

## Faculty Avoiding Multiple Exams on the Last Day of Finals

Academic Policies Committee

April 7, 2023

The APC has been charged by the Faculty Senate to examine the current Final Exam/Assessment (FE/A) Week Policy to determine whether there is a way that faculty can avoid having multiple exams on the final day. Increasingly, there are less than three days between the last exam period and the deadline for posting grades, with Commencement—where faculty are expected to attend—taking a significant block of that time.

For background, it should be understood that the FE/A schedule is created by the Registrar's Office for each Fall and Spring semester. The 5-day schedule consists of blocks (5 per day) that are based on class time periods (Monday through Friday) that occur during the semester. Due to the complex nature of all of the courses that are offered by each department, representing an increasingly diverse set of course schedules, there is no practicable structural way to identify and reschedule an individual faculty member's exams. (This can be done manually, but due to the time and effort involved, should be reserved for unusual/exceptional situations.) In consultation with the Registrar, the APC makes the following recommendations for those wishing to avoid multiple (or any) exams on the last day of FE/A Week.

- **Use established time periods when creating course schedules**

The Final Exam/Assessment Schedule is based on the traditional time periods that were established by SU and many other USM institutions. The meeting pattern for MWF courses is 50 minutes followed by a 10-min change of class time beginning at the top of each hour – 8:00 am, 9:00 am, etc. The meeting pattern for T/Th courses is 75 minutes followed by a 15-min change of class. Thus, each time period begins every 90 minutes – beginning at 8:00 am, followed by 9:30 am, 11:00 am, and so on.

Unfortunately, GullNet cannot enforce those established time periods when creating courses; therefore, some departments and/or instructors have created time periods that fit their own schedules, which have affected not only students' schedules, but room availability as well.

Example: A Tuesday/Thursday course should officially be offered every 75 minutes followed by a 15-minutes change of class time. Thus, the first class would begin at 8:00 am, the second at 9:30 am, and so on. If a course is offered, however, from 10:00 – 11:15 am, it will cover two traditional time periods (9:30 – 10:45 am and 11:00 – 12:15), which makes it impossible for a traditionally scheduled course to use that room from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm.

Unfortunately, this isn't an arbitrary example – a course has been scheduled from 10-11:15 am for Fall 2023, which has caused issues with room scheduling

- **Advance availability of Final Exam/Assessment Schedule**

Prior to each semester's course scheduling preparation period the FE/A Week schedule will be made available online

(<https://www.salisbury.edu/administration/academic-affairs/registrar/exam-schedule.aspx>). When preparing course schedules instructors will be able to

determine exactly when their final assessment block is scheduled in relation to when they schedule their course offerings.

- **Assess exam/assessment blocks early**

It is understandable that some faculty have preferred times when they wish to teach, however, in doing so they must also review the FE/A schedule because it changes each semester. Thus, faculty should assess their final exam schedule before the semester begins or at least within the first week of classes

- **Poll students**

If a scheduling problem has been determined, faculty could poll their students within the first week of classes for potential alternative assessment times.

- **Assistance from the Registrar/Registrar's Office**

The Registrar's Office is always available to assist faculty who have a FE/A Week scheduling conflict(s). We examine the schedules of every student within the course as well as that of the instructor to come up with possible alternative time blocks