**PROPOSED REVISED FINAL EXAMINATION POLICY**

January 16, 2019

**PART 1: PROPOSAL**

**TEXT OF CURRENT POLICY**

It is the policy of the University of Colorado Boulder to adhere to the final examination schedule as published in the *Registration Handbook and Schedule of Courses* each semester. While it may be appropriate not to give a final in some cases, such as laboratory courses, seminars, and colloquia, final examinations are integral parts of the instructional program and should be given in all other undergraduate courses. Unless notified otherwise in writing during the first week of classes, students should assume that an examination will be given.

In addition to the principles stated above, the following guidelines should be followed by all faculty members and administrators in order to assure fairness and the best possible educational experience for students.

1. The final examination in a course should be given as scheduled and not at other times, even if the faculty member and all students in a course agree to such a change.
2. The week of classes preceding the scheduled final examination period should be used primarily for continued instruction and may include the introduction of new material. No hourly examinations are to be given during the seven days preceding the start of the examination period. However, lab practicums and seminar presentations may be scheduled in that week.
3. Individual students may be granted a variance from these policies, provided the instructor is satisfied that the exception is based on good and sufficient reasons, and that such an exception for an early or late examination will not prejudice the interests of other students in the course.
4. When students have three or more final examinations on the same day, they are entitled to arrange an alternative examination time for the last exam or exams scheduled on that day. When students have two final exams scheduled to meet at the same time, they are entitled to arrange an alternative examination time for the later course offered that day or week. Such arrangements must be made by the deadline to drop a course without dean and instructor's permission in the tenth week of the semester. Students should make arrangements with the instructor of the affected course and are expected to provide evidence of these situations to qualify for exceptions.
5. This policy applies to all undergraduate students, including seniors. Graduating seniors are not exempted from final examinations. Such exemptions are inappropriate on both procedural and academic grounds.
6. The submission deadline of all grades for each semester is 90 hours after the conclusion of the final exam, minus Sundays and official designated university holidays.

**TEXT OF PROPOSED REVISED POLICY AND PROCEDURES (MAJOR ADDITIONS/CHANGES HIGHLIGHTED)**

*Purpose*

This policy enforces a uniform final examination schedule in order to facilitate fairness and help maximize the educational experience for students.

*Policy*

It is the policy of the University of Colorado Boulder to adhere to the final examination schedule as published by the Office of the Registrar each semester. Unless notified otherwise in writing during the first week of classes, students enrolled in undergraduate courses should assume that an examination will be given. While it may be appropriate not to give a final in some undergraduate courses, such as independent studies, laboratory courses, seminars, project-based courses and colloquia, final examinations are integral parts of the instructional program and should be given in all other undergraduate courses. Graduating seniors are not exempt from final examinations. Students enrolled in graduate courses should consult with their instructors on whether final examinations will be administered.

*Procedures*

1. The final examination in a course should be given as scheduled by the Office of the Registrar and not at other times, even if the instructor and all students in a course agree to such a change. An instructor may allow individual students to take the final examination at an earlier or later time if the instructor is satisfied that an exception is based on good and sufficient reasons and if such an exception is unlikely to materially advantage or disadvantage the interests of other students in the course.
2. Students should consult with their instructors and course syllabi for final examination information for courses that are scheduled at non-standard times and are not included in the published final examination schedule.
3. Final examinations in summer courses and in courses offered during special (variable length) sessions in fall and spring semesters are typically administered on the last regular meeting day of the course. No Common Exams for multiple sections of a single course may be scheduled for special session courses.
4. The week of classes preceding the scheduled final examination period should be used primarily for continued instruction and may include the introduction of new material. For courses in sessions of ten weeks or longer, no examinations may be given during the week of classes preceding the start of the campus’s final examination period; however, assignments listed in the syllabus such as papers, lab practicums, presentations, portfolios and projects may be due during that week.
5. Class sessions or graded assignments of any kind, including papers, lab practicums, presentations, portfolios and projects, may not take place or be due on a day designated in the academic calendar as a Reading Day.
6. When students have three or more final examinations on the same day, they are entitled to arrange an alternative examination time for the last exam or exams scheduled on that day. When students have two final examinations scheduled to meet at the same time, they are entitled to arrange an alternative examination time for the course that meets later in the week during the term or, if the two courses meet on the same day during the term, the course that meets later in the day. Students must make arrangements with the instructor of the affected course(s) by the standard deadline to drop a course in that term and are expected to provide supporting written information of these situations to qualify for exceptions.
7. The submission deadline for grades each semester or special session is 96 hours after the conclusion of the final examination, excluding designated university holidays.
8. The Provost (or designee), in consultation with the Senior Vice Chancellor (or designee), may either reschedule or cancel final examinations in response to inclement weather or other emergencies that result in a campus closure during the final examination period. The administration’s determination of whether to reschedule or to cancel final examinations is based on the number of exam periods affected by the closure and the timing of the closure.
* Rescheduled exams: A final examination may be rescheduled within the final examination period. Students who do not participate in a rescheduled final examination are not guaranteed any make-up examination or alternative assignment, and in such cases students will be assigned course grades based on tests, assignments and other graded work completed up to the end of the term.
* Canceled exams: If a final examination is canceled, course grades will be assigned based on tests, assignments and other graded work completed up to the end of the term. Faculty may also offer a make-up examination and/or allow for an alternative assignment to be submitted after the final examination period. However, such opportunities must be made available to all students enrolled in the course, all final work must be received and graded no later than the end of the first week of the subsequent term (inclusive of summer session), and faculty must then submit change of record information for students whose course grades change due to their work on make-up examinations or alternative assignments.

**PART 2: RATIONALE AND PROCESS**

**WHY A REVISED POLICY?**

The current final examination policy is unclear or silent on several important matters, including:

* What happens with summer session courses and others that do not fall within the regular 15- week fall and spring semester length
* Whether faculty or departments can schedule classes, exams, or other course events or coursework on the designated Reading Day
* What happens when a final examination is rescheduled or canceled due to campus closure for weather or another emergency

**HOW DOES THE PROPOSED REVISED POLICY DIFFER FROM THE CURRENT POLICY?**

* Replaces “guideline” language with “policy” language, including a clear distinction between what an instructor or student “must,” “may,” or “should” do
* Specifies procedures for courses that do not fall within the regular 15-week fall and spring semesters
* Prohibits the scheduling of any class session, exam, or other course event or coursework on the designated Reading Day
* Extends the deadline for submitting grades from 90 hours after the final exam to 96 hours
* Specifies what happens when a final examination is rescheduled or canceled due to a campus closure for weather or another emergency
* Revises language to clarify agency (i.e., reduce use of passive voice) and to clarify or add detail to previously unclear phrasing
* Differentiates policy from procedure

**WHO DEVELOPED THE PROPOSED REVISED POLICY?**

The proposed revised policy was developed in summer 2018 by an ad hoc committee consisting of Mary Kraus, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, and Katherine Eggert, Vice Provost for Academic Planning and Assessment, and Kristi Wold-McCormick, Registrar.

**WHO HAS REVIEWED THE PROPOSED REVISED POLICY SO FAR?**

1. Reviewed in summer 2018 by the CADS (Council of Associate Deans) group, which made minor suggestions; these were all incorporated.
2. Reviewed in fall 2018 by the BFA Academic Affairs Committee, whose suggestions were for the most part incorporated into this revised draft. BFA AA Committee suggestions that were not incorporated included:
* *The policy should allow a final exam to be rescheduled if students and instructor all agree.* The ad hoc committee did not adopt this suggestion because not all students may be present to agree on such a change, and/or some students may feel peer pressure to agree.
* *The provision for rescheduling a final in case of weather or other emergency invites unequal treatment of students in the same class. Any student who can’t take a rescheduled final (perhaps because of a flight home) would receive a final grade on a different mix of assignments than some student who has to stick around until the end of the exam period.* The ad hoc committee considered this circumstance. Faculty may offer such students a make-up exam or alternative assignment. However, in the interest of academic freedom, the campus should not require faculty to offer students a make-up opportunity.
1. Reviewed in December 2018 by Michelle Krech, Associate Council, Office of University Council, who made suggestions on wording; these were all incorporated.