

Section:	II.1.13	
Title:	Final Assessment, Reading Day	
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Approved By:	Board of Trustees	
Responsible Unit:	Academic Affairs (609) 771-3080; academic@tcnj.edu	
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I. INTRODUCTION

This policy outlines the final assessment and reading day policy for all courses at The College of New Jersey.

The rationale for requiring all courses to have an assessment that takes place during the final assessment period is that the comprehensive concluding experience requires a period of in-depth study and thoughtful reflection. Placing all final assessments during the final assessment period will provide the time needed to successfully synthesize and integrate course materials.

II. DEFINITIONS

A **final Assessment** is a graded culminating course assignment for individual students (may be exam, paper, project, presentation, etc.). The grade is assigned to individuals, although the assignment may be completed by groups of students. A final assessment is an essential component of the high-quality and rigorous education experience at The College of New Jersey.

III. POLICY

A. Undergraduate Courses

All full-semester or second-quarter classes (ranging from 0.25-1 unit) undergraduate courses, including online and blended courses, have a final assessment that takes place during the final assessment period. The time designated as the “final assessment period” includes reading and final assessment periods. Courses, such as capstones, practicums and independent study, for example, must request a final assessment slot for culminating work that is due during the final assessment period, but not on a reading day. Components tied to a lecture course,

such as a lab, need not have a separate culminating experience. It is expected that the reading periods will give students sufficient time to prepare for the final assessment. The reading periods are intended for students to reflect on what they have learned and integrate course material in a way that is intellectually meaningful. During the reading periods, there cannot be mandatory scheduled activities for a course, including in-class examinations, make-up exams, presentations, or required meetings with instructors. During the reading periods, faculty should remain accessible to students. Faculty must follow the student accommodations provided by the Accessibility Resource Center guidelines.

- a. For each course, regardless of delivery mode, there shall be a final assessment. Such final assessments may take the form of an in-class exam, a take-home exam, a paper, a performance, or a project and other formats are acceptable. In each case, the assessment should be comprehensive and integrative in nature, but not necessarily cumulative. It should require students to identify the major semester-long themes covered in the course and synthesize concepts in an organically articulated manner.
- b. The final assessment value must count at least 15% and not exceed 35% of the final grade, as that would compromise the student's entire course work.
- c. Final assessments that are in-class (e. g. exam, project, presentation, performance, activity, etc.) must be held during the scheduled exam period (day and time) scheduled by Records and Registration for the course. Except in the unusual cases outlined in point F, faculty members may not schedule a final in-class assessment outside of the scheduled period for the course.
- d. Final assessments that are conducted out of class (e. g. take-home exams, papers, projects or student-scheduled exams including clinicals) need to coincide with the day, and not necessarily the assigned time window, of the scheduled exam period for that class, as assigned by Records and Registration.
- e. Due dates for papers, projects, exams, and other course assignments that do not constitute the final assessment shall be due on or before the last day of classes. To preserve the integrity of the final assessment period, no in-class or out-of-class take-home exams/quizzes that have the character of a "final assessment," as described here-in, should be assigned during the last week of classes.
 1. This provision ensures that the reading day period preceding the final assessment period and the final assessment period itself will be available for students to prepare for their final assessments.
- f. Students must not have three out-of-class or in-class final assessments due in a 24-hour period.
 - a. A student has a conflict when:
 1. More than two final assessments are scheduled in a 24-hour period
 2. More than two final assessments are scheduled in consecutive periods (this can cross days, for example 2 pm, 5 pm, and 8 am next day)
 3. Two assessments are scheduled for the same time period
 4. In the instance that out of class final assessments are part of the conflict, the in-class final assessments take precedence (should not be moved).

- b. In even numbered years, the final assessments falling third should be rescheduled and in odd numbered years the first final assessment should be rescheduled. Varying the rule for rescheduling in cases of conflict avoids the burden of alternative scheduling repeatedly falling on the same classes and instructors.
- c. If a conflict cannot be resolved, students may appeal to the chair of the department that hosts the final assessment in question. In instances of conflicts, students are responsible to initiate moving a final assessment. Students must notify faculty by two business weeks before the last day of classes in a given semester. Faculty should include this information in their course syllabus.
- g. While no regular season games involving TCNJ student-athletes are scheduled during the final assessment period, post-season playoff games, which are set by the local conference, NJAC, or NCAA, may occur during this period. When a post-season game conflicts with a scheduled final assessment, the student-athlete should arrange with the instructor to reschedule. Instructors are expected to accommodate such requests.
- h. Students are expected to take their final assessments in the time blocks assigned by Records and Registration. Except in the unusual cases outlined in point F and G, this is the rule.
 - a. Faculty, staff, and students must be available to administer or take their final assessment(s) during the final assessment period.
- i. Any exceptions to this policy must be approved in writing in advance by the chair (or program director) and dean.

B. Courses Offered Outside the Regular Semester

Maymester, Wintermester, Summer Study Abroad, and Summer Sessions shall have a final assessment. Such a final assessment may take the form of an in-class exam, a take-home exam, a paper, a final performance, or a project and other formats may be acceptable, at the discretion of the faculty member. In each case, the assessment should be comprehensive and integrative in nature, but not necessarily cumulative. It should require students to identify the major themes covered during the course and to synthesize these concepts in an organically articulated manner. The date for the final assessment must be defined by each faculty member and appear on the course syllabus.

C. Graduate Courses

For graduate courses, final assessments will be due on the final day of classes or up to three academic days after, at the instructor's discretion (unless this conflicts with the deadline for final grade submission). Courses, such as capstones, practicums and independent study, for example, must request a final assessment slot for culminating work that is due during the final assessment period, but not on a reading day. Components tied to a lecture course, such as a lab, need not have a separate

culminating experience. The due date for the final assessment should be noted in the syllabus distributed at the beginning of the semester. For undergraduate courses that are cross-listed with a graduate course (where undergraduates and graduate students are in the same class section) the final assessment policies for graduate courses apply to all students, including undergraduate students. Conflicts that arise for undergraduate students should be resolved in a manner consistent with sections F and G above.

The due dates for graduate final assessments that are not in-class exams or activities but instead take the form of out-of-class take-home exams, papers, projects or student scheduled exams need not coincide with the final day of classes. The due dates for graduate final assessments must be noted in the syllabus distributed at the beginning of the semester and should be due on the last day of the graduate course or up to three academic days thereafter, at the instructor's discretion (unless this conflicts with the deadline for the final grade submission).