

## FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

### WAIVER OF WRITTEN FINAL EXAMINATIONS

The University mandates that a written final examination should be held in most courses but recognizes that for some courses an alternate method of final examination or no final examination may be more appropriate. The approval of waivers for courses which will not have a written final examination is assigned by the University Senate to the Curriculum Committee of each Faculty. In 1976 the Faculty of Humanities established criteria to be used by the Undergraduate Curriculum and Calendar Committee for the approval of waivers, and these were last amended in 1986. Recent inquiries have shown the need for some further clarification and revision.

A written final examination is normal for courses in the Faculty of Humanities. However, the substitution of an alternate method of final examination (e.g., oral examinations, juries) or the omission of any form of final examination may be warranted in some courses in the Faculty depending on their level, size, and pedagogical method.

In deciding whether to apply for an alternate method of final examination or the omission of a final examination, departments should consider the following points:

1. A final examination must be held in all Level I courses.
2. Approval to omit a final examination is not normally granted to Level II courses.
3. Examinations conducted by alternate methods are by definition instructor-scheduled examinations (see the attached procedures for ISE). Most courses with this type of final examination are limited enrolment courses. For other courses the size of the class must make feasible the administration of such examinations.
4. Approval to omit a final examination is not normally granted to courses with more than 25 students.
5. Approval to omit a final examination is not normally granted to standard lecture courses.
6. Approval either to omit a final examination or to substitute an alternate method of final examination may be granted for the following types of courses:
  - a. courses designed to develop practical skills, such as language practice courses, performance courses in music and drama, studio art courses, and creative writing courses: final grades in these courses are normally based on various methods of continuous assessment;
  - b. senior-level seminar courses: final grades in these courses are normally based on in-class presentation of papers and group discussions;
  - c. senior-level individual project courses, such as thesis courses and reading courses: final grades in these courses are normally based on one or more major papers or other pieces of work;
  - d. courses where the pedagogical method makes appropriate the omission of a final examination or the substitution of an alternate method of final examination.

A decision on the type of final examination must be made early in the planning process for each course since the course outline given to each student at the beginning of the course must include this information as part of the statement of the methods of evaluation to be used in the course and the formula by which the

final grade is to be computed. Therefore, **approval for the omission of a final examination or the substitution of an alternate method of examination must be secured prior to the distribution of course outlines.** The method of final examination must also be reported to the Registrar on the final examination information forms submitted at the beginning of each term.

Therefore, the Undergraduate Curriculum and Calendar Committee will consider requests for examination waivers at its May and October meetings in accordance with the following procedures:

1. Requests for waivers for all six-unit courses, all two-term three-unit courses, and one-term three-unit courses to be examined in December must be received no later than May 1. Requests for waivers for one-term three-unit courses to be examined in April must be received no later than October 1.
2. All requests must have the prior written approval of the Chair of the appropriate department(s). No requests made by individual instructors will be considered.
3. All requests must be accompanied by a course description including a detailed statement of the methods of evaluation to be used and the weighting assigned to each element. After approval by the Committee, this information must appear on the course outline given to each student at the beginning of the course.
4. A department may request that a standing waiver be assigned to particular courses. After such waivers are granted, the department must assure that the same method of evaluation is to be used each time the course is offered. If any changes are to be made, a new request for waiver must be submitted.
5. In extraordinary circumstances, a department may request that a waiver be granted contingent on the size of the class, in which case the request must include information on the possible alternative methods of evaluation. The decision on the final examination should be made, if possible, prior to the distribution to students of the course outline. If a decision cannot be made by that time, the alternatives must be included on the course outline. In all cases, the final decision must be made and announced to students prior to the final day of the Drop-Add Period.

Department Chairs should insure that all instructors are made aware of these criteria.