

An Essay on Students Requesting Changes in the Examination Schedule

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I have been asked by the P1 Class to provide a statement explaining the process we use in considering a student-initiated request to have a scheduled examination time changed. As you are aware, we use a formal iterative process with faculty and students to determine the final examination schedule. We try to assure that the exams are sufficiently 'spread out' so as to not cause major conflicts for the students and to provide the opportunity for students to optimize their performance. Because we work with the Pharmacy Council Reps, we feel that all students have input into the decision making process. Since final exam times/rooms are then scheduled by the University centrally, it is very difficult to later change those times.

In terms of the regular (summary) exams scheduled for the various courses, these are set in the first day handout for each course by the course coordinator so that students can plan accordingly. If a direct conflict arises (e.g., two exams scheduled at the same time), clearly, one must be rescheduled to avoid the conflict. If two exams occur on the same day, or if exams fall on consecutive days, this is not considered a conflict. However, students can certainly ask (through their Representatives) to have an exam changed. Under those circumstances, the best course of action is for the Representative to ascertain if the faculty member is willing to entertain a move (if not, there's no point in going through the process) and what would be required for approval (e.g., unanimous consent among the students). This latter point is critical, and you should know that we encourage faculty to require unanimous student agreement for any proposal from the students that the faculty member is to consider. **The reason is simple.** Since all of the students have had the schedule well in advance, some students have laid out their plans (study, work, etc) based on that schedule. To then grant a student-initiated change in the exam schedule without the approval of a sub-group of students that have dutifully planned their schedule will undoubtedly create difficulties. Should conflicts arise, the inevitable question that will be asked is "What did it say on the first day handout?"

I hope this explanation is helpful in clarifying any issues. I would suggest that you take this opportunity to work with Pharmacy Council in developing a master exam process (notice I said 'process', not 'calendar') by which students can work with faculty in setting up semester based exams in a manner similar to what we now (very successfully) do for final exams.