

Final week of Classes, Reading Period, and Final Assessments

Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to establish expectations for instructional and assessment activities during the final week of classes, reading period, and the final examination period. The policy ensures that students have a protected period to review course material and prepare for final assessments without additional instructional or assignment obligations. The policy also ensures that final examinations and other comprehensive assessments occur during the officially scheduled examination period provided by the Office of the University Registrar so that courses meet required instructional time in accordance with NYSED regulations and regional accreditation standards.

Definitions

Final Assessment: A required graded evaluation that assesses a substantial portion or the entirety of course content regardless of format (in-person, take-home, or recorded). A “substantial portion” refers to content that spans multiple modules or units, generally more than half of the total course material, and requires students to review or synthesize topics addressing the cumulative scope of the course rather than mastery of a single, defined topic. Examples include cumulative/comprehensive exams, papers, projects, recitals, performances, capstone assignments, or other culminating assessments.

Final Examination Period: the officially scheduled period assigned by the Office of the University Registrar during which final assessments are administered.

Final Week of Classes: The final scheduled week of regular instruction in a term, occurring before the reading period begins.

Non-comprehensive assessment: An evaluation limited to a specific unit, module, chapter, or other defined portion of course material - no more than a single module or unit - and does not require cumulative review or synthesis.

Reading Period: The interval that begins after the last day of classes and ends when the final examination period begins, reserved for independent student review and preparation.

Synchronous / Asynchronous Activities: Synchronous activities occur in real time with required simultaneous participation. Asynchronous activities are completed independently by an assigned due date.

Scope/Compliance

This policy applies to faculty, staff, and students.

Policy Details

I. Policy Statement

The University is committed to protecting dedicated time for students to review course material, synthesize learning, and prepare for final assessments free from additional instructional or assignment obligations. This policy establishes clear expectations for the final week of classes, the reading period, and the final examination period. Comprehensive final



assessments must be administered during the officially scheduled final examination period assigned by the Office of the University Registrar—not during the final week of classes or the reading period—so that every course satisfies the instructional time required by New York State Education Department (NYSED) regulations and regional accreditation standards. All faculty, staff, and students are responsible for adhering to the requirements outlined below.

II. Policy Detail

A. Final Week of Classes

1. The final week of classes is part of the regular instructional hours of a term.
2. During the final week of classes, administration of final assessments is not allowed. Final assessments may only occur during the final examination period.
3. During the final week of classes, administration of non-comprehensive assessments during regular class time is allowed.

B. Reading Period

1. The reading period begins after the last day of classes and ends when the final examination period begins.
2. During reading period, synchronous, required course activities are not allowed. This includes instruction or the administration of graded assessments such as in-person exams, quizzes, presentations, recitals, or performances.
3. During the reading period, assignment of due dates for asynchronous, graded assessments is not allowed. This includes final papers, reports, presentation or performance recordings, reflection journals, and other take-home assignments or exams.
4. During the reading period, synchronous, optional course activities are allowed. This includes optional review sessions and make-up exams, performances, or recitals if participation is voluntary.
5. During the reading period, individually scheduled academic activities (e.g., senior thesis defenses) are allowed if alternative scheduling options are available that would permit every student to select a time slot that does not occur during reading period.
6. During reading period, school-wide events not associated with a single course (e.g., Design Day, senior thesis colloquia), may occur with advanced approval from the appropriate school Dean.

C. Final Examination Period

1. The final examination period is part of the academic term and consists of 150 minutes (3 hours) of required instructional time for each course, regardless of the assessment format. This instructional time is necessary to satisfy the New York State and regional accreditation requirements for instructional hours (Refer to the [Credit Hour Policy and Compliance website](#) for more information).
2. Administering a final assessment during the final examination period is a mandatory component of every course.
3. Under no circumstances may a final assessment be administered during the final week of scheduled classes or during the designated reading period.
4. If the final assessment is synchronous, it must be administered during the course's officially scheduled examination date and time assigned by the Office of the University Registrar. If the final assessment is not conducive to a scheduled classroom format, the alternative must be clearly stated on the syllabus, approved by the department chair and must satisfy the course instructional credit hours, as defined by policy.

5. If the final assessment is asynchronous, it must be assigned a due date during the final examination period and the amount of time expected for its completion must at a minimum meet the required instructional time.
6. During the final examination period, additional required instruction outside of the assigned exam time is not allowed.

D. Exceptions

1. Exceptions may be granted only in extraordinary circumstances (e.g., documented emergencies or accreditation-related conflicts) by the appropriate school Dean. Requests for exceptions must be submitted in writing at least two weeks in advance and include a rationale and proposed alternative arrangement.

Policy Administration	
Policy Owner	Office of Academic Excellence
Policy Organization	Office of the Provost, Office of Academic Affairs
Related Contacts	Office of Academic Affairs

Policy History	
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Revised Date(s)	