



MEMORANDUM

To: Executive Committee of Faculty Council (October 8, 2019)
Faculty Council (October 31, 2019)

From: Professor Daniel Posen
Chair, Committee on Examinations

Date: September 24, 2019

Re: Examinations Committee Goals for 2019-2020 Academic Year

REPORT CLASSIFICATION

This is a routine or minor policy matter that will be considered by the Executive Committee for approving and forwarding to Faculty Council for information.

BACKGROUND

In accordance with Procedures for Committees of Council of the Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering, this report is a brief summary of proposed business for the Committee on Examinations for the coming academic year.

PROCESS AND CONSULTATION

Committee goals were created collaboratively among members of the Committee on Examinations, and recorded in the minutes of the Committee.

COMMITTEE GOALS

Ongoing Duties

The Committee on Examinations has substantial ongoing duties, including:

- a) Administering instructor requests to deviate from Faculty Grading Policies
- b) Administering Committee decisions on petitions (typically several hundred per semester)
- c) Reviewing grades in all courses, and determining whether adjustments should be made (generally in consultation with the course instructor)
- d) Other duties, as outlined in the Committee manual

In addition, the Committee has near-term plans to introduce and/or consider updates to the following policies/procedures:

Grading Guidelines

In the previous academic year, the Committee developed a set of guidelines to assist course instructors in developing a common understanding of how to assign and interpret course grades (e.g., what qualitative level of student performance is expected for grades within each percentage band). These documents are guidelines, and are intended for information rather than to set new practices. They will be presented at Faculty Council prior to full release.

Chief Presiding Officer Exam Supervision

Later this year, the Committee plans to introduce a major policy item, proposing that the Faculty begin using Chief Presiding Officers (CPOs) for exam supervision. CPO is a position recognized in the CUPE Unit 1 Collective Agreement, and is already used extensively in other Faculties. They will be graduate students hired by the Registrar's office, who will receive substantial training on exam procedures, and who will take a lead role in implementing exam rules in individual exam rooms. Consultation with departments is currently ongoing.

Restricted Exam Policy

In the previous academic year, the Committee held informal consultations regarding a potential proposal to restrict final exams, so that questions may be kept confidential for future years. The Committee determined that there was insufficient support for such a proposal, and does not plan to proceed. There are, however, limited circumstances in which it is necessary to restrict exams for certain courses. The Committee plans to finalize procedures for such cases.

Composition of Final Marks (COFM) for Project-based Courses

Current regulations require that the portion of marks for lecture courses which is derived from not closely supervised work shall not exceed a total of 50% of the final mark in a course unless the Committee on Examinations approves other arrangements. The Committee on Examinations regularly approves requests for deviation from this requirement for project-based courses, such as Capstone projects. Currently, there are no guidelines for what constitutes acceptable grading practice in such project-based courses. The Committee plans to develop COFM guidelines for these courses, in coordination with current practice.

Extra Credits

The Committee has determined that rules for Extra (EXT) courses are difficult to enforce and so are currently applied somewhat inconsistently across departments. We plan to review this policy and propose updates if necessary.

Self-Declaration of Illness Pilot Project

The Faculty is participating in a pilot program through Health & Wellness to allow students to submit a self-declaration of illness petition once per term without medical documentation (for assignments worth less than 15% occurring over no more than three calendar days). The Committee on Examinations will monitor the results of this pilot project.

Updating Committee Manual

The manual for the Committee on Examinations was last updated in December, 2010. Once new Faculty Council governance rules are finalized, we plan to update our Committee manual.

PROPOSAL/MOTION

For information.