



Examination Hardships and Clashes for Non-Traditional Exam Conditions

Interpretation guidance under non-traditional exam conditions

Background

Senate Policy J-102 specifies policies and procedures to deal with situations where the final exam schedule for a student has (i) *clashes* between two exams scheduled for the same time period or (ii) creates a *hardship* where three or more exams are scheduled within a 24-hour period. (See <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,41,91,0>.) Despite online delivery of exams, students writing exams that will be conducted within the regular schedule (i.e., starting at 08:30, 12:00, 15:30, and 19:00 Pacific Time for up to 3 hours) are still regulated by the rules as stated in the Calendar and no additional interpretation guidance is necessary.

The purpose of this note is to provide interpretation guidance for exam offerings that deviate from the regular schedule because some instructors and programs are providing flexibility to accommodate students studying in different time zones. As these are challenging situations for both students and instructors, cooperation and sharing of responsibility is necessary to mitigate adverse outcomes. Below, “alternate arrangement” includes not only an alternate exam time, but also alternate assessments or Deferred Standing (SD).

Guidance

1. If an instructor offers an alternate exam time, and as a result:
 - a. It creates a *clash* with an exam scheduled by the Registrar, then the exam scheduled by the Registrar takes precedence. The instructor and student will jointly find an alternate arrangement (which may include reverting to the originally scheduled exam time).
 - b. It creates a *hardship* for the student, then the instructor offering the alternate exam has a duty to accommodate by offering an alternate arrangement if requested by the student.
2. If an instructor offers an exam that allows students to write the exam over an extended timeframe (e.g., any two hours between 08:30 and 20:30), then the student has a duty to choose a time that does not create a *clash* or *hardship*. However, if the only feasible options require the student to write the exam between the hours of 00:00 to 06:00 in the student’s local time zone, then the instructor has a duty to accommodate by offering an alternate arrangement if requested by the student.

Example:

A student who lives in Asia has the following three exams as scheduled by the Registrar (times in PST):

Exam A – December 9 at 12:00

Exam B – December 10 at 15:30

Exam C – December 10 at 19:00.

In a regular schedule, the student has no exam hardship.



However, the Instructor for Exam A makes it available for any two hours between 12:00 and 23:59 on December 9 to accommodate students in other time zones. Given Exams B and C on December 10, the part of this 12-hour timeframe that does not create a hardship for this student is 12:00 to 19:00 on December 9. This 7-hour portion of the 12-hour timeframe corresponds to 01:30 to 08:30 in India and 04:00 to 11:00 in China, Singapore, and the Philippines. In this case, it is feasible for the student to choose a 2-hour block of time between the hours of 06:00 and 23:59 local time to write Exam A without hardship.

If instead of the 12-hour timeframe, assume that the Instructor for Exam A provides an alternate exam time of December 9 from 20:00 to 22:00 to accommodate students in Asia. In this case, the student will have a justified claim of hardship since the third exam begins within 24 hours after the beginning of the first exam. (December 9, 20:00 to December 10, 19:00 is 23 hours.)

Timing of notification

Although normal procedures under the *Examination Hardships and Clashes* policy requires a student facing a *hardship* to notify instructors no later than one month prior to the exam date, the times of alternate exam offerings and details of extended timeframes are not always known so far in advance. A student facing a clash or hardship created by flexible exam scheduling should notify their instructor as early as possible, and no later than three days after the details of the exam timing is provided to the student or December 2, 2020 (three days after the publication of this guidance) whichever is later.