

Willamette University
Guidance for End-of-Term Conflicts

Guidance for Managing End-of-Term Conflicts:
Final Exams, Critiques, and other Summative Evaluations

Purpose:

Willamette students have access to an array of courses across the University's colleges and programs. Through this guidance, we seek to: 1) help ensure that faculty provide students with timely information about expectations regarding final exams and other summative evaluations in an effort to minimize the impact of potential exam conflicts, and 2) equip students and faculty to navigate conflicts when they arise—particularly when students are enrolled in coursework in multiple Willamette University colleges, schools, or programs.

Types of Summative Evaluations at Willamette University:

- **Final Exam:** The final exam is administered at the end of a semester, and assesses a student's mastery of course content. Final exams are scheduled within defined windows of time and are to be completed within a given time period—including in cases where an accommodation has been approved for the student by the [Office of Accessible Education Services \(AES\)](#) to complete their exams in an alternative time/setting.
- **Critique:** The critique is central to the evaluative and learning process for art students. As part of a critique, student artists describe their work, its context, and their choice of technique or materials, and have the opportunity to obtain their classmates' analysis, interpretation, and feedback on their work. The critique is crucial to students' artistic development and growth, and serves as a final evaluation in many PNCA courses.
- **Other Summative Evaluation:** Courses across the University deploy other summative assessments of student learning, including final papers, presentations, and/or performances. These evaluations may have specific periods in which they must be completed (e.g., within a given class period or time block), or may have a more flexible due date (e.g., for submission by a given date/time). Some specific examples of these "other summative evaluations" at Willamette include:
 - FOCUS Week at PNCA
 - Presentations and/or Demos—which may take place during class periods or outside of classes (including on-campus and in the community)
 - Final papers or projects
 - External competitions or presentations central to coursework

Guidance to Faculty:

1. Faculty should schedule final exams, critiques, and other summative evaluations far in advance—indicating the dates/times for these evaluations in their course syllabi ([see template language here](#)). *Any changes to these dates should be shared with students at least 30 calendar days in advance of the scheduled exam/summative evaluation date.*
2. There may be cases in which an exam, critique, or other summative evaluation conflicts with other University coursework or evaluative activities. Such conflicts may include:
 - a. When two final exams, critiques, or other summative evaluations are scheduled at the same time;
 - b. When a student's AES-facilitated accommodation interferes with another course's exam, critique, or other summative evaluation;

- c. When an exam, critique, or other summative evaluation is scheduled during a class meeting in another Willamette University college, school, or program; or
 - d. When a University-sanctioned activity (e.g. athletic competition, musical or theatre production, course-based field trip, etc.) is scheduled during a final exam, critique, or other summative evaluation.
- 3. Faculty should provide clear guidance—preferably in their syllabi—about how students should navigate potential conflicts. This includes information on who should be contacted in cases of conflict¹ and how much notice is required. Furthermore, particular schools may have policies in place to resolve conflicts that arise within those schools, and those policies should be referenced in course syllabi and followed where applicable.
- 4. Students are responsible for following school, program, or course-level policies and for identifying and reasonably pursuing resolution of any conflicts within 21 calendar days of the scheduled evaluations. Furthermore, if a student fails to sit for an exam or other summative evaluation at the scheduled time without properly arranging for an alternative evaluation period, instructors have the right to evaluate the student as though they have chosen not to participate in that assessment.
- 5. Faculty (or their designees) should always work with the student to reschedule exams, critiques, or other summative evaluations with an eye toward student learning. The following considerations may be used to help determine how to manage these conflicts:
 - a. Whether one exam or summative evaluation is more or less difficult to reschedule.
Examples of this may include:
 - i. An evaluation that requires a particular setting (e.g., presentation to a group of peers or external audience)
 - ii. An evaluation in a course that is taught by a contingent faculty member with a limited contract period
 - b. Whether the timing of an exam, critique, or other summative evaluation might impact another critical evaluation. Examples of this may include:
 - i. If a missed presentation would prevent the student from receiving feedback that is critical to their subsequent final paper or project submission
 - ii. If delaying a summative evaluation will substantially reduce a student's ability to receive or reflect upon feedback that best positions them to sit for an external exam or other professional assessment
- 6. If the instructing faculty (or their designee) and the student are unable to reach a resolution to the conflict, the student should contact the Registrar's Office (or if the student is navigating this conflict in addition to learning accommodations, the Office of Accessible Education Services) to receive additional support. Such requests should be made at least 10 calendar days before the scheduled exam, critique, or other summative evaluation.

¹ For example, students taking coursework in the College of Law are asked to report such conflicts to the College's Office of Student Affairs to ensure confidentiality per the school's anonymous grading practices.