



320 STEPHENS HALL
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Guidelines Concerning Scheduling Conflicts with Academic Requirements

Committee on Educational Policy, 2005 / 2006

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These guidelines focus on the handling of conflicts that arise between extra-curricular activities and academic requirements, and specifically concern the schedules of student athletes, student musicians, those with out-of-town interviews, and other students with activities that compete with academic obligations. The object of these guidelines is to avoid misunderstanding and to foster a climate in which learning can take place. The basic assumptions are that matriculated students—while often deeply engaged with other activities—are in university primarily to achieve academic goals, and that faculty member’s individual judgments about the pedagogical needs of their classes should be respected.

The Scheduling of Extra-curricular Activities

Many extra-curricular activities in which students are the central participants arrange their performances, matches, debates, practices, and rehearsals to occur outside the hours students are regularly expected to be in class or to be taking final exams. This is the preferred arrangement. When such activities *are* scheduled at times that classes and exams are regularly scheduled, students should be notified of that schedule (and of potential additional late-scheduled obligations such as tournaments and special performances) before they enroll in their courses for the term in question.

Those music directors, coaches and others scheduling activities that require student absence from regularly-scheduled classes and exams should seek to minimize the number and the impact of these conflicts. In some cases rules minimizing conflicts are mandated by external national agencies and one such example already endorsed by UCB, NCAA Bylaw 17.1.5.6.1, provides a useful template for all:

Declaration of Playing Season: 2005-2006 Missed Class Guidelines:

- 1. No away competition should be scheduled during the first week of each semester unless the game is a Pac-12 conference scheduled game.*
- 2. No home or away competition should be scheduled during Final Exam Week.*
- 3. No away competition should be scheduled during Dead Days.*

4. *No departure for away competition may occur prior to the evening of the last day of Final Exam Week. However, if all team members have completed their final exams early, travel may occur after the last final is complete.*
5. *No travel (return trip from an away competition) scheduled during Dead Days.*
6. *No departure for an away competition earlier than 48 hours prior to the start of the actual competition and no return more than 36 hours following the conclusion of the actual competition.*
7. *In the sports of men's and women's basketball, a team may not leave campus before 3:00 p.m. the day before all away Pac-12 competitions.*
8. *No home competition starting times prior to 1:00 p.m.*
9. *When at all possible (depending on destination of trip and availability of flights) departure for all away competition will occur after noon.*
10. *No missed class time will be allowed for any practice activity.*

Course Syllabus

All major exams, papers, and project due dates, and field trips should be on the course syllabus and available to students the first day of class (or earlier if practicable). Faculty teaching courses that are structured so that this early notice is impossible or undesirable should accept the burden of accommodating students who have conflicts and who have notified their teacher of those conflicts in a timely manner.

When circumstances change unexpectedly, resulting in event schedules changing during the semester, the music director, coach or other person scheduling the changed activity should consult the students involved to determine whether there will be any classroom conflicts and whether they can be resolved. The organizers should accept that students with unresolvable conflicts may not be able to participate in the rescheduled event.

Notification of Conflicts

It is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor (or designated GSI), in writing, before the end of the second week of term of all foreseeable conflicts between the syllabus (classes, exams, project due dates, field trips) and scheduled practices, matches, games, potential tournaments, interview weeks, performances, and other activities in which the student will be participating (or *may* be participating) that would require absence from academic activities during the semester, as well as to provide a proposal for resolving these conflicts. If unforeseen conflicts arise during the course of the semester students must promptly notify the instructor and arrange to discuss the situation as soon as these conflicts (or the *possibility* of these conflicts) are known.

Similarly, if the music directors, coaches, and others who arrange these activities have stated policies concerning mandatory attendance, punctuality, and participation, students involved in these activities must notify these individuals by the second week of term concerning academic conflicts or potential conflicts. If a mutually-satisfactory arrangement is not possible, the student may be dropped from the roster of that activity.

Missed Classes

As noted above, when occasional conflicts arise, for instance, because of job-seeking, or athletic team-related activities, or religious observance, for instance, and the student has notified the instructor at the outset of the semester, including a statement concerning his/her proposed handling of the situation (e.g. attending an alternative section one week) and discussed the matter with the instructor or designated GSI, faculty should try to accommodate the student.

If systematic conflicts occur that might, for instance, require a student to leave lecture or section early or arrive late on a *consistent* basis, and if, in the opinion of the instructor there is no mutually-workable solution, the student may be dropped from the class.

Students should be aware that, because of internal requirements (such as activities requiring students to work in specific teams during classtime, special resource-use, and similar necessities), faculty may decline to enroll students in a class who cannot be present at *all* scheduled activities.

On the other hand, class policies to instructor-drop students who miss a class during the first weeks of class should not be applied to students who have proposed accommodations for those missed classes. The purpose of those policies is to drop students who are not intending to actually take the class. Students who have proposed accommodations have demonstrated that they intend to take the class.

Students are responsible for material covered during missed classes whether or not they have been formally excused; therefore it is the student's responsibility to inform him/herself about the material missed. Because of serious workload issues it is not the instructor's or the GSI's responsibility to tutor students in missed material. For this reason it is recommended that students absent from class for any reason make timely contact with several other students in the class to arrange for thorough briefing on the material they missed.

Assignments

Students whose off-campus events conflict with the due dates of projects, assignments, and such must arrange to have their work in the hands of instructors before they leave campus so that it can be evaluated and graded with the work of the student's cohort, unless the instructor has agreed in advance to other arrangements.

Exam Conflicts

Making up and proctoring exams for individual students (or groups of students) is a workload issue for faculty and GSIs. Students may be aware that alternative exams are sometimes scheduled by faculty to accommodate, for instance, DSP (Disabled Students' Program) students. Students with scheduling conflicts may sometimes be accommodated in these alternative exams. However, Campus Proctoring Services can only serve students with disabilities documented by DSP. The Athletic Study Center is another independent organization which can, in many circumstances, provide suitable proctoring services. Berkeley faculty and faculty at other institutions are also a source of suitable independent proctoring arrangements.

Furthermore, because of mechanical requirements in some classes, and the requirement to provide the same opportunities to all enrolled students, often no alternative exams will be given outside of the scheduled classrooms or the appointed hours.

Under certain circumstances and with appropriate notice (see “Notification of Conflicts” above), a faculty member may decide to assign a proxy proctor to give a midterm exam off campus at the same time that that exam is given in class. Simultaneous proctored administration of a remote exam is an appropriate solution to exam security concerns. Berkeley faculty, faculty at the destination institution and the normal proctoring services here and remotely are presumed to be suitable sources of independent proctoring. Care should be taken that conflict of interest or the appearance of conflict of interest be avoided in undertaking proxy proctorships.

It is not a significant increase in faculty workload to have a suitable proctor pick up exam copy(s) several days in advance, followed by returning the completed exams with several days after administration.

General

The pedagogical needs of the class are the key criteria when deciding whether a proposed accommodation is appropriate. Faculty must clearly articulate the specific pedagogical reasons that prevent accepting a proposed accommodation. Absent such a reason, the presumption should be that accommodations are to be made.

If, in the opinion of the instructor the student’s list of foreseeable conflicts reveals multiple unresolvable scheduling conflicts the student may be advised to find another class that better accommodates his/her priorities. If systematic or frequent unresolved conflicts are evident the instructor may drop the student from the class.

When a satisfactory solution can’t be found, the student and instructor should refer the situation to the Departmental Chair and/or the student Ombudsperson. The Chair is responsible for ensuring that cases are treated consistently and fairly across the Department. The student Ombudsperson can facilitate communication between the student and instructor.

Conclusion

These guidelines are designed to foster communication between students, faculty, GSIs, and the professional staffs that orchestrate extra-curricular activities in which UCB students participate. With the timely attention of faculty, students, coaches and others to scheduling on the one hand, and notification of potential conflicts on the other, difficulties and misunderstanding can be avoided and learning will be facilitated.