Exception granted to the Faculty of Law to grandfather existing sessional lecturers/practitioners

3 Exception granted to the Faculty of Law to grandfather existing sessional lecturers/practitioners

4 Exception granted to the Faculty of Law.

<i>History</i>		
<i>Approved:</i> Senate	February 16, 2011	Minute 11B.5
<i>Amendments:</i> Senate	January 23, 2013	Minute 11B.3