



MEMORANDUM

To: Executive Committee of Faculty Council (October 10, 2023)
Faculty Council (October 31, 2023)

From: Professor Arthur Chan
Chair, Undergraduate Assessment Committee (UAC)

Date: September 26, 2023

Re: **Expanded Definitions for Type C Exams**

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

FASE grading policies (Section IX, subsection J) lists allowable types of final exam, copied below for reference.

Current exam types

- **Type A:** A "closed book" examination. No aids are permitted other than the information printed on the examination paper.
- **Type B:** Papers for which separate special aids or data, as specified at the top of the examination paper, are provided by the examiner for distribution to the candidates by the Office of the Registrar or are made available to the students electronically in a computer-based exam.
- **Type C:** A "closed book" examination. A student may take a single, double-sided aid sheet to a Type C exam. The aid sheet is for personal use only and must be printed using the Faculty's template. Students may enter information on both sides of the aid sheet, without restriction. Such entries will be handwritten and not mechanically reproduced. Nothing may be fixed or appended to the sheet. The template may not be modified in any way and must be printed on 8.5" x 11" paper.
- **Type D:** Candidates may bring to the examination and use such aids (in the form of printed or written material) as the examiner may specify. The nature of the permitted aids must be clearly specified at the top of the examination paper and must be announced to the class by the examiner in advance of the examination.
- **Type X:** An "open book" examination. The candidate may bring to the examination and use, any books, notes or other printed or written material, without restriction.

- **Type O:** A different exam format, not covered by one of the existing types. Requires special approval by the Undergraduate Assessment Committee as part of the approval for Composition of Final Marks. Details of the assessment must be communicated to the students prior to the course drop deadline.
- **Type CPU_[]:** Examinations which will take place in a computer lab, using software and pre-loaded aids or data specified ahead of time by the instructor. The brackets “[]” should be replaced by one of the letters (A, B, C, D, X, O) from an existing exam type, specifying the type of aid material a candidate may bring into the exam room. Open internet access is not permitted except with special permission (Type O). Access to specific websites is permitted only if (a) the websites do not allow communication amongst students, or between students and an outside party, and (b) The Engineering Computing Facility (ECF) team confirms that access can be restricted to only these websites. Instructors using Type CPU are responsible for coordinating with the Registrar’s Office and ECF to ensure they are aware of all required procedures and are prepared to administer the exam according to staff guidelines.

Type C exams exist as a standard and structured way for instructors to indicate examinations in which an aid sheet is permitted. Prior to 2018, there was ambiguity regarding whether instructors could place restrictions on how the aid sheet was prepared, and so [Report 3588: Modification to the Definition of Type C Exam](#) (approved by Faculty Council on April 11, 2018) adopted a restrictive definition that required aid sheets to be handwritten. The rationale at the time was that there was pedagogical value in ensuring students prepare their own sheets, which cannot be enforced if mechanical reproduction is allowed. It was argued therefore that Type C should be more rigid since Type D could offer more flexibility for other formats (typed sheets, multiple pages, etc.).

Some downsides to the current regime include:

- Instructors have different preferences regarding how to implement aid sheets. Relying on Type D exams requires additional communication to specify the allowable aids, which creates uncertainty and administrative burden.
- Digitally handwritten aid sheets (e.g., on a tablet) blur the line between mechanically produced vs handwritten aids.
- The current implementation of Type C rules has been inconsistent, with some instructors mistakenly allowing digitally produced sheets. This creates uncertainty and is a particular problem for equity when students writing in a separate room (with Accommodated Test Services) are subjected to a more rigid interpretation of the rules than the rest of the class

The Undergraduate Assessment Committee discussed different potential Type C definitions or information campaigns to handle the equity issue. The committee concluded that clarity is best served by splitting the definition of Type C into multiple subtypes. Type C1 below corresponds to the current policy. A majority of committee members felt that a long list of exam types is not a problem, since it is not a high burden for instructors to select from the list or for students to cross-reference specific rules based on the listed exam type. On the contrary, a long list of exam types ensures precision and clarity with a single symbol – reducing the risk of miscommunication.

PROPOSED

We propose to update the wording as follows:

- **Type C:** A “closed book” examination. A student may prepare, bring to the examination and use, a single aid sheet, downloaded from the Faculty's website, printed on an 8.5"x11" piece of paper. Students may enter on both sides of the aid sheet any information they desire, as specified by one of the three subtypes listed below.
 - **Type C1:** Such entries will be handwritten and not mechanically reproduced. Digitally prepared sheets (e.g., handwritten on a tablet) will not be permitted.
 - **Type C2:** Such entries will be handwritten, but may be mechanically reproduced (e.g., prepared on a tablet and printed).
 - **Type C3:** Such entries may be handwritten or computer generated, including typewritten text, images or other formats that fit within the aid sheet.

CONSULTATION PROCESS

This policy was approved by the Undergraduate Assessment Committee on May 5, 2023 under the prior chair (Daniel Posen).

RECOMMENDATION FOR COUNCIL

For information.