

Student Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate
Request to modify the final exam rule regarding number of in class exams or tests permitted in
the last two weeks of the semester

Background

Several faculty whose courses include a lab component have reached out for clarification regarding whether they can offer a lab exam in the week prior to finals if they also plan to offer a final for the lecture component of the course. In Fall 2021 a student also raised objections to a lab exam separate from the course final, citing the current exam policy.

The final exam policy in place prior to Fall 2016 clearly stated that courses with specific lab sections could offer a lab exam during the last five instructional days of the semester. When the policy was revised effective Fall 2016 this exception was removed, although the reasons for this are no longer clear.

The discussion in the SAC last Spring included consideration of whether a one-credit lab is considered a “separate course” for the purposes of the final exam policy, and correspondingly, whether courses such as four-credit language classes with a weekly lab session would be included as well. The consensus position was that the language regarding lab exams should be restored to the exam policy with consideration for non-lab courses where practical skills are often tested in addition to an exam on course content. The discussion concluded with a request to bring the language forward in Fall 2022 for additional discussion and a vote by the committee.

Policy Language

Prior to Fall 2016 the final exam policy stated:

2. No exam (regular or final) shall be given during the last five instructional days of the semester except lab exams given in courses with specific lab sections.

(https://www.uvm.edu/~rgweb/zoo/archive/catalogue/1516cat_ug.pdf - page 349)

Effective Fall 2016 the final exam policy states:

2. No course may conduct more than one in class exam or test during the last two weeks of the semester (week prior to finals week and the week of finals).

At the April SAC meeting, the following revision (in bold) was suggested:

2. No course may conduct more than one in class exam or test during the last two weeks of the semester (week prior to finals week and the week of finals) **except lab exams with specific lab sections and practical exams associated with non-lab courses.**

SAC requested to have policy revision presented again in 2022-2023 for committee approval:

April SAC minutes, <https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/Faculty-Senate/SACMinutesApril22.pdf>