

UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL
Tuesday, June 23, 2020 at 11:00 a.m.
Videoconference via Zoom

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REPORT TO UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL
from the
UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL
CERTIFICATES AND DIPLOMAS COMMITTEE

FOR APPROVAL

I. Revisions to the Senate Policy on Diplomas and Certificates

At its June 18, 2020 meeting, the Certificates and Diplomas Committee approved, for recommendation to Undergraduate Council, revisions to the *Senate Policy on Diplomas and Certificates*. Details of the proposed revisions are contained in Attachment I of the circulated report.

It is now recommended,

that the Undergraduate Council approve, for recommendation to Senate, revisions to the Senate Policy on Diplomas and Certificates, as set out in the attached.

Undergraduate Council
June 23, 2020

Complete Policy Title

Certificates & Diplomas Policy

Policy Number (if applicable):

Approved by

Senate

Date of Most Recent Approval

PENDING APPROVAL – July 8, 2020

Date of Original Approval(s)

May 12, 1997

Supersedes/Amends Policy dated

Senate Policy on Diplomas and Certificates,
June 6, 2018

Policy on Certificates and Diplomas, March 10,
2010

Responsible Executive

Vice-Provost, Faculty

Policy Specific Enquiries

[Vice-Provost, Faculty](#)

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SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

PREAMBLE

1. The purpose of this Policy is to provide minimum academic criteria which must be met if programs are to be approved as McMaster University certificates and diplomas. The academic criteria proposed are intended to maintain the University's high academic standards and enable certificates and diplomas to continue their traditional functions of providing studies complementary to degree programs, professional preparation or upgrading, and/or bridging into degree programs.
2. The evaluation, approval and monitoring of certificate and diploma programs is the responsibility of the University's governing councils, Graduate Council and Undergraduate Council (as applicable). The relevant Council shall report to the Senate the establishment, closure, and/or substantial revisions of academic certificate and diploma programs.
3. Academic certificate and diploma programs are operated in accordance with normal academic regulations as outlined in the *Undergraduate Calendar* or *Graduate Calendar* (as applicable).

DEFINITIONS

4. **Credential** is a body of academic work or collection of course work that stands on its own and for which a parchment is issued. McMaster credentials include certificates, diplomas, and degrees.
5. **Academic Credit Course** is a course of an academic calibre consistent with those offered in undergraduate or graduate degree programs. The most common kind of academic credit course is that included in the curricula of undergraduate or graduate degree programs. These provide a benchmark against which other academic credit courses can be evaluated.

SECTION II: PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS

MANAGEMENT OF ACADEMIC CERTIFICATE AND DIPLOMA PROGRAMS

6. Academic certificate and diploma programs are operated in accordance with normal academic regulations as outlined in the *Undergraduate Calendar* or *Graduate Calendar* (as applicable).
7. Students registered in academic certificate and diploma programs are issued a student number, classes are scheduled within sessional dates, and part-time student fees are charged. Student records, including grades, are maintained by the Office of the Registrar.
8. Academic certificates and diplomas will be issued by the academic unit offering the program to the student upon completion of all academic requirements of a program.

ACADEMIC CREDIT FOR DIPLOMA AND CERTIFICATE COURSES

9. Certificate and diploma programs include courses which are determined to be of an academic calibre consistent with courses offered in undergraduate or graduate degree programs (as appropriate).
10. While credit for courses in degree programs is normally given in blocks of three or six units, credit can be at the one, two, three or any other unit level.
11. To receive approval as an academic credit course, a course which is not part of a degree program must:
 - a) be at a level of intellectual rigour comparable to that found in undergraduate or graduate degree program courses in the same or similar field(s). Academic credit courses are vetted by the Faculty offering the course or that is most relevant to the content of the course;
 - b) evaluate student performance by the methods normally used in degree courses such as tests, essays, reports and other assignments; and
 - c) include a systematic student evaluation of the course using such methods as multiple-choice questionnaires, narrative responses and/or interviews.

Transfer between Credentials

12. Academic credits can be applied to another credential. Examples include, but are not limited to, transfer of credit from a certificate to a degree or from a degree to a diploma. Normally, credits can be applied to a maximum of two credentials.
13. Up to 100% of the academic credit courses completed toward undergraduate diploma and certificate programs may be used for credit toward another credential at the discretion of and in accordance with the normal academic rules specified by the academic unit offering the subsequent credential.
14. In some specific cases, courses taken for credit as part of a graduate diploma program may be considered for credit toward a subsequent Master's degree program.

Academic Approval Criteria

15. When approving a certificate or diploma program, Undergraduate Council or Graduate Council (as appropriate) must ensure that the program proposal appropriately fulfills all of the following criteria:
- a) well-defined program objective(s);
 - b) well-defined program learning outcomes;
 - c) curriculum to meet the program learning outcomes; and
 - d) admission requirements (as applicable).

SECTION III: UNDERGRADUATE DIPLOMAS

16. An Undergraduate Diploma is a program of study involving a significant body of academic work coherently organized around clear learning objectives. Undergraduate Diplomas (including post-baccalaureate diplomas) may be focused primarily upon academic or professional development objectives, but all must include academic content equivalent to a **minimum of 24 units** of undergraduate-level course work.
17. Undergraduate Diplomas serve such functions as: study complementary to degree programs, professional preparation or upgrading, and bridging into undergraduate degree programs. The word Diploma must be included in the program name.

Academic Program Requirements

18. All Undergraduate Diplomas must include academic credit courses equivalent to **at least 24 units** of undergraduate study at McMaster. In addition to their academic content, Undergraduate Diploma programs may include courses and other forms of learning which are not suitable for academic credit.
19. The maximum overlap with degree courses is 70% of the requirement for the diploma. Up to 100% of the academic credit courses completed toward undergraduate diploma and certificate programs may be used for credit toward another credential at the discretion of and in accordance with the normal academic rules specified by the academic unit offering the subsequent credential.

Admission Requirements

20. There are two sets of admission requirements:

General Requirements

- a) students who wish to enter an Undergraduate Diploma program must have at least one of:
 - (i) an Ontario Secondary School Diploma or equivalent;
 - (ii) be a mature student as defined in the *Undergraduate Calendar*; or
 - (iii) be deemed an exceptional case by the admissions committee for the Undergraduate Diploma.
- b) these requirements ensure that students have the basic capabilities necessary to deal with the academic credit courses in Undergraduate Diploma programs and take into account the bridging function that some diplomas perform; and

Additional Requirements

- c) any particular diploma program may have other admission requirements which are appropriate to its learning objectives. These requirements may include prerequisite courses or degrees specific to the particular diploma.

SECTION IV: GRADUATE DIPLOMAS

21. A Graduate Diploma is based on Graduate Degree Level Expectations and will prepare students for employment requiring sound judgment, personal responsibility and individual initiative, in complex and unpredictable professional environments.
22. Graduate Diplomas must include academic content **equivalent to a minimum of four graduate courses** at McMaster. Graduate Diplomas are defined in this Policy. However, the review and approval process falls under the [Policy on Academic Program Development and Review](#).
23. There are three types of Graduate Diplomas:
 - a) Master's Level Diploma (Type 1) programs require students to develop a conceptual understanding of fundamental aspects of the discipline. Some programs require students to demonstrate Master's-level analytical, interpretative, methodological and expository skills through course-specific applications, while some may also require students to demonstrate these skills in applied activities;
 - b) Master's and Doctoral Level Diploma (Type 2) programs are offered in conjunction with a Master's or doctoral degree and represent an additional, usually interdisciplinary, qualification. Programs require students to develop a conceptual understanding of fundamental aspects of the discipline(s) and appropriate levels of analytical, interpretative, methodological and expository skills through course-specific applications, while some may require students to demonstrate these skills in applied activities; and
 - c) Master's and Doctoral Level Diploma (Type 3) programs are stand-alone, direct-entry Graduate Diploma programs require students to develop a conceptual understanding of fundamental aspects of the discipline. Programs require students to demonstrate the appropriate level of analytical, interpretative, methodological and expository skills through course-specific applications, while some may require students to demonstrate these skills in applied activities.

Academic Course Requirements

24. All McMaster Graduate Diplomas must include academic credit courses equivalent to at least four courses at the graduate level at McMaster.

Admission Requirements

25. There are two sets of admission requirements:

General Requirements

- a) students who wish to enter a Graduate Diploma program must meet the admission requirements of a Master's level program. These requirements ensure that students have the basic capabilities necessary to deal with the academic credit courses in Graduate Diploma programs; and

Additional Requirements

- b) any particular Graduate Diploma program may have other admission requirements which are appropriate to its learning objectives. These requirements may include prerequisite courses or degrees specific to the particular diploma.

SECTION V: UNDERGRADUATE CERTIFICATES

26. An Undergraduate Certificate is a program of study coherently organized around clear learning objectives and having academic content equivalent to **15 or 9 units** of undergraduate study at McMaster.
27. There are three types of Undergraduate Academic Certificates:
 - a) Stand-Alone Undergraduate Certificate (15 units);
 - b) Stand-Alone Certificate of Professional Learning (9 units); and
 - c) Concurrent Undergraduate Certificate (15 units).

STAND-ALONE UNDERGRADUATE CERTIFICATE

28. Stand-Alone Undergraduate Certificate (including Post-Baccalaureate Certificates) may be focused primarily upon academic or professional development objectives, but all must meet the minimum criterion of academic content (**15 units**). Stand-Alone Undergraduate Certificates serve such functions as bridging into undergraduate degree programs, professional preparation or upgrading, and study complementary to degree studies.

Academic Course Requirements

29. All Stand-Alone Undergraduate Certificates must include academic credit courses equivalent to at least **15 units** (half a year) of undergraduate study at McMaster. In addition to their academic content, Stand-Alone Undergraduate Certificate programs may include courses and other forms of learning which are not suitable for academic credit.
30. Up to 100% of the academic credit courses completed toward undergraduate diploma and certificate programs may be used for credit toward another credential at the discretion of and in accordance with the normal academic rules specified by the academic unit offering the subsequent credential.

Admission Requirements

31. There are two sets of admission requirements:

General Requirements

- a) students who wish to enter a Stand-Alone Undergraduate Certificate program must have at least one of:
 - (i) an Ontario Secondary School Diploma or equivalent;
 - (ii) be a mature student as defined in the *Undergraduate Calendar* of McMaster University; or
 - (iii) be deemed an exceptional case by the admissions committee for the certificate.
- b) these requirements ensure that students have the basic capabilities necessary to deal with the academic credit courses in Undergraduate Certificate programs and take into account the bridging function that some certificates perform; and

Additional Requirements

- c) any particular Stand-Alone Undergraduate Certificate program may have other admission requirements which are appropriate to its learning objectives. These requirements may include prerequisite courses or degrees specific to the particular certificate.

STAND-ALONE CERTIFICATE OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

- 32. Stand-Alone Certificate of Professional Learning enables learners to complete an academic program of study (9 units) with a professional focus. It will include academic development objectives targeting the learner's growth in a professional area and will meet the minimum criterion of academic content. Stand-Alone Certificates of Professional Learning serve the function of bridging into undergraduate degree programs and professional enhancement.

Academic Course Requirements

- 33. All Stand-Alone Certificates of Professional Learning must include academic credit courses equivalent to 9 units of undergraduate study at McMaster. Up to 100% of the academic credit courses completed toward undergraduate diploma and certificate programs may be used for credit toward another credential at the discretion of and in accordance with the normal academic rules specified by academic unit offering the subsequent credential.

Admission Requirements

- 34. There are two sets of admission requirements:

General Requirements

- a) students who wish to enter a Stand-Alone Certificate of Professional Learning program must have at least one of:
 - (i) an Ontario Secondary School Diploma or equivalent;
 - (ii) be a mature student as defined in the *Undergraduate Calendar* of McMaster University; or
 - (iii) be deemed an exceptional case by the admissions committee for the certificate.
- b) these requirements ensure that students have the basic capabilities necessary to deal with the academic credit courses in Undergraduate Certificate programs and take into account the bridging function that some certificates perform; and

Additional Requirements

- c) any particular Undergraduate Stand-Alone Certificate of Professional Learning program may have other admission requirements which are appropriate to its learning objectives. These requirements may include prerequisite courses or degrees specific to the particular certificate.

CONCURRENT UNDERGRADUATE CERTIFICATE

35. A Concurrent Undergraduate Certificate shall be focused primarily upon academic development objectives and must meet the minimum criterion of academic content (**15 units**). This type of Certificate sets out a plan of study complementary to degree studies and will provide added value to degree studies.

Academic Course Requirements

36. All Concurrent Undergraduate Certificates must include academic credit courses equivalent to at least 15 units (half a year) of undergraduate study at McMaster.
37. In addition to their academic content, concurrent certificate programs may include courses and other forms of learning which are not suitable for academic credit. Up to 100% of the requirement for the concurrent certificate may overlap with degree courses.

Admission Requirements

38. Students who wish to enter a Concurrent Undergraduate Certificate program must be enrolled in an undergraduate degree program at McMaster.
39. Any particular Concurrent Undergraduate Certificate program may have other admission requirements, such as prerequisite courses, which are appropriate to its learning objectives.

SECTION VI: GRADUATE CERTIFICATES

40. A Graduate Certificate is a program of study coherently organized around clear learning objectives and having academic content equivalent to a minimum of three graduate courses at McMaster.

Academic Course Requirements

41. All Graduate Certificates must include academic credit courses equivalent to at least three courses at the graduate level at McMaster. Up to 100% of the certificate course requirements may overlap with graduate degree courses. (Courses may or may not be unique to the certificate.)

Admission Requirements

42. There are two sets of admission requirements:

General Requirements

- a) students who wish to enter a Graduate Certificate program must meet the admission requirements of a Master's level program. These requirements ensure that students have the basic capabilities necessary to deal with the academic credit courses in Graduate Certificate programs; and

Additional Requirements

- b) any particular Graduate Certificate program may have other admission requirements which are appropriate to its learning objectives. These requirements may include prerequisite courses or degrees specific to the particular certificate.

SECTION VII: OTHER CERTIFICATES

43. There are two types of non-academic programs:
 - a) Certificates of Completion: and
 - b) Certificates of Attendance.
44. These non-academic programs are distinct and differentiated from Certificates and Diplomas. The term "Certificate" shall only be used by McMaster courses and programs within the guidelines of this Policy.

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

45. A Certificate of Completion acknowledges that an individual has completed a course or program at McMaster that does not have the status of an academic program.
46. A Certificate of Completion can be issued when a non-academic course or program includes a minimum of **30 contact hours** and **evaluation** of the learner's learning. Certificates of Completion may include academic content if the course or courses have been approved for credit toward another credential.
47. The learner must demonstrate competency in the material as determined by evaluation methods which may include an exam, paper, project, presentation, etc. This will normally be recorded as a pass or fail, and records will be kept by the unit offering the program.
48. This category will be suitable for various types of life-long learning courses and programs. The Certificate of Completion is not an academic certificate and as such shall not be categorized as undergraduate or graduate level.

Admission Requirements

49. Normally, there are no specific admission requirements.

Credit Toward Another Credential

50. Normally, there is no credit granted towards degree program studies, unless the course or courses making up the Certificate of Completion have been approved for credit as part of a degree, diploma or certificate.
51. A series of Certificates of Attendance (see below) cannot make up the components of a Certificate of Completion.

Approval Criteria

52. Although administrative and academic units at McMaster do not need permission from Undergraduate Council to issue Certificates of Completion, they are required, at minimum, to report new Certificates of Completion and revisions to existing Certificate of Completion programs to Undergraduate Council on an annual basis.
53. However, if new **fees** are being charged to learners, the Faculty proposing the Certificate of Completion program must follow the process for approval of academic certificates and diplomas.

54. It is expected that Certificates of Completion will be granted only when the activities are of benefit and/or interest to the community and are consistent with the objectives of McMaster University.

Guidelines and Limitations

55. Clarity and the protection of the McMaster certificate brand are paramount. Thus, any courses or programs that issue a Certificate of Completion shall not use the term Certificate in their title, unless it is part of the term "Certificate of Completion." Exceptions may occur when a program is provided as contract training to a company (i.e. not a public program) and the program name is determined jointly with the client.
56. The course description should include the credit or non-credit status of the course, that there will be learner evaluation, how the learner shall be graded (i.e., pass/fail or a letter grade), and that a "Certificate of Completion" will be awarded for successful completion.

CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDANCE

57. A Certificate of Attendance acknowledges that an individual has participated in a set of activities at McMaster that does not have the status of an academic program as there is no academic content and no evaluation of learning.
58. Such activities are designed to meet the interests and objectives of participants who may want to acquire general knowledge or training for general interest purposes, but who neither require nor seek any form of professional or academic recognition. As such a Certificate of Attendance shall not be categorized as undergraduate or graduate level. This category will be suitable for various types of life-long learning courses and programs.

Admission Requirements

59. Normally, there are no specific admission requirements.

Credit Toward Degree or Other Program Studies

60. There is no credit granted toward additional credentials.

Approval Criteria

61. Although administrative and academic units at McMaster do not require approval from Undergraduate Council to issue Certificates of Attendance, they are required, at minimum, to report to Undergraduate Council on an annual basis new Certificates of Attendance programs and revisions to existing Certificate of Attendance programs.
62. However, if new fees are being charged to learners, administrative and/or academic units proposing the Certificate of Attendance program must follow the process for approval of academic certificates and diplomas.
63. It is expected that Certificates of Attendance will be granted only when the activities are of benefit and/or interest to the community and are consistent with the objectives of McMaster University.

Guidelines and Limitations

64. Clarity and the protection of the McMaster certificate brand are paramount. Thus, any courses or programs that issue a Certificate of Attendance shall not use the term Certificate in their title, unless it is part of the term "Certificate of Attendance."

NON-MCMASTER CERTIFICATES

65. McMaster collaborates with other organisations and institutions to offer programming toward a credential that is issued by that other entity. Such externally issued credentials are outside the scope of this Policy.

SECTION VIII: PROCEDURES FOR APPROVAL

66. The Faculty or Centre for Continuing Education will present the proposal for undergraduate diplomas, undergraduate academic certificates and undergraduate-level academic credit courses to the Undergraduate Council Certificates and Diplomas Committee. Once approved, the Certificates and Diplomas Committee will then make a recommendation to Undergraduate Council.
67. In the case of graduate certificates and graduate-level academic courses, the Faculty will present proposals to Graduate Council.
68. The relevant Council shall report to the Senate the establishment, closure, and/or substantial revisions of academic certificate and diploma programs.
69. The academic unit is responsible for providing a complete proposal. In addition to the program proposal, the complete submission must include a statement of academic merit from the office of the Dean, as described below.
70. Graduate Diplomas are approved through the process outlined in the [Policy on Academic Program Development and Review](#).
71. The approval and reporting processes for Certificates of Completion and Certificates of Attendance are outlined in [Section VII](#) above.

Statement of Academic Merit

72. The statement of academic merit is normally an attestation from a Faculty, at McMaster University, confirming that the Faculty has vetted the proposed program and found that it meets the criteria for the designation proposed. That statement will also include a general description of how the academic merit of the proposal was evaluated, including such things as which academic departments were involved and the procedures used.
73. Proposals for new academic credit courses, which are intended to be part of a certificate or diploma program, and which are not to be part of any degree program, will include the following:
 - a) a paragraph-long course description along with a statement of the number of units of academic credit provided by the course; and
 - b) a statement of how the course contributes to the learning objectives of the program(s) of which it will be a part.

Financial Viability and Resource Implications

74. The financial viability of a certificate and diploma program is evaluated through other mechanisms within the University. All programs should follow these approval processes and ensure they are complying with financial policies, which may include returning a portion of revenue to the University.
75. Diploma and academic certificate programs, as well as non-academic certificates for which fees are charged, must submit fee proposals to the University Student Fees Committee for approval. Normally, this approval

should be sought prior to submission of the academic proposal to Undergraduate Council or Graduate Council. Please note that fees are approved by the Board of Governors for the subsequent academic year, so approvals should be sought in sufficient time to launch programs as planned.

76. Following approval by Undergraduate Council or Graduate Council (as applicable), the completed *Financial Viability and Resource Implications template* for new certificate and diploma programs must be reviewed, prior to submission of the business case to the University Planning Committee, as per the [Academic Revenue Activity Policy for Revenue Generating Certificate and Diploma Programs Administered through a Faculty](#) by the:
- a) Executive Director Finance and Administration (Academic); and
 - b) Vice-Provost (Faculty) or Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies.
77. It is expected that **additional fees will not** be charged for Undergraduate Concurrent Certificates and Graduate Certificates, and that such programs will not generate additional revenue for the University, and therefore do not normally require approval from the University Planning Committee.

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE PARCHMENTS



The Chancellor and Senate of

McMaster University

award

Firstname Lastname

the graduate diploma in

Advanced Neonatal Nursing

Dated this 20th day of November, 2015 at Hamilton, Ontario.

President and Vice-Chancellor

University Registrar

Dean of Graduate Studies



Certificate of Completion

is hereby presented to

Firstname Lastname

to recognize the successful completion of the

Project Management Program

delivered by <Faculty/Dept>

<enter optional information re: hours>

<Signature>

<Date>

*<Name>
<Title>
<Faculty/Dept>*

Name of Credential

is hereby presented to

Firstname Lastname

to recognize the successful completion of the

Program Title

delivered by the <CCE or Partner> in partnership with <CCE or Partner> and <CCE or Partner>

Signature

Date

  

Name of Credential

is hereby presented to

Firstname Lastname

to recognize the successful completion of the

Program Title

delivered by the Centre for Continuing Education

Signature

Date



Name of Credential

is hereby presented to

Firstname Lastname

to recognize the successful completion of the

Program Title

delivered by the <CCE or Partner> in partnership with <CCE or Partner>

Signature

Date

 

Name of Credential

is hereby presented to

Firstname Lastname

to recognize the successful completion of the

Program Title

delivered by the <Name of Faculty or Department>

Signature

Date





Policies, Procedures and Guidelines

Complete Policy Title:
Senate Policy on Diplomas and Certificates

Policy Number (if applicable):

Approved by:
Senate

Date of Most Recent Approval:
June 6, 2018

Date of Original Approval(s):
May 12, 1997

Supersedes/Amends Policy dated:
Policy on Certificates and Diplomas, March 10, 2010

Responsible Executive:
Vice-Provost (Faculty)

Enquiries:
[Policy \(University Secretariat\)](#)

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1. INTRODUCTION

This document provides criteria and procedures for the evaluation, approval and monitoring by Undergraduate Council and Graduate Council of undergraduate and graduate certificate and undergraduate diploma programs. It provides a framework which will enable better quality control and unambiguous communication to students and prospective students regarding the nature of each credential and the academic value of certificates and diplomas.

The intention is to provide minimum academic criteria which must be met if programs are to be approved as McMaster certificates and diplomas. With the minima clearly set, program designers will be free to build creatively around them to provide programs appropriate to their constituencies. The academic criteria proposed are intended to maintain the high academic standards of McMaster and enable certificates and diplomas to continue their traditional functions of providing studies complementary to degree programs, professional preparation or upgrading, and bridging into degree programs.

These criteria and procedures are also designed to make it straightforward for McMaster to mount new, innovative certificate and diploma programs. The number of criteria has been kept to a minimum and the procedures have been streamlined in order to allow program developers to move quickly with initiatives while subjecting them to clear, rigorous academic scrutiny. These criteria and procedures are intended to engender speed, flexibility, quality and clarity.

McMaster's diploma and academic certificate programs are operated in accordance with normal academic regulations as outlined in the *Undergraduate Calendar* or *Graduate Calendar* (as applicable). For example, students are issued a student number, student records (including grades) are kept by the Office of the Registrar, classes are scheduled within sessional dates, and part-time student fees are charged. Further, university approved certificates and diplomas will be issued by the academic unit offering the program to the student upon completion of all academic requirements of a program.

2. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

2.1 Credential

A credential is a body of academic work or collection of course work that stands on its own and for which a parchment is issued. McMaster credentials include certificates, diplomas, and degrees.

2.2 Academic Credit Course

A course of an academic calibre consistent with those offered in undergraduate or graduate degree programs at McMaster. The most common kind of academic credit course is that included in the curricula of undergraduate or graduate degree programs. These provide a benchmark against which other academic credit courses can be evaluated. (See Section 3)

2.3 McMaster Diplomas

2.3.1 Undergraduate Diploma

A McMaster Undergraduate Diploma is a program of study involving a significant body of academic work coherently organized around clear learning objectives. Undergraduate Diplomas (which include post-baccalaureate diplomas) may be focused primarily upon academic or professional development objectives, but all must include academic content equivalent to a minimum of 24 units of undergraduate-level course work. Undergraduate

Diplomas serve such functions as: study complementary to degree programs, professional preparation or upgrading, and bridging into undergraduate degree programs. The word Diploma must be included in the program name. (See Section 4)

2.3.2 Graduate Diploma

McMaster Graduate Diplomas are based on Graduate Degree Level Expectations (see Appendix 1 of the *Quality Assurance Framework*) and will prepare students for employment requiring sound judgment, personal responsibility and individual initiative, in complex and unpredictable professional environments. Graduate Diplomas must include academic content equivalent to a minimum of four graduate courses at McMaster. Graduate Diplomas are defined in this Policy; however, the review and approval process falls under the [Policy on Academic Program Reviews](#). There are three types of Graduate Diplomas. (See Section 5)

2.3.2.1 Master's Level Diploma (Type 1)

Master's Level Type 1 Graduate Diploma programs require students to develop a conceptual understanding of fundamental aspects of the discipline. Some programs require students to demonstrate Master's-level analytical, interpretative, methodological and expository skills through course-specific applications, and some may also require students to demonstrate these skills in applied activities.

2.3.2.2 Master's and Doctoral Level Diploma (Type 2)

Master's Level Type 2 Graduate Diplomas are offered in conjunction with a Master's or doctoral degree and represent an additional, usually interdisciplinary, qualification. Programs require students to develop a conceptual understanding of fundamental aspects of the discipline(s) and appropriate levels of analytical, interpretative, methodological and expository skills through course-specific applications, and some may require students to demonstrate these skills in applied activities.

2.3.2.3 Master's and Doctoral Level Diploma (Type 3)

These stand-alone, direct-entry Graduate Diploma programs require students to develop a conceptual understanding of fundamental aspects of the discipline. Programs require students to demonstrate the appropriate level of analytical, interpretative, methodological and expository skills through course-specific applications, and some may require students to demonstrate these skills in applied activities.

2.4 McMaster Academic Certificates

2.4.1 Undergraduate Certificate

A McMaster Undergraduate Certificate is a program of study coherently organized around clear learning objectives and having academic content equivalent to a minimum of half a year of full-time undergraduate study at McMaster (15 units). There are two types of McMaster Undergraduate Academic Certificates.

2.4.1.1 McMaster Stand-Alone Undergraduate Certificate

Stand-Alone Undergraduate Certificates (which include Post-Baccalaureate Certificates) may be focused primarily upon academic or professional development



objectives, but all must meet the minimum criterion of academic content. Stand-Alone Certificates serve such functions as bridging into undergraduate degree programs, professional preparation or upgrading, and study complementary to degree studies. (See Section 6)

2.4.1.2 McMaster Concurrent Undergraduate Certificate

A Concurrent Undergraduate Certificate shall be focused primarily upon academic development objectives and must meet the minimum criterion of academic content. This type of Certificate sets out a plan of study complementary to degree studies and will provide added value to degree studies. (See Section 7)

2.4.2 Graduate Certificate

A McMaster Graduate Certificate is a program of study coherently organized around clear learning objectives and having academic content equivalent to a minimum of three graduate courses at McMaster. (See Section 8)

2.5 Non-Academic Programs

These are distinct and differentiated from Certificates and Diplomas. The term "Certificate" shall only be used by McMaster courses and programs within the guidelines of this Policy. There are two types of non-academic programs.

2.5.1 Certificate of Completion

Certificates of Completion may be provided for non-academic programs that include a minimum of 30 contact hours and evaluation of the student's learning. Certificates of Completion may include academic content if the course or courses have been approved for credit toward another credential. (See Section 9)

2.5.2 Certificate of Attendance

Certificates of Attendance may be provided for programs that have no academic content and for which there is no evaluation of learning. (See Section 10)

2.6 Non-McMaster Certificates

McMaster collaborates with other organisations or institutions to offer programming toward a credential that is issued by that other entity. Such externally issued credentials are outside the scope of this Policy.

3. ACADEMIC CREDIT FOR DIPLOMA AND CERTIFICATE COURSES

Diploma and certificate programs include courses which are determined by Undergraduate Council or Graduate Council, as appropriate, to be of an academic calibre consistent with courses offered in undergraduate or graduate degree programs. While credit for courses in degree programs is normally given in blocks of three or six units, credit can be at the one, two, three or any other unit level. This provides a flexibility appropriate for programs which often have professional development as well as academic goals.

To receive approval as an academic credit course, a course which is not part of a degree program must:



- (i) Be at a level of intellectual rigour comparable to that found in undergraduate or graduate degree program courses in the same or similar fields. Academic credit courses are vetted by the Faculty offering the course or that is most relevant to the content of the course.
- (ii) Evaluate student performance by the methods normally used in degree courses such as tests, essays, reports and other assignments.
- (iii) Include a systematic student evaluation of the course using such methods as multiple-choice questionnaires, narrative responses and/or interviews.

3.1 Transfer between Credentials

Academic credits can be applied to another credential. Examples include, but are not limited to, transfer of credit from a certificate to a degree or from a degree to a diploma. Normally credits can be applied to a maximum of two credentials.

Up to 100% of the academic credit courses completed toward undergraduate diploma and certificate programs may be used for credit toward another credential at the discretion of and in accordance with the normal academic rules specified by academic unit offering the subsequent credential.

In some specific cases, courses taken for credit as part of a graduate diploma program may be considered for credit toward a subsequent Master's degree program.

3.2 Academic Approval Criteria

When approving a program as a McMaster Diploma or Certificate, Undergraduate Council or Graduate Council (as appropriate) must ensure that the program proposal appropriately fulfills all of the following criteria. It has:

- (i) a well-defined program objective(s);
- (ii) well-defined program learning outcomes;
- (iii) curriculum to meet the program learning outcomes; and
- (iv) admission requirements (as applicable).

Additional criteria for program proposals are set out in Section 11.

4. McMASTER UNDERGRADUATE DIPLOMA

4.1 Academic Program Requirements

All McMaster Undergraduate Diplomas must include academic credit courses equivalent to at least 24 units of undergraduate study at McMaster. In addition to their academic content, Undergraduate Diploma programs may include courses and other forms of learning which are not suitable for academic credit. The maximum overlap with degree courses is 70% of the requirement for the diploma. Up to 100% of the academic credit courses completed toward undergraduate diploma and certificate programs may be used for credit toward another credential at the discretion of and in accordance with the normal academic rules specified by academic unit offering the subsequent credential.

4.2 Admission Requirements

There are two sets of admission requirements:

- a. **General Undergraduate Diploma Admission Requirements.** Students who wish to enter a McMaster Undergraduate Diploma program must have at least one of: (i) an Ontario Secondary



School Diploma or equivalent; (ii) be a mature student as defined in the *Undergraduate Calendar* of McMaster University; (iii) be deemed an exceptional case by the admissions committee for the Undergraduate Diploma. These requirements ensure that students have the basic capabilities necessary to deal with the academic credit courses in Undergraduate Diploma programs and take into account the bridging function that some diplomas perform.

- b. **Diploma Specific Admission Requirements.** Any particular diploma program may have other admission requirements which are appropriate to its learning objectives. These requirements may include prerequisite courses or degrees specific to the particular diploma.

5. McMASTER GRADUATE DIPLOMA

The minimum requirements for Graduate Diplomas are set out below. For submission and approval requirements, please see the [Academic Program Development and Review, Policy on](#).

5.1 Academic Course Requirements

All McMaster Graduate Diplomas must include academic credit courses equivalent to at least four courses at the graduate level at McMaster.

5.2 Admission Requirements

There are two sets of admission requirements:

- a. **General Graduate Diploma Admission Requirements.** Students who wish to enter a McMaster Graduate Diploma program must meet the admission requirements of a Master's level program. These requirements ensure that students have the basic capabilities necessary to deal with the academic credit courses in Graduate Diploma programs.
- b. **Diploma Specific Admission Requirements.** Any particular Graduate Diploma program may have other admission requirements which are appropriate to its learning objectives. These requirements may include prerequisite courses or degrees specific to the particular diploma.

6. McMASTER STAND-ALONE UNDERGRADUATE CERTIFICATE

6.1 Academic Course Requirements

All McMaster Stand-Alone Undergraduate Certificates must include academic credit courses equivalent to at least 15 units (half a year) of undergraduate study at McMaster. In addition to their academic content, Stand-Alone Certificate programs may include courses and other forms of learning which are not suitable for academic credit. Up to 100% of the academic credit courses completed toward undergraduate diploma and certificate programs may be used for credit toward another credential at the discretion of and in accordance with the normal academic rules specified by academic unit offering the subsequent credential.

6.2 Admission Requirements

There are two sets of admission requirements:

- a. **General Undergraduate Stand-Alone Certificate Admission Requirements.** Students who wish to enter a McMaster Undergraduate Stand-Alone Certificate program must have at least one of: (i) an Ontario Secondary School Diploma or equivalent; (ii) be a mature student as defined in the *Undergraduate Calendar* of McMaster University; (iii) be deemed an exceptional case by the admissions committee for the certificate. These requirements ensure that students have the



basic capabilities necessary to deal with the academic credit courses in Undergraduate Certificate programs and take into account the bridging function that some certificates perform.

- b. **Certificate Specific Admission Requirements.** Any particular Undergraduate Stand-Alone Certificate program may have other admission requirements which are appropriate to its learning objectives. These requirements may include prerequisite courses or degrees specific to the particular certificate.

7. McMASTER CONCURRENT UNDERGRADUATE CERTIFICATE

7.1 Academic Course Requirements

All McMaster Concurrent Undergraduate Certificates must include academic credit courses equivalent to at least 15 units (half a year) of undergraduate study at McMaster. In addition to their academic content, concurrent certificate programs may include courses and other forms of learning which are not suitable for academic credit. Up to 100% of the requirement for the concurrent certificate may overlap with degree courses.

7.2 Admission Requirements

Students who wish to enter a McMaster Concurrent Undergraduate Certificate program must be enrolled in an undergraduate degree program at McMaster University. Any particular concurrent Undergraduate Certificate program may have other admission requirements, such as prerequisite courses, which are appropriate to its learning objectives.

8. McMASTER GRADUATE CERTIFICATE

8.1 Academic Course Requirements

All McMaster Graduate Certificates must include academic credit courses equivalent to at least three courses at the graduate level at McMaster. Up to 100% of the certificate course requirements may overlap with graduate degree courses. (Courses may or may not be unique to the certificate.)

8.2 Admission Requirements

There are two sets of admission requirements:

- a. **General Graduate Certificate Admission Requirements.** Students who wish to enter a McMaster Graduate Certificate program must meet the admission requirements of a Master's level program. These requirements ensure that students have the basic capabilities necessary to deal with the academic credit courses in Graduate Certificate programs.
- b. **Certificate Specific Admission Requirements.** Any particular Graduate Certificate program may have other admission requirements which are appropriate to its learning objectives. These requirements may include prerequisites courses or degrees specific to the particular certificate.

9. CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

A Certificate of Completion issued by McMaster University acknowledges that an individual has completed a course or program at McMaster that does not have the status of an academic program. A Certificate of Completion can be issued when a course or program includes a minimum of 30 contact hours and there is evaluation of the student's learning. The student must demonstrate competency in the material as determined by evaluation methods which may include an exam, paper, project, presentation, etc. This will normally be recorded as a pass or fail and records will be kept by the unit offering the program.



This category will be suitable for various types of life-long learning courses and programs. The Certificate of Completion is not an academic certificate and as such shall not be categorized as undergraduate or graduate level.

9.1 Admission Requirements

Normally, there are no specific admission requirements.

9.2 Credit Toward Another Credential

Normally, there is no credit granted towards degree program studies, unless the course or courses making up the Certificate of Completion have been approved for credit as part of degree, diploma or certificate.

A series of Certificates of Attendance cannot make up the components of a Certificate of Completion.

9.3 Approval Criteria

Although administrative and academic units at McMaster do not need permission from Undergraduate Council to issue Certificates of Completion, they are required, at minimum, to report new Certificates of Completion and revisions to existing Certificate of Completion programs to Undergraduate Council on an annual basis.

However, if new fees are being charged to students, the Faculty proposing the Certificate of Completion program must follow the process for approval of academic certificates and diplomas, as set out in Section 11 below.

It is expected that Certificates of Completion will be granted only when the activities are of benefit and/or interest to the community and are consistent with the objectives of McMaster University.

9.4 Guidelines and Limitations

Clarity and the protection of the McMaster certificate brand are paramount. Thus, any courses or programs that issue a Certificate of Completion shall not use the term Certificate in their title, unless it is part of the term "Certificate of Completion." Exceptions may occur when a program is provided as contract training to a company (i.e., not a public program) and the program name is determined jointly with the client.

The course description should include the credit or non-credit status of the course, that there will be student evaluation, how the student shall be graded (i.e., pass/fail or a letter grade), and that a "Certificate of Completion" will be awarded for successful completion.

10. CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDANCE

A Certificate of Attendance issued by McMaster University acknowledges that an individual has participated in a set of activities at McMaster that does not have the status of an academic program. Such activities are designed to meet the interests and objectives of participants who may want to acquire general knowledge or training for general interest purposes, but who neither require nor seek any form of professional or academic recognition, and as such a Certificate of Attendance shall not be categorized



as undergraduate or graduate level. This category will be suitable for various types of life-long learning courses and programs.

10.1 Admission Requirements

Normally, there are no specific admission requirements.

10.2 Credit Toward Degree or Other Program Studies

There is no credit granted toward additional credentials.

10.3 Approval Criteria

Although administrative and academic units at McMaster do not need permission from Undergraduate Council to issue Certificates of Attendance, they are required, at minimum, to report new Certificates of Attendance and revisions to existing Certificate of Attendance programs to Undergraduate Council on an annual basis.

However, if new fees are being charged to students, the Faculty proposing Certificate of Attendance program must follow the process for approval of academic certificates and diplomas, as set out in Section 11 below.

It is expected that Certificates of Attendance will be granted only when the activities are of benefit and/or interest to the community and are consistent with the objectives of McMaster University.

10.4 Guidelines and Limitations

Clarity and the protection of the McMaster certificate brand are paramount. Thus, any courses or programs that issue a Certificate of Attendance shall not use the term Certificate in their title, unless it is part of the term "Certificate of Attendance."

11. PROCEDURES FOR THE APPROVAL OF CERTIFICATE AND DIPLOMA PROGRAMS AND ACADEMIC CREDIT COURSES

The Faculty or Centre for Continuing Education will present proposal for undergraduate diplomas, undergraduate academic certificates and undergraduate-level academic credit courses to the Undergraduate Council Certificates and Diplomas Committee. Such proposals do not need to be approved by the Undergraduate Council Curriculum Committee. Once approved, the Certificates and Diplomas Committee will then make a recommendation to Undergraduate Council. In the case of graduate certificates and graduate-level academic courses, the Faculty will present proposals to Graduate Council. Undergraduate Council or Graduate Council in turn will make its recommendations to Senate. The academic unit is responsible for providing a complete proposal. In addition to the program proposal, the complete submission must include a statement of academic merit from the office of the Dean, as described below.

Graduate Diplomas are approved through the process outlined in the [Academic Program Development and Review, Policy on](#).

The approval and reporting processes for Certificates of Completion and Certificates of Attendance are outlined in Sections 9 and 10 above.

11.1 Statement of Academic Merit

The statement of academic merit is normally an attestation from a Faculty, at McMaster University, confirming that the Faculty has vetted the proposed program and found that it meets the criteria for the designation proposed. That statement will also include a general description of how the academic merit of the proposal was evaluated, including such things as which academic departments were involved and the procedures used.

Proposals for new academic credit courses, which are intended to be part of a certificate or diploma program, and which are not to be part of any degree program, will include the following:

- (i) a paragraph-long course description along with a statement of the number of units of academic credit provided by the course.
- (ii) a statement of how the course contributes to the learning objectives of the program(s) of which it will be a part.

11.2 Financial Viability and Resource Implications

The financial viability of a certificate and diploma program is evaluated through other mechanisms within the University. All programs should follow these approval processes and ensure they are complying with financial policies, which may include returning a portion of revenue to the University.

Diploma and academic certificate programs, as well as non-academic certificates for which fees are charged, must submit fee proposals to the University Student Fees Committee for approval. Normally, this approval should be sought prior to submission of the academic proposal to Undergraduate Council or Graduate Council. Please note that fees are approved by the Board of Governors for the subsequent academic year, so approvals should be sought in sufficient time to launch programs as planned.

Following approval by Undergraduate Council or Graduate Council (as applicable), the completed Financial Viability and Resource Implications template for new certificate and diploma programs must be reviewed by the Executive Director Finance and Administration (Academic) and Vice-Provost (Faculty) or Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies prior to submission of the business case to the University Planning Committee, as per the [Academic Revenue Activity Policy](#).

It is expected that additional fees will not be charged for Undergraduate Concurrent Certificates and Graduate Certificates and that such programs will not generate additional revenue for the University, and therefore do not normally require approval from the University Planning Committee.

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE PARCHMENTS



The Chancellor and Senate of

McMaster University

award

Firstname Lastname

the graduate diploma in

Advanced Neonatal Nursing

Dated this 20th day of November, 2015 at Hamilton, Ontario.

President and Vice-Chancellor

University Registrar

Dean of Graduate Studies



Certificate of Completion

is hereby presented to

Firstname Lastname

to recognize the successful completion of the

Project Management Program

delivered by <Faculty/Dept>

<enter optional information re: hours>

<Signature>

<Date>

<Name>
<Title>
<Faculty/Dept>



Complete Policy Title

Undergraduate Course Management Policies

Policy Number (if applicable):

Approved by

Senate

Date of Most Recent Approval

DRAFT 03

Date of Original Approval(s)

April 9, 2014

Supersedes/Amends Policy dated

December 13, 2017 effective September 1, 2018

June 4, 2014

- Senate Resolutions on Course Outlines – June 14, 1995
- Guidelines for Student Evaluation – March 10, 2004
- Examination Ban – March 1995
- Academic Integrity Statement for Course Outlines – April 13, 2005
- Turnitin.com Guidelines – April 13, 2005
- Retention of Examination Papers and Other Graded Materials – May 13, 2009

Responsible Executive

Vice-Provost (Faculty)

Policy Specific Enquiries

[Vice-Provost \(Faculty\)](#)

General Policy Enquiries

[Policy \(University Secretariat\)](#)

DISCLAIMER:

If there is a Discrepancy between this electronic policy and the written copy held by the policy owner, the written copy prevails.

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PURPOSE

1. This ~~policy~~ **Policy** summarizes instructor responsibilities in regard to undergraduate courses. The University expects instructors to clearly communicate their course expectations so students are able to plan ahead and manage their time accordingly. Additionally, undergraduate students should normally be assessed more than once and receive feedback early enough to make decisions.

SECTION A: COURSE OUTLINES

2. A course outline sets the expectations for students and what they can expect in terms of the course experience they will receive, the format in which the course will be delivered and the knowledge and skills that can be gained. The outline introduces the course and the instructor and sets out the expectations of the instructor so that students are aware of how they will learn, what level of participation will be expected and how they will be assessed.
- ~~2.3.~~ Instructors are responsible for ensuring course outlines are compliant with all policies. As such, instructors must attach the two-page appendix **Course Outline – Approved Advisory Statements**, located at the end of this Policy.
4. Since Calendar descriptions of courses are necessarily brief, instructors are required to provide students with a more detailed course outline describing the administrative and academic details of the course.
- ~~2.5.~~ **Course** outlines are to be made available to students at the beginning of the course and **must be kept on file for 10 years in the department administering the course.** Instructors are encouraged to make course outlines available as soon as possible, but at the very least two weeks before the start of classes.
- ~~4.6.~~ Students will expect the course to unfold as described in the course outline and will plan their time and resources accordingly. As questions or concerns during the course will be referred back to the course outline, instructors are encouraged to anticipate issues that might arise and specify how those issues will be addressed (e.g., late submission of assignments, missed tests).
- ~~5.7.~~ If it becomes necessary to make changes to some part of the course during the term, reasonable notice and communication between the instructor and students is critical. Students should be provided with an explanation and an opportunity to comment. ~~The instructor is~~ Instructors are encouraged to use multiple communication methods with students (e.g. class announcements, e-mail message sent to the class through Mosaic, message posted on the course web-site or A2L, etc.).
- ~~6.8.~~ The arrangement proposed in the course outline should not be interpreted in a way that discourages flexibility in course presentation and organization exclusive of grade weighting. If an instructor wishes to reserve decisions to be made as the course progresses, that intention should be stated in the course outline, for example:

"At certain points in the course it may make good sense to modify the schedule. The instructor may modify elements of the course and will notify students accordingly (in class, on the course website)".
- ~~7.9.~~ Any changes related to evaluation must be made in consultation with the Department Chair.

~~8.~~ The University reserves the right to change dates and/or deadlines etc. for any or all courses in the case of an extreme circumstance, such as an emergency situation or labour disruption.

~~9,10.~~ ~~Instructors must include the following in their course outlines:~~

- ~~a) the Academic Integrity statement, and~~
- ~~b) the Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities statement, and~~
- ~~c) the Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work statement, and~~
- ~~d) the Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances statement, and~~
- ~~e) the Extreme Circumstances statement.~~

~~10,11.~~ Instructors are asked to make announcements encouraging students to discuss the implementation of their accommodations with you as soon as possible.

SECTION B: DUE DATE RESTRICTIONS

12. The following language is based on the *Undergraduate Calendar General Academic Regulations - Due Date Restrictions*, and will be revised as required to remain consistent with the calendar:

~~11. Academic~~ academic assessments, ~~and~~ due dates and evaluations are described in course outlines except where other University policies apply, e.g., Student Accessibility Services (SAS) ~~Student Accessibility Services (SAS)~~ accommodations, deferred exams, etc. Restrictions are placed on ~~due dates~~ academic obligations to enable students to plan their work ~~load~~ schedules.

a)

b) ~~Due due~~ dates for all term work must be **on or before** the final day of classes for courses with a final examination.

~~a) For~~ for courses with no final examination, academic assessments can be due on or before the final date of examinations.

c)

d) academic obligations cannot be due during the December holiday break or the fall and winter mid-term recesses, with the exception of deferred exams scheduled by the Office of the Registrar.

e) the Test and Examination Ban period, is the last 5 days of classes plus the day(s) between the end of classes and the beginning of examinations, and:

(i) ~~Tests~~ tests, quizzes, exams and ~~take take~~ home exams worth more than 10% cannot be assigned or due during this period ~~the last 5 days of classes plus the day(s) between the end of classes and the beginning of examinations~~.

~~12. Assignments~~ assignments worth more than 10% that are assigned at the beginning of the course and noted on the course outline can be due during this time period, provided students are given sufficient additional detail to enable them to work on the assignment in advance of the due date.

~~(i)(ii) Academic assessments cannot be due during the December holiday break or the fall and winter mid-term recesses, with the exception of deferred exams scheduled by the Office of the Registrar.~~

~~12.~~

SECTION C: MAXIMUM VALUE OF ACADEMIC ASSESSMENTS

~~14.~~ 13. Student learning in undergraduate courses should be assessed on more than one occasion. To that end, no single academic obligation (e.g., essay, test, examination, etc.) should have a value of more than 75% of the final grade without approval from the Department Chair or Associate Dean's Office. Clinical, placement, thesis and capstone courses are exempt.

14. For students requiring relief from an academic obligation, it is at the discretion of the instructor to determine the nature of the relief. In cases such as this, students can be offered the choice of another assessment or the option of writing a final examination which may be worth more than 75% of the course grade.

SECTION D: MCMASTER UNIVERSITY GRADING SCALE

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Equivalent Grade Point</u>	<u>Equivalent Percentages</u>
<u>A+</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>90-100</u>
<u>A</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>85-89</u>
<u>A-</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>80-84</u>
<u>B+</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>77-79</u>
<u>B</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>73-76</u>
<u>B-</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>70-72</u>
<u>C+</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>67-69</u>
<u>C</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>63-66</u>
<u>C-</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>60-62</u>
<u>D+</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>57-59</u>
<u>D</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>53-56</u>
<u>D-</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>50-52</u>
<u>F</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0-49</u>

~~15.~~**SECTION D: EARLY FEEDBACK**

~~16.~~ 15. All students must receive feedback regarding their progress prior to the final date by which a student may cancel the course without failure by default.

~~17.~~ 16. For Level I and Level II courses, this feedback must equal a minimum of 20% of the final grade.

~~18.~~ 17. For Level III courses and above, this feedback must equal a minimum of 10% of the final grade.

~~19.~~ 18. For courses where it is difficult to achieve a numeric grade due to the design of the course (e.g., supervised study, thesis, capstone, inquiry, independent research/study, experiential courses, etc.), clear and early feedback must be provided.

~~20.~~ 19. When academic obligations are completed by the due dates in the course outline, early feedback will be received by the final date by which a student can cancel a course without failure by default. Students who use the MSAF process and other petitionable accommodations may not receive feedback by the early feedback deadline.

SECTION E: RETURNING MARKED WORK AND THE POSTING OF GRADES

~~21~~20. It is always preferable to return marked work or grades directly to students either electronically or physically. However, if there is a need to return marked work to students in an indirect manner or to post grades, the work must be returned and the grades posted in a manner designed to protect the anonymity of the students.

~~22~~21. All posting of final grades will note that the grades are unofficial until released by the Office of the Registrar.

SECTION F: RETENTION OF EXAMINATION PAPERS ~~AND~~ & OTHER GRADED MATERIAL

22. Department Chairs (or Director of a School or Program) are responsible for ensuring that final examinations and all other graded material not meant to be returned to students, and the instructor's record of how the final grades in a course were determined, are:

a) ~~retained~~ for at least one year after last use; and

~~23~~b) _____ remain accessible to the Department Chair for that period.

~~24~~23. This ~~policy~~ applies to all instructors. Sessional lecturers and those retiring or otherwise leaving the service of the University must notify their immediate supervisor of the on-campus storage location of the material.

SECTION G: AUTHENTICITY / PLAGIARISM DETECTION

~~25.~~ 24. McMaster University approves the use of software to check authenticity of academic work for the following reasons:

- a) prevention – if students know their academic work is being checked for plagiarism, they will use proper citation methods;
- b) protection of honest students and their work; and
- c) detection – with the type of technology in common use today, it is necessary to use a detection tool which checks academic work against the internet, scholarly publications and previously submitted assignments to McMaster and other institutions.

~~26.~~ 25. Guidelines for the use of Turnitin.com:

- a) papers/assignments submitted via Avenue to Learn (A2L) or Turnitin.com may be subject to a plagiarism and similarity check using Turnitin.com;
- b) the instructor should indicate that Turnitin.com will be used in the course outline and/or on the assignment details;
- c) the use of Turnitin.com cannot be mandatory. If a student refuses to submit their work to A2L or Turnitin.com for plagiarism detection, they cannot be compelled to do so and should not be penalized. Instructors are advised to accept an electronic and/or hard copy of the assignment and grade it as per normal methods. The assignment can be subjected to a Google search or some other kind of detection method if the instructor wishes.

~~27.~~ Some students object to the use of Turnitin.com because of ownership issues. All work submitted to Turnitin.com becomes part of their database and is used to check authenticity of other student's assignments. Some students object to their work being put in the database and others object to their work being used by Turnitin.com.

26.

SECTION H: ACCOMMODATIONS AND ~~PETITIONS~~ MISSED WORK

27. Instructors are expected and required to support all McMaster University Policies, including the Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities policy and/or the Policy on Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances.

~~28.~~ ~~As per the Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities policy, instructors cannot ask or require medical notes from students.~~ A student may be allowed modifications to academic obligations, including deadlines, in compliance with the Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities policy and/or the Policy on Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances.
~~under the following circumstances:~~

~~29.~~ 29. Instructors are encouraged, where possible, to design Academic Obligations (assessments) in a manner that anticipates the need for modifications for some students and that protects the academic

integrity of the course. For example, preparing and scheduling a make-up mid-term test, anticipating that deadlines may need to be extended, preparing a deferred exam, etc.

~~29.~~ 30. Instructors are encouraged to adopt Universal Design principles and practices to ensure the course is accessible and that assessments are designed with flexibility where possible. The [MacPherson Institute](#) located in [Mills Library](#) is available to assist instructors.

~~30.~~ If a student brings an informal request directly to the instructor, the instructor is encouraged to re-direct the student to the appropriate office. Usually the correct office is the Faculty/Program Office, except in the case of disability related or other human rights- related requests, in which case students should be directed to [Student Accessibility Services](#). Any request to instructors for additional modification beyond what has been formally granted, should be directed back to the appropriate office.

31.

Academic Accommodations of Students with Disabilities

~~31.~~ 32. As per the *Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities* policy students may seek accommodations related to a permanent or temporary disability.

~~32.~~ 33. Instructors who are ~~directly~~ approached by students seeking a disability related accommodation, are expected to direct students to contact Student Accessibility Services or the appropriate Faculty Office.

~~33.~~ 34. Any request to Instructors for additional modification of accommodations beyond what has been formally granted, should be directed back to the appropriate office.

~~34.~~ 35. Instructors are expected to comply with the *Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities* policy and should be aware that students are not required to reveal the cause of their disability, diagnosis, symptoms, or treatment, in order for their approved accommodations to be implemented.

36. Accommodations may or may not affect the academic obligations outlined in the course outline. For example, an accommodation may be that the student receive the course material in an alternate format or bring a service animal to class.

Missed Term Work or Examinations

~~Accommodation decisions are normally made through a collaborative process involving the student, Student Accessibility Services (SAS) (if disability related), the instructor, and possibly the Faculty Office and/or the Equity and Inclusion Office (EIO).¹~~

~~Accommodation on the basis of disability, religion, family status, or other human rights-related grounds.~~

~~a)~~

~~Relief from the consequences of missed term work or examinations based on compelling personal, family or medical circumstances.~~

¹ ~~Accommodations may or may not affect the academic obligations outlined in the course outline. For example, an accommodation may be that the student receive the course material in an alternate format or bring a service animal to class.~~

~~37.~~ A student may self-declare an illness or other personal situation granting themselves relief from academic work under certain conditions using the [McMaster Student Absence Form \(MSAF\)](#) process.

~~b)~~

~~35.~~ For all other compelling circumstances, the student is required to request relief from their Faculty Office. If the petition is granted, the ~~faculty~~ Faculty office ~~Office~~ will notify the instructor of the time period for which the student has been granted an approved absence.

~~38.~~

~~36.~~

~~37.~~~~39.~~ It is at the discretion of the instructor to determine the nature of the relief, bearing in mind re-weighting one component of the grade to 75% of the final grade or more is discouraged without approval from the Department Chair or Associate Dean's Office. ~~=====~~

~~38.~~

SECTION I: CONFLICT OF INTEREST GUIDELINES

~~39.~~~~40.~~ Faculty members and University officers normally shall not take part in any proceedings at any level which affect the academic standing of an immediate family member (spouse, common-law partner, parent, in-law, sibling, child or step-child). Such proceedings include admission, scholarships, financial assistance and reviewing.

~~40.~~~~41.~~ There shall be no restriction against a student registering in a course taught by an immediate family member. In all such cases, however, the instructor must inform ~~his/her~~ their Department Chair who shall ensure that arrangements are made for an appropriate assessment of the student's performance involving a qualified person or persons other than the instructor.

SECTION J: PROTECTION OF PRIVACY

~~42.~~ The *Privacy Governance and Accountability Framework* applies to all McMaster University faculty, staff and students when handling personal information or personal health information on behalf of the institution. The policy sets out the accountabilities for ensuring that all individuals involved in the planning, management and day-to-day operations of McMaster University are in compliance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA)*, the *McMaster University Statement on the Collection of Personal Information and the Protection of Privacy*, and the privacy policies, procedures and practices set out by the University.

~~41.~~~~43.~~ Instructors should take care to protect student names, student numbers, grades and all other personal information at all times. For example, the submission and return of assignments and the posting of grades must be done in a manner that ensures confidentiality.

SECTION ~~J~~K: RELATED POLICIES

This Policy is to be read in conjunction with the following policies, guidelines, and statements. The University reserves the right to amend or add to the University's policies and statements from time to time (this is not a comprehensive list). ~~The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) applies to universities. Instructors should take care to protect student names, student numbers, grades and all other personal information at all times. For example, the submission and return of assignments and the posting of grades must be done in a manner that ensures confidentiality—see <http://www.mcmaster.ca/univsec/fippra/fippra.cfm>~~

- [Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances, Policy on](#)
- [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#)
- [Conflict of Interest Guidelines – Undergraduate Studies and Graduate Studies](#)
- [McMaster University Statement on Collection of Personal Information and Protection of Privacy](#)
- [Privacy Governance and Accountability Framework](#)
- [Rights and Responsibilities of Undergraduate Students During Work Stoppages That Substantially Disrupt Academic Activities](#)
- [RMM 801 Field Trips, Student Placements and Research Activity Planning and Approval Program](#)
- [RMM 801 Field Trip, Student Placement, Research Activity Program Guidelines](#)
- [Statement on Building an Inclusive Community with a Shared Purpose](#)
- [Statement and Guidelines on Inclusive Communications](#)
- ~~[Storm Emergency Policy](#)~~
- ~~[Fair Dealing Policy](#)~~
- [Guidelines for Digital Learning Resources](#)
- ~~[Undergraduate Examinations Policy](#)~~
- [_____](#)

APPENDIX I: COMPONENTS OF A COURSE OUTLINE

~~Undergraduate Course Management Policies – APPENDIX II~~

ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

- contact information
- office hours or how/when available
- session and term of the class

If applicable include:

- TA and/or Course Coordinator contact information
- website address or alternative methods of communication

COURSE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- list of course and learning objectives (by the end of the course, what should the students know, be able to do, value, demonstrate, etc.)

MATERIALS & FEES

- list of all required materials e.g. textbooks, materials (calculators -use McMaster standard calculator), art supplies, etc.).
- any additional expenses which may be required (e.g., digital learning resources, trips)

COURSE OVERVIEW AND ASSESSMENT

- a clear breakdown of the course requirements or expectations including the weight given to each and due date (if possible)
- how work is to be submitted
- policy on missed work, extensions, and late penalties

If applicable include:

- **final exam** (specify if a final is included, and whether it tests cumulative knowledge)
- weekly breakdown of class topics and readings
- attendance requirements
- class participation expectations
- group work expectations and how group work will be evaluated
- grade adjustment techniques
- where possible, include the criteria to be used in evaluating a student's work

APPROVED ADVISORY STATEMENTS

- Instructors must ~~include the~~ attach the *Course Outline – Approved Advisory Statements* (pages 10 & 11 below)

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS – ~~see Appendix II~~ if applicable include

- reference to Research Ethics
- any other policy relevant to the course

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~~Undergraduate Course Management Policies—APPENDIX II~~



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COURSE OUTLINE – APPROVED ADVISORY STATEMENTS

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

~~ACADEMIC INTEGRITY LANGUAGE FOR COURSE OUTLINES~~

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. ~~It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.~~ For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- ~~P~~lagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- ~~I~~mproper collaboration in group work.
- ~~C~~opying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.
-

~~AUTHENTICITY / PLAGIARISM DETECTION LANGUAGE FOR COURSE OUTLINES~~

~~In this course we will be~~ Some courses may ~~using~~ a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. ~~For courses using such software, s~~ Students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via Avenue to Learn (A2L) plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish to submit their work through A2L and/or Turnitin.com must still submit an electronic and/or hardcopy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com or A2L. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

COURSES WITH AN ON-LINE ELEMENT

~~Some courses may~~ ~~In this course we will be~~ using on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.)~~.~~ Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of ~~this a course using these elements~~, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in ~~this a course~~ that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

~~X – e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.~~

~~Undergraduate Course Management Policies—APPENDIX II~~

ONLINE PROCTORING

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lockdown their browser during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the exam begins.

CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the *Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities* (the "Code"). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online.**

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students' access to these platforms.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES ~~LANGUAGE~~

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) ~~to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca e-mail~~ to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University's [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

REQUESTS FOR RELIEF FOR MISSED ACADEMIC TERM WORK

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF): In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar "Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work".

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS, INDIGENOUS OR SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students ~~requiring a RISO accommodation~~ should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

COPYRIGHT AND RECORDING

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary,

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~~Undergraduate Course Management Policies—APPENDIX II~~

dramatic, musical and artistic work, including lectures by University instructors

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

Complete Policy Title

Undergraduate Course Management Policies

Policy Number (if applicable):

Approved by

Senate

Date of Most Recent Approval

DRAFT 03

Date of Original Approval(s)

April 9, 2014

Supersedes/Amends Policy dated

December 13, 2017 effective September 1, 2018

June 4, 2014

- Senate Resolutions on Course Outlines – June 14, 1995
- Guidelines for Student Evaluation – March 10, 2004
- Examination Ban – March 1995
- Academic Integrity Statement for Course Outlines – April 13, 2005
- Turnitin.com Guidelines – April 13, 2005
- Retention of Examination Papers and Other Graded Materials – May 13, 2009

Responsible Executive

Vice-Provost (Faculty)

Policy Specific Enquiries

[Vice-Provost \(Faculty\)](#)

General Policy Enquiries

[Policy \(University Secretariat\)](#)

DISCLAIMER:

If there is a Discrepancy between this electronic policy and the written copy held by the policy owner, the written copy prevails.

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PURPOSE

1. This Policy summarizes instructor responsibilities in regard to undergraduate courses. The University expects instructors to clearly communicate their course expectations so students are able to plan ahead and manage their time accordingly. Additionally, undergraduate students should normally be assessed more than once and receive feedback early enough to make decisions.

SECTION A: COURSE OUTLINES

2. A course outline sets the expectations for students and what they can expect in terms of the course experience they will receive, the format in which the course will be delivered and the knowledge and skills that can be gained. The outline introduces the course and the instructor and sets out the expectations of the instructor so that students are aware of how they will learn, what level of participation will be expected and how they will be assessed.
3. Instructors are responsible for ensuring course outlines are compliant with all policies. As such, Instructors **must** attach the two-page appendix **Course Outline – Approved Advisory Statements**, located at the end of this Policy.
4. Since Calendar descriptions of courses are necessarily brief, instructors are required to provide students with a more detailed course outline describing the administrative and academic details of the course.
5. Course outlines are to be made available to students at the beginning of the course and **must be kept on file for 10 years in the department administering the course**. Instructors are encouraged to make course outlines available as soon as possible, but at the very least two weeks before the start of classes.
6. Students will expect the course to unfold as described in the course outline and will plan their time and resources accordingly. As questions or concerns during the course will be referred back to the course outline, instructors are encouraged to anticipate issues that might arise and specify how those issues will be addressed (e.g., late submission of assignments, missed tests).
7. If it becomes necessary to make changes to some part of the course during the term, reasonable notice and communication between the instructor and students is critical. Students should be provided with an explanation and an opportunity to comment. Instructors are encouraged to use multiple communication methods with students (e.g. class announcements, e-mail message sent to the class through Mosaic, message posted on the course website or A2L, etc.).
8. The arrangement proposed in the course outline should not be interpreted in a way that discourages flexibility in course presentation and organization exclusive of grade weighting. If an instructor wishes to reserve decisions to be made as the course progresses, that intention should be stated in the course outline, for example:
"At certain points in the course it may make good sense to modify the schedule. The instructor may modify elements of the course and will notify students accordingly (in class, on the course website)".
9. Any changes related to evaluation must be made in consultation with the Department Chair.

10. The University reserves the right to change dates and/or deadlines etc. for any or all courses in the case of an extreme circumstance, such as an emergency situation or labour disruption.
11. Instructors are asked to make announcements encouraging students to discuss the implementation of their accommodations with you as soon as possible.

SECTION B: DUE DATE RESTRICTIONS

12. The following language is based on the *Undergraduate Calendar General Academic Regulations - Due Date Restrictions*, and will be revised as required to remain consistent with the calendar:
 - a) academic assessments, due dates and evaluations are described in course outlines except where other University policies apply, e.g., Student Accessibility Services (SAS) accommodations, deferred exams, etc. Restrictions are placed on academic obligations to enable students to plan their work schedules;
 - b) due dates for all term work must be **on or before** the final day of classes for courses with a final examination;
 - c) for courses with no final examination, academic assessments can be due on or before the final date of examinations;
 - d) academic obligations cannot be due during the December holiday break or the fall and winter mid-term recesses, with the exception of deferred exams scheduled by the Office of the Registrar.
 - e) the **Test and Examination Ban** period, is the last 5 days of classes plus the day(s) between the end of classes and the beginning of examinations, and:
 - (i) tests, quizzes, exams and take-home exams worth more than 10% cannot be assigned or due during this period; or
 - (ii) assignments worth more than 10% that are assigned at the beginning of the course and noted on the course outline can be due during this time period, provided students are given sufficient additional detail to enable them to work on the assignment in advance of the due date.

SECTION C: MAXIMUM VALUE OF ACADEMIC ASSESSMENTS

13. Student learning in undergraduate courses should be assessed on more than one occasion. To that end, no single academic obligation (e.g., essay, test, examination, etc.) should have a value of more than 75% of the final grade without approval from the Department Chair or Associate Dean's Office. Clinical, placement, thesis and capstone courses are exempt.
14. For students requiring relief from an academic obligation, it is at the discretion of the instructor to determine the nature of the relief. In cases such as this, students can be offered the choice of another assessment or the option of writing a final examination which may be worth more than 75% of the course grade.

SECTION D: MCMASTER UNIVERSITY GRADING SCALE

Grade	Equivalent Grade Point	Equivalent Percentages
A+	12	90-100
A	11	85-89
A-	10	80-84
B+	9	77-79
B	8	73-76
B-	7	70-72
C+	6	67-69
C	5	63-66
C-	4	60-62
D+	3	57-59
D	2	53-56
D-	1	50-52
F	0	0-49

SECTION D: EARLY FEEDBACK

15. All students must receive feedback regarding their progress prior to the final date by which a student may cancel the course without failure by default.
16. For Level I and Level II courses, this feedback must equal a minimum of 20% of the final grade.
17. For Level III courses and above, this feedback must equal a minimum of 10% of the final grade.
18. For courses where it is difficult to achieve a numeric grade due to the design of the course (e.g., supervised study, thesis, capstone, inquiry, independent research/study, experiential courses, etc.), clear and early feedback must be provided.
19. When academic obligations are completed by the due dates in the course outline, early feedback will be received by the final date by which a student can cancel a course without failure by default. Students who use the MSAF process and other petitionable accommodations may not receive feedback by the early feedback deadline.

SECTION E: RETURNING MARKED WORK AND THE POSTING OF GRADES

20. It is always preferable to return marked work or grades directly to students either electronically or physically. However, if there is a need to return marked work to students in an indirect manner or to post grades, the work must be returned and the grades posted in a manner designed to protect the anonymity of the students.
21. All posting of final grades will note that the grades are unofficial until released by the Office of the Registrar.

SECTION F: RETENTION OF EXAMINATION PAPERS & OTHER GRADED MATERIAL

22. Department Chairs (or Director of a School or Program) are responsible for ensuring that final examinations and all other graded material not meant to be returned to students, and the instructor's record of how the final grades in a course were determined, are:
 - a) retained for at least one year after last use; and
 - b) remain accessible to the Department Chair for that period.
23. This applies to all instructors. Sessional lecturers and those retiring or otherwise leaving the service of the University must notify their immediate supervisor of the on-campus storage location of the material.

SECTION G: AUTHENTICITY / PLAGIARISM DETECTION

24. McMaster University approves the use of software to check authenticity of academic work for the following reasons:
 - a) prevention – if students know their academic work is being checked for plagiarism, they will use proper citation methods;
 - b) protection of honest students and their work; and
 - c) detection – with the type of technology in common use today, it is necessary to use a detection tool which checks academic work against the internet, scholarly publications and previously submitted assignments to McMaster and other institutions.
25. Guidelines for the use of Turnitin.com:
 - a) papers/assignments submitted via Avenue to Learn (A2L) or Turnitin.com may be subject to a plagiarism and similarity check using Turnitin.com;
 - b) the instructor should indicate that Turnitin.com will be used in the course outline and/or on the assignment details;
 - c) the use of Turnitin.com cannot be mandatory. If a student refuses to submit their work to A2L or Turnitin.com for plagiarism detection, they cannot be compelled to do so and should not be penalized. Instructors are advised to accept an electronic and/or hard copy of the assignment and grade it as per normal methods. The assignment can be subjected to a Google search or some other kind of detection method if the instructor wishes.

26. Some students object to the use of Turnitin.com because of ownership issues. All work submitted to Turnitin.com becomes part of their database and is used to check authenticity of other student's assignments. Some students object to their work being put in the database and others object to their work being used by Turnitin.com.

SECTION H: ACCOMMODATIONS AND MISSED WORK

27. Instructors are expected and required to support all McMaster University Policies, including the *Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities* policy and/or the [Policy on Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances](#).
28. A student may be allowed modifications to academic obligations, including deadlines, in compliance with the *Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities* policy and/or the *Policy on Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances*.
29. Instructors are encouraged, where possible, to design Academic Obligations (assessments) in a manner that anticipates the need for modifications for some students and that protects the academic integrity of the course. For example, preparing and scheduling a make-up mid-term test, anticipating that deadlines may need to be extended, preparing a deferred exam, etc.
30. Instructors are encouraged to adopt Universal Design principles and practices to ensure the course is accessible and that assessments are designed with flexibility where possible. The [MacPherson Institute](#) located in [Mills Library](#) is available to assist instructors.
31. If a student brings an informal request directly to the instructor, the instructor is encouraged to re-direct the student to the appropriate office. Usually the correct office is the Faculty/Program Office, except in the case of disability related or other human rights- related requests, in which case students should be directed to Student Accessibility Services. Any request to instructors for additional modification beyond what has been formally granted, should be directed back to the appropriate office.

Academic Accommodations of Students with Disabilities

32. As per the [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy students may seek accommodations related to a permanent or temporary disability.
33. Instructors who are directly approached by students seeking a disability related accommodation, are expected to direct students to contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) or the appropriate Faculty Office.
34. Any request to Instructors for additional modification of accommodations beyond what has been formally granted, should be directed back to the appropriate office.
35. Instructors are expected to comply with the *Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities* policy and should be aware that students are not required to reveal the cause of their disability, diagnosis, symptoms, or treatment, in order for their approved accommodations to be implemented.
36. Accommodations may or may not affect the academic obligations outlined in the course outline. For example, an accommodation may be that the student receive the course material in an alternate format or bring a service animal to class.

Missed Term Work or Examinations

37. A student may self-declare an illness or other personal situation granting themselves relief from academic work under certain conditions using the [McMaster Student Absence Form \(MSAF\)](#) process.
38. For all other compelling circumstances, the student is required to request relief from their Faculty Office. If the petition is granted, the Faculty Office will notify the instructor of the time period for which the student has been granted an approved absence.
39. It is at the discretion of the instructor to determine the nature of the relief, bearing in mind re-weighting one component of the grade to 75% of the final grade or more is discouraged without approval from the Department Chair or Associate Dean's Office.

SECTION I: CONFLICT OF INTEREST GUIDELINES

40. Faculty members and University officers normally shall not take part in any proceedings at any level which affect the academic standing of an immediate family member (spouse, common-law partner, parent, in-law, sibling, child or step-child). Such proceedings include admission, scholarships, financial assistance and reviewing.
41. There shall be no restriction against a student registering in a course taught by an immediate family member. In all such cases, however, the instructor must inform their Department Chair who shall ensure that arrangements are made for an appropriate assessment of the student's performance involving a qualified person or persons other than the instructor.

SECTION J: PROTECTION OF PRIVACY

42. The [Privacy Governance and Accountability Framework](#) applies to all McMaster University faculty, staff and students when handling personal information or personal health information on behalf of the institution. The policy sets out the accountabilities for ensuring that all individuals involved in the planning, management and day-to-day operations of McMaster University are in compliance with the [Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act \(FIPPA\)](#), the [McMaster University Statement on the Collection of Personal Information and the Protection of Privacy](#), and the privacy policies, procedures and practices set out by the University.
43. Instructors should take care to protect student names, student numbers, grades and all other personal information at all times. For example, the submission and return of assignments and the posting of grades must be done in a manner that ensures confidentiality.

SECTION K: RELATED POLICIES

This Policy is to be read in conjunction with the following policies, guidelines, and statements. The University reserves the right to amend or add to the University's policies and statements from time to time (this is not a comprehensive list):

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- [Undergraduate Examinations Policy](#)

APPENDIX I: COMPONENTS OF A COURSE OUTLINE

ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contact information • office hours or how/when available • session and term of the class <p><u>If applicable include:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TA and/or Course Coordinator contact information • website address or alternative methods of communication
COURSE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • list of course and learning objectives (by the end of the course, what should the students know, be able to do, value, demonstrate, etc.)
MATERIALS & FEES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • list of all required materials e.g. textbooks, materials (calculators -use McMaster standard calculator), art supplies, etc.). • any additional expenses which may be required (e.g., digital learning resources, trips)
COURSE OVERVIEW AND ASSESSMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a clear breakdown of the course requirements or expectations including the weight given to each and due date (if possible) • how work is to be submitted • policy on missed work, extensions, and late penalties <p><u>If applicable include:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • final exam (specify if a final is included, and whether it tests cumulative knowledge) • weekly breakdown of class topics and readings • attendance requirements • class participation expectations • group work expectations and how group work will be evaluated • grade adjustment techniques • where possible, include the criteria to be used in evaluating a student's work
APPROVED ADVISORY STATEMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructors must attach the <i>Course Outline – Approved Advisory Statements</i> (pages 10 & 11 below)
ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS – if applicable include
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reference to Research Ethics • any other policy relevant to the course

COURSE OUTLINE – APPROVED ADVISORY STATEMENTS

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

AUTHENTICITY / PLAGIARISM DETECTION

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via Avenue to Learn (A2L) plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish to submit their work through A2L and/or Turnitin.com must still submit an electronic and/or hardcopy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com or A2L. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

COURSES WITH AN ON-LINE ELEMENT

Some courses may use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

ONLINE PROCTORING

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lockdown their browser during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the exam begins.

CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the "Code"). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online**.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students' access to these platforms.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University's [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

REQUESTS FOR RELIEF FOR MISSED ACADEMIC TERM WORK

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF): In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar "Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work".

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS, INDIGENOUS OR SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

COPYRIGHT AND RECORDING

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

Complete Policy Title

Undergraduate Examinations Policy

Policy Number (if applicable):

Approved by

Senate

Date of Most Recent Approval

DRAFT 02

Date of Original Approval(s)

April 9, 2014

Supersedes/Amends Policy dated

April 9, 2014 (effective September 1, 2014)

- Instructors at Examinations – last revised date: March 10, 1971
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PREAMBLE

1. This document brings together policies approved by the Senate of McMaster University related to undergraduate examinations. These policies are intended to communicate clearly the University's expectations with regard to the responsibilities of both students and instructors. Each section addresses a separate issue and the appendices provide additional useful information.

ASSESSMENT BAN

2. There is a ~~university~~ University-wide ban on examinations and tests in the final week of classes – see ~~Section C of the Undergraduate Course Management Policies~~ for full details (Section B: Due Date Restrictions).

SECTION A: INSTRUCTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

3. Examination papers must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar according to the formatting guidelines provided by the Office of the Registrar.
4. Any authorized aids must be indicated on the examination paper and communicated in writing to students in advance of the examination date. If an instructor authorizes the use of a calculator it must be communicated to the students in advance of the examination. The instructor may specify the use of the McMaster Standard Calculator(s). Such calculator(s) are designated by the appropriate Associate Vice-President on behalf of Undergraduate Council. If an instructor permits the use of a different calculator, it is the instructor's responsibility to ensure the calculator does not allow an unfair advantage or disadvantage.
- ~~4~~5. If students will be taking tests and/or examinations online, instructors must specify the required electronic equipment and software at the beginning of the course. Such equipment may include a computer video camera, computer, and any other piece of equipment that can be reasonably expected of students. Instructors will use course outlines to inform students that the course may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and lockdown their browser during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the exam begins.
- ~~5~~6. It is the responsibility of the instructor to devise and use checking procedures in the grading of all examinations to ensure that every portion of the examination is marked and the totalling of the marks awarded is correct.
- ~~6~~7. For a course with an enrolment of 500 or more students and a final examination with a ~~multiple~~ multiple-choice component, the instructor must provide four different versions of the examination to the Office of the Registrar.
- ~~7~~8. The instructor(s) (or an appropriate designate) is expected to be present at the regularly scheduled examination and is responsible for ensuring the accuracy of the examination paper. If the instructor (or appropriate designate) must leave the examination, the instructor (or appropriate designate) must

provide the President with contact information where ~~they~~ ~~he/she~~ can be reached for the remainder of the examination.

SECTION B: STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

~~8-9.~~ Students must be available for the entire examination period as listed in the *Sessional Dates* section of the Undergraduate Calendar. Examinations will not be re-scheduled for purposes of travel.

~~9-10.~~ Students who encounter ~~any of the following~~ scheduling difficulties, and who wish to have an examination re-scheduled, must report the issue to the Office of the Registrar immediately. A minimum of **10 working days prior** to the first day of the examination period is required to facilitate the re-scheduling of examinations. Scheduling difficulties include:

- ~~More~~ more than one examination scheduled at the same time.
- ~~Three~~ three examinations in one calendar day (midnight to midnight).
- ~~Three~~ three consecutive examinations over two days.
- December only: two consecutive examinations if the first examination is three hours in duration.

11. Students who wish to request the re-scheduling of examinations on the basis of religious obligations must contact the Office of the Registrar with appropriate supporting documentation as soon as possible and **no later than 10 working days prior** to the first day of the examination period.

12. If a course has an exam that is conducted online, it is a student's responsibility to ensure that they have the necessary equipment and software required to successfully undertake the examination. Questions or considerations related to online examinations must be referred to an instructor as soon as possible and no later than 10 days prior to an online examination/test.

13. Students who miss an examination for compelling medical or personal reasons should refer to the Deferred Examination Section.

~~10.~~

Academic Accommodations of Students with Disabilities

14. Students ~~with disabilities~~ who will require additional aids or other accommodations in their examinations must contact Student Accessibility Services and receive a recommendation regarding appropriate accommodation under the Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities from ~~Student Accessibility Services (SAS)~~ by the last date for cancelling courses without failure by default.

15. No additional aids or accommodations are allowed other than those confirmed by Student Accessibility Services ~~SAS~~ and the course instructor.

~~11.~~ A late cancellation or ~~no~~ no-show fee may be applied to any student who fails to provide at least ~~24~~ 24-hour notice of cancellation of final examination accommodation requirements.

~~1.~~

~~12.~~ Students who miss an examination for compelling medical or personal reasons should refer to the Deferred Examination Section.

16.

SECTION C: REGULATIONS

~~12.~~17. The following regulations apply to all examinations conducted by the Office of the Registrar (variations may occur for instructor-conducted and/or online examinations):

- a) the student is responsible for writing the correct examination (instructor and section) at the place and time indicated on ~~his/her~~ their personal examination timetable;
- b) no student will be admitted to the examination room more than 30 minutes after the start of any examination. No extra time will be allowed for a student who arrives late to the examination;
- c) McMaster student photo identification cards (I.D. cards) are required for all examinations. A student who arrives without their I.D. card will be required (before being seated) to obtain a substitute card and pay a \$30.00 fee; no extra time will be allowed for students arriving without their I.D. card;
- d) students should use the washroom before the examination;
- e) students should bring into the examination room only what is necessary to write the examination. All items not required to write the examination must be left at the side of the room at the student's risk. Only small personal belongings (e.g., purses) may be left beneath the chairs, not on the desks. The University assumes no responsibility for lost articles;
- f) no aids (including but not limited to; books, papers, instruments, communication or electronic devices, cell phones, etc.) may be used in examinations unless specified by the instructor. Invigilators will check for compliance;
- g) no food is permitted. Drinks must be in a spill proof container;
- h) no form of communication between students is permitted;
- i) the University makes every effort to ensure that examination papers are properly prepared however it is the responsibility of the student check the paper and to bring any discrepancies found in their examination to the attention of the invigilator;
- j) a student officially registered in any class shall have the right to take the final examination in that class regardless of ~~his/her~~ their attendance record at the class lectures;
- k) students who are unwell during the examination and are unable to complete an examination must report to the Room President. A Petition for Special Consideration form with supporting documentation may be submitted to the Office of the Associate Dean (Studies) of the student's Faculty normally within five working days of the missed examination; and
- l) students may not remove examination books or supplies from the examination room.

~~14.~~18. Students who fail to comply will be required to surrender their examination paper and leave the room immediately.

SECTION D: MIDTERMS AND FINAL EXAMINATIONS

~~15.~~19. All September to April (~~Multi-term~~~~Term 2~~) Level I courses, with the exception of those that do not hold final examinations, must have a formal mid-year examination. Such examinations will be written in December as scheduled by the Office of the Registrar.

~~16.~~20. The Office of the Registrar will attempt to schedule and assign rooms for upper-level mid-year examinations if requested, on the understanding that these requests have a lower priority than Level I mid-year examinations and final examinations in first term courses.

SECTION E: EXAMINATIONS IN PROGRESS

~~17.~~21. From time to time unforeseen problems arise during examinations such as:

- a fire alarm leading to the evacuation of the examination location,
- a power failure,
- a number of examination papers being defective, and
- an instructor failing to arrive to administer an instructor-administered examination.

~~18.~~22. When such an irregularity occurs, the Office of the Registrar decides whether or not to terminate the examination(s) and collect the papers. Such decisions are reported to the appropriate Associate Dean and instructor.

~~19.~~23. If the University is unexpectedly closed during an examination period (e.g. inclement weather) the Office of the Registrar will re-schedule the affected examinations and communicate the new schedule to students and instructors.

24. If academic dishonesty is suspected during an examination the Office of the Registrar has protocols in place for invigilators to document and/or stop the behaviour. The Office of Academic Integrity will be informed of all suspected cases of academic dishonesty in examinations and will proceed according to the [*Academic Integrity Policy*](#).

~~20.~~25. If students taking online examinations experience technical difficulties, it is documented within the University's online proctoring system. The individual, if they realize that they are experiencing difficulties can access an AI chat function within the system to document any difficulties. The report is documented as part of their exam data.

SECTION F: STUDENT ACCESS TO WRITTEN FINAL EXAMINATIONS

~~21.~~26. The procedure for student access to written final examinations has the following two objectives:

- a) to provide an opportunity for the student to review the graded examination; and
- b) to enable the instructor to maintain the confidentiality of questions drawn from a limited pool of questions.

~~22.~~27. A student's written request to review the graded examination must be submitted to the Department Chair¹ by June 30 following the Fall/Winter Session or by October 15 following the Spring/Summer Session. The relevant Session is the one during which the last graded material for the course was due. The Chair, in consultation with the instructor, will decide on one of the following courses of action:

- a) the instructor may review the student's graded examination with the student. Although it is not mandatory for instructors to do this, they are encouraged to do so when it is feasible.
- b) the student may read the graded examination under supervised conditions but must not make notes. Where appropriate, model answers and/or the marking scheme also may be examined by the student, subject to the approval of the instructor.
- c) a photocopy of the student's graded examination, and, where appropriate, model answers and/or the marking scheme may be provided to the student at cost², subject to the approval of the instructor.

~~23.~~28. The responsibility for implementing the above procedures rests with the Chair of the instructor's department. A student's final examination script will be made available to the student as soon as possible and not later than one month after the written request by the student.

SECTION G: NON-WRITTEN EXAMINATIONS

~~24.~~29. Alternate means of final assessment may be appropriate or necessary, such as oral examinations, assessment of practical or performance skills and clinical performance (OSCE). In these final assessments, students must be made aware of the objectives and criteria for evaluation. Suitable notes, records, marking sheets, recordings, etc. must be kept intact for at least one year after last use, and remain accessible to the Department Chair for that period.

Oral Examinations

~~25.~~30. Final oral examinations shall be either recorded or witnessed by a second faculty member who is competent in the subject being examined. Where the examination involves demonstration that cannot adequately be recorded, suitable notes shall be taken by the examiner and the second faculty member so that a written record will be available.

~~26.~~31. It is recognized this recommendation involves the assumption that final oral examinations can be clearly defined. Undergraduate Council suggest the above procedure be followed for examinations that occur at the end of a course and are worth a significant proportion of the students' final grade. If it is unclear whether a particular examination qualifies as "final", the responsibility for deciding should rest with the Department Chair and the Dean of the Faculty.

Practical Skills or Performance Exams

~~27.~~32. Final examinations can be structured to measure practical skills or performance skills. Students should be informed in advance about the format of the examination and the objectives for evaluation. Evaluation criteria are determined on the basis of course objectives. Practical skills or performance examinations may be recorded or have multiple observers evaluating the students.

¹ In this document any reference to a Department Chair shall also include the Director of a School or Program.

² Current cost is \$10.00 per examination.

Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCE)

- ~~28.~~33. An OSCE is an objective evaluation measure used to assess components of clinical competence. Students should be made aware of the objectives for the evaluation in the OSCE, which is structured to sample student performance in a variety of areas relevant to these objectives. Students rotate through a series of timed stations normally each lasting 5-10 minutes. At each station students are asked to perform a specific task (such as taking a patient history, performing a treatment technique, etc.). There are two types of stations. Examiner stations involve the use of a rater who scores a student's performance and may entail interaction with a standardized patient or mannequin. Marker stations, where a student is asked to answer written questions, record findings or interpret patient data, do not require an observer but entail subsequent marking. Evaluation criteria are determined in advance on the basis of course objectives. A rating form or standardised checklist clearly specifies the evaluation criteria and the scoring system to be used by the examiners.
- ~~29.~~34. Final OSCE examinations consisting of 8 or more stations can be used toward the final grade in a course. As 8 or more raters (1 per station) are involved in assessing the student's performance, a review of the documentation provided by these raters on the student's performance by an independent faculty member competent in the subject being examined would constitute a fair and adequate review of the student's performance in the case of a student appeal of the mark.
- ~~30.~~35. If the final OSCE examination consists of 7 or fewer stations, one of the following must be included when conducting the OSCE examination:
- a) a second rater at all examination stations; or
 - b) videotaping or audiotaping, depending on the nature of the task being examined of each student at all examiner stations; or
 - c) using standardised patients at all examiner stations who are trained to complete a checklist regarding each student's performance.
- ~~31.~~36. The standardised marking sheets for each student should be kept intact for a period of 1 year after last use following the end of the academic session in which the evaluation takes place.

SECTION H: DEFERRED EXAMINATIONS

(see Sessional Dates section of the Undergraduate Calendar)

- ~~32.~~37. The following statement is excerpted in part from McMaster University's Undergraduate Calendar - General Academic Regulations (<https://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/index.php>).
- ~~33.~~38. The Petition for Special Consideration: Request for Deferred Examination (Form B) is used when a student misses an examination because of compelling medical or personal reasons.
39. Requests related to temporary or permanent disabilities, or for retroactive accommodations related to a disability are excluded from petitions and must be processed under the *Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities* policy.
- ~~34.~~40. Once a student has completed an examination, no special consideration will be granted.

- ~~35~~41. A student who misses an examination because of compelling medical or personal reasons may submit a Petition for Special Consideration: Request for Deferred Examination (Form B) to the Faculty/Program Office, normally within five working days of the missed examination.
- ~~36~~42. If the reason is medical, the approved McMaster University Medical Form must be used. The student must be seen by a doctor at the earliest possible date, normally on or before the date of the missed exam and the doctor must verify the duration of the illness. Relief will not be available for minor illnesses. If the reason is non-medical, appropriate documentation with verifiable origin covering the relevant dates must be submitted, normally within five working days.
- ~~37~~43. In deciding whether or not to grant a petition, the adequacy of the supporting documentation, including the timing in relation to the due date of the missed work and the degree of the student's incapacitation, will be taken into account.
- ~~38~~44. It is the student's responsibility to check Mosaic Student Center > Deferred Exam Approvals or with the Faculty/Program Office for a decision on the request for a deferred examination. If the deferred examination is granted, the student will be informed officially by means of the notation DEF which will appear against the relevant course on the student's academic record and via Mosaic > Student Center > View My Grades.
- ~~39~~45. Deferred examinations are written during the next official University deferred examination period. Default of the deferred examination will result in a fail for that examination.
- ~~40~~46. Students who have been granted more than one deferred examination may be required by their Faculty/Program Office to reduce their course load during the term in which the deferred examinations are being written. The decision on a reduced load will be made and communicated with the decision on the request for deferred examinations.
- ~~41~~47. At the discretion of the Faculty/Program Office, students who have been granted one or more deferred examinations, may not be allowed to enrol in a subsequent term until all deferred examinations have been completed and the Academic Standing calculated. Students will be notified of this decision by their Faculty/Program Office.
- ~~42~~48. Students who will be living more than 160 kilometres from Hamilton during the deferred examination period and wish to write their approved deferred examination at an institution other than McMaster must submit a Request to Write Deferred Examination Off-campus Form at least 15 working days prior to the deferred examination period. Students are responsible for making arrangements for a presider to conduct the deferred examination at an outside institution and for paying any fees such as invigilation and return courier.
49. The authority to grant any petitions lies with the Faculty/Program Office and is discretionary. It is imperative that students make every effort to meet the originally-scheduled course requirements and it is a student's responsibility to write examinations as scheduled.
50. Decisions made on Petitions for Special Consideration are final. In accordance with the *Student Appeal Procedures*, decisions made on Petitions for Special Consideration cannot be appealed to the

Senate Board for Student Appeals. However, should students believe that a decision may be a violation of their human rights, they may wish to contact the Equity and Inclusion Office to identify appropriate avenues of recourse as per the ~~Policy on Discrimination and Harassment Policy~~. Prevention & Response.

51. Requests related to temporary or permanent disabilities, or for retroactive accommodations related to a disability, are excluded from Petitions for Special Consideration and, therefore, must be processed under the *Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities* policy.

~~For a student who has missed an examination because of compelling medical or personal reasons, he/she must fill out the Petition for Special Consideration: Request for Deferred Examination (Form B). The form must be submitted normally within five working days of the missed examination.~~

~~Please note, deferred examinations may affect academic decisions including the eligibility to graduate, admission into a program and progression.~~

- ~~1. Once a student has completed an examination, no subsequent request for special consideration will be granted.~~
- ~~2. If the reason is medical, the approved McMaster University Medical Form must be used. The student must be seen by a doctor at the earliest possible date, normally on or before the date of the missed exam and the doctor must verify the duration of the illness. Relief will not be available for minor illnesses. If the reason is non medical, appropriate documentation with verifiable origin covering the relevant dates must be submitted, normally within five working days.~~
- ~~3. In deciding whether or not to grant a petition, the adequacy of the supporting documentation, including the timing in relation to the due date of the missed work and the degree of the student's incapacitation, will be taken into account.~~
- ~~4. It is the student's responsibility to check with the Faculty office for a decision on the request for a deferred examination. If the deferred examination is granted, the student will be informed officially by means of the notation DEF which will appear against the relevant course on the student's academic record and on the student's grade report (available on MUGSI).~~
- ~~5. Deferred examinations are written during the next official University deferred examination period. Default of the deferred examination will result in a fail for that examination.~~
- ~~6. Students who have been granted more than one deferred examination may be required by their Faculty/Program office to reduce their course load during the term in which the deferred examinations are being written. The decision on a reduced load will be made and communicated with the decision on the request for deferred examinations.~~
- ~~7. At the discretion of the Faculty/Program office, students who have been granted one or more deferred examinations may not be allowed to register in a subsequent session until all deferred examination(s) have been completed and the Result of Session calculated. Students will be notified of this decision by their Faculty/Program office or on their End of Session Grade Report.~~

~~Students wanting to write their approved deferred examination at an institution other than McMaster must submit a Request to Write Deferred Examinations Off-Campus Form at least 15 working days prior to the date of the deferred examination. Any fees incurred are the responsibility of the student. This includes the fee to courier the written examination(s) back to the Office of the Registrar.~~

SECTION J: PROTECTION OF PRIVACY

52. The *Privacy Governance and Accountability Framework* applies to all McMaster University faculty, staff and students when handling personal information or personal health information on behalf of the institution. The policy sets out the accountabilities for ensuring that all individuals involved in the planning, management and day-to-day operations of McMaster University are in compliance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA)*, the *McMaster University Statement on the Collection of Personal Information and the Protection of Privacy*, and the privacy policies, procedures and practices set out by the University.

53. Instructors should take care to protect student names, student numbers, grades and all other personal information at all times. For example, the submission and return of assignments and the posting of grades must be done in a manner that ensures confidentiality.

SECTION K: RELATED POLICIES

This Policy is to be read in conjunction with the following policies, guidelines, and statements. The University reserves the right to amend or add to the University's policies and statements from time to time (this is not a comprehensive list):

- Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances, Policy on
- Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities
- Academic Integrity Policy
- Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities
- Conflict of Interest Guidelines – Undergraduate Studies and Graduate Studies
- McMaster University Statement on Collection of Personal Information and Protection of Privacy
- Privacy Governance and Accountability Framework
- Rights and Responsibilities of Undergraduate Students During Work Stoppages That Substantially Disrupt Academic Activities
- Statement on Building an Inclusive Community with a Shared Purpose
- Statement and Guidelines on Inclusive Communications
- Storm Emergency Policy
- Guidelines for Digital Learning Resources

- [Undergraduate Course Management Policies](#)

Complete Policy Title

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Approved by

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3. Examination papers must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar according to the formatting guidelines provided by the Office of the Registrar.
4. Any authorized aids must be indicated on the examination paper and communicated in writing to students in advance of the examination date. If an instructor authorizes the use of a calculator it must be communicated to the students in advance of the examination. The instructor may specify the use of the McMaster Standard Calculator(s). Such calculator(s) are designated by the appropriate Associate Vice-President on behalf of Undergraduate Council. If an instructor permits the use of a different calculator, it is the instructor's responsibility to ensure the calculator does not allow an unfair advantage or disadvantage.
5. If students will be taking tests and/or examinations online, instructors must specify the required electronic equipment and software at the beginning of the course. Such equipment may include a computer video camera, computer, and any other piece of equipment that can be reasonably expected of students. Instructors will use course outlines to inform students that the course may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and lockdown their browser during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the exam begins.
6. It is the responsibility of the instructor to devise and use checking procedures in the grading of all examinations to ensure that every portion of the examination is marked and the totalling of the marks awarded is correct.
7. For a course with an enrolment of 500 or more students and a final examination with a multiple-choice component, the instructor must provide four different versions of the examination to the Office of the Registrar.
8. The instructor(s) (or an appropriate designate) is expected to be present at the regularly scheduled examination and is responsible for ensuring the accuracy of the examination paper. If the instructor (or appropriate designate) must leave the examination, the instructor (or appropriate designate) must provide the President with contact information where they can be reached for the remainder of the examination.

SECTION B: STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

9. Students must be available for the entire examination period as listed in the *Sessional Dates* section of the [Undergraduate Calendar](#). Examinations will not be re-scheduled for purposes of travel.
10. Students who encounter scheduling difficulties and who wish to have an examination re-scheduled, must report the issue to the Office of the Registrar immediately. A minimum of **10 working days prior** to the first day of the examination period is required to facilitate the re-scheduling of examinations. Scheduling difficulties include:
 - more than one examination scheduled at the same time.
 - three examinations in one calendar day (midnight to midnight).
 - three consecutive examinations over two days.
 - December only: two consecutive examinations if the first examination is three hours in duration.
11. Students who wish to request the re-scheduling of examinations on the basis of religious obligations must contact the Office of the Registrar with appropriate supporting documentation as soon as possible and **no later than 10 working days prior** to the first day of the examination period.
12. If a course has an exam that is conducted online, it is a student's responsibility to ensure that they have the necessary equipment and software required to successfully undertake the examination. Questions or considerations related to online examinations must be referred to an instructor as soon as possible and **no later than 10 days** prior to an online examination/test.
13. Students who miss an examination for compelling medical or personal reasons should refer to the Deferred Examination Section.

Academic Accommodations of Students with Disabilities

- ~~14~~ 14. Students who will require additional aids or other accommodations in their examinations must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) and receive a recommendation regarding appropriate accommodation under the [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) by the last date for cancelling courses without failure by default.
- ~~15~~ 15. No additional aids or accommodations are allowed other than those confirmed by Student Accessibility Services and the course instructor.
- ~~17~~ 16. A late cancellation or no-show fee may be applied to any student who fails to provide at least 24-hour notice of cancellation of final examination accommodation requirements.

SECTION C: REGULATIONS

- ~~18~~ 17. The following regulations apply to all examinations conducted by the Office of the Registrar (variations may occur for instructor-conducted and/or online examinations):
 - a) the student is responsible for writing the correct examination (instructor and section) at the place and time indicated on their personal examination timetable.;

- b) no student will be admitted to the examination room more than 30 minutes after the start of any examination. No extra time will be allowed for a student who arrives late to the examination;
- c) McMaster student photo identification cards (I.D. cards) are required for all examinations. A student who arrives without their I.D. card will be required (before being seated) to obtain a substitute card and pay a \$30.00 fee; no extra time will be allowed for students arriving without their I.D. card;
- d) students should use the washroom before the examination;
- e) students should bring into the examination room only what is necessary to write the examination. All items not required to write the examination must be left at the side of the room at the student's risk. Only small personal belongings (e.g., purses) may be left beneath the chairs, not on the desks. The University assumes no responsibility for lost articles;
- f) no aids (including but not limited to; books, papers, instruments, communication or electronic devices, cell phones, etc.) may be used in examinations unless specified by the instructor. Invigilators will check for compliance;
- g) no food is permitted. Drinks must be in a spill proof container;
- h) no form of communication between students is permitted;
- i) the University makes every effort to ensure that examination papers are properly prepared however it is the responsibility of the student check the paper and to bring any discrepancies found in their examination to the attention of the invigilator;
- j) a student officially registered in any class shall have the right to take the final examination in that class regardless of their attendance record at the class lectures;
- k) students who are unwell during the examination and are unable to complete an examination must report to the Room President. A Petition for Special Consideration form with supporting documentation may be submitted to the Office of the Associate Dean (Studies) of the student's Faculty normally within five working days of the missed examination; and
- l) students may not remove examination books or supplies from the examination room.

~~19~~18. Students who fail to comply will be required to surrender their examination paper and leave the room immediately.

SECTION D: MIDTERMS AND FINAL EXAMINATIONS

~~20~~19. All September to April (Multi-term) Level I courses, with the exception of those that do not hold final examinations, must have a formal mid-year examination. Such examinations will be written in December as scheduled by the Office of the Registrar.

~~21~~20. The Office of the Registrar will attempt to schedule and assign rooms for upper-level mid-year examinations if requested, on the understanding that these requests have a lower priority than Level I mid-year examinations and final examinations in first term courses.

SECTION E: EXAMINATIONS IN PROGRESS

~~22~~21. From time to time unforeseen problems arise during examinations such as:

- a fire alarm leading to the evacuation of the examination location,
- a power failure,
- a number of examination papers being defective, and
- an instructor failing to arrive to administer an instructor-administered examination.

~~23~~22. When such an irregularity occurs, the Office of the Registrar decides whether or not to terminate the examination(s) and collect the papers. Such decisions are reported to the appropriate Associate Dean and instructor.

~~24~~23. If the University is unexpectedly closed during an examination period (e.g. inclement weather) the Office of the Registrar will re-schedule the affected examinations and communicate the new schedule to students and instructors.

~~25~~24. If academic dishonesty is suspected during an examination the Office of the Registrar has protocols in place for invigilators to document and/or stop the behaviour. The Office of Academic Integrity will be informed of all suspected cases of academic dishonesty in examinations and will proceed according to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

~~26~~25. If students taking online examinations experience technical difficulties, it is documented within the University's online proctoring system. The individual, if they realize that they are experiencing difficulties can access an AI chat function within the system to document any difficulties. The report is documented as part of their exam data.

SECTION F: STUDENT ACCESS TO WRITTEN FINAL EXAMINATIONS

~~27~~26. The procedure for student access to written final examinations has the following two objectives:

- a) to provide an opportunity for the student to review the graded examination; and
- b) to enable the instructor to maintain the confidentiality of questions drawn from a limited pool of questions.

~~28~~27. A student's written request to review the graded examination must be submitted to the Department Chair¹ by June 30 following the Fall/Winter Session or by October 15 following the Spring/Summer Session. The relevant Session is the one during which the last graded material for the course was due. The Chair, in consultation with the instructor, will decide on one of the following courses of action:

- a) the instructor may review the student's graded examination with the student. Although it is not mandatory for instructors to do this, they are encouraged to do so when it is feasible.

¹ In this document any reference to a Department Chair shall also include the Director of a School or Program.

- b) the student may read the graded examination under supervised conditions but must not make notes. Where appropriate, model answers and/or the marking scheme also may be examined by the student, subject to the approval of the instructor.
- c) a photocopy of the student's graded examination, and, where appropriate, model answers and/or the marking scheme may be provided to the student at cost², subject to the approval of the instructor.

~~29.~~28. The responsibility for implementing the above procedures rests with the Chair of the instructor's department. A student's final examination script will be made available to the student as soon as possible and not later than one month after the written request by the student.

SECTION G: NON-WRITTEN EXAMINATIONS

~~29.~~29. Alternate means of final assessment may be appropriate or necessary, such as oral examinations, assessment of practical or performance skills and clinical performance (OSCE). In these final assessments, students must be made aware of the objectives and criteria for evaluation. Suitable notes, records, marking sheets, recordings, etc. must be kept intact for at least one year after last use, and remain accessible to the Department Chair for that period.

Oral Examinations

~~31.~~30. Final oral examinations shall be either recorded or witnessed by a second faculty member who is competent in the subject being examined. Where the examination involves demonstration that cannot adequately be recorded, suitable notes shall be taken by the examiner and the second faculty member so that a written record will be available.

~~32.~~31. It is recognized this recommendation involves the assumption that final oral examinations can be clearly defined. Undergraduate Council suggest the above procedure be followed for examinations that occur at the end of a course and are worth a significant proportion of the students' final grade. If it is unclear whether a particular examination qualifies as "final", the responsibility for deciding should rest with the Department Chair and the Dean of the Faculty.

Practical Skills or Performance Exams

~~32.~~32. Final examinations can be structured to measure practical skills or performance skills. Students should be informed in advance about the format of the examination and the objectives for evaluation. Evaluation criteria are determined on the basis of course objectives. Practical skills or performance examinations may be recorded or have multiple observers evaluating the students.

Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCE)

~~34.~~33. An OSCE is an objective evaluation measure used to assess components of clinical competence. Students should be made aware of the objectives for the evaluation in the OSCE, which is structured to sample student performance in a variety of areas relevant to these objectives. Students rotate through a series of timed stations normally each lasting 5-10 minutes. At each station students are asked to perform a specific task (such as taking a patient history, performing a treatment technique, etc.). There

² Current cost is \$10.00 per examination.

are two types of stations. Examiner stations involve the use of a rater who scores a student's performance and may entail interaction with a standardized patient or mannequin. Marker stations, where a student is asked to answer written questions, record findings or interpret patient data, do not require an observer but entail subsequent marking. Evaluation criteria are determined in advance on the basis of course objectives. A rating form or standardised checklist clearly specifies the evaluation criteria and the scoring system to be used by the examiners.

~~35.~~34. Final OSCE examinations consisting of 8 or more stations can be used toward the final grade in a course. As 8 or more raters (1 per station) are involved in assessing the student's performance, a review of the documentation provided by these raters on the student's performance by an independent faculty member competent in the subject being examined would constitute a fair and adequate review of the student's performance in the case of a student appeal of the mark.

~~36.~~35. If the final OSCE examination consists of 7 or fewer stations, one of the following must be included when conducting the OSCE examination:

- a) a second rater at all examination stations; or
- b) videotaping or audiotaping, depending on the nature of the task being examined of each student at all examiner stations; or
- c) using standardised patients at all examiner stations who are trained to complete a checklist regarding each student's performance.

~~37.~~36. The standardised marking sheets for each student should be kept intact for a period of 1 year after last use following the end of the academic session in which the evaluation takes place.

SECTION H: DEFERRED EXAMINATIONS

(see Sessional Dates section of the Undergraduate Calendar)

~~38.~~37. The following statement is excerpted in part from McMaster University's Undergraduate Calendar - General Academic Regulations (<https://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/index.php>).

~~39.~~38. The Petition for Special Consideration: Request for Deferred Examination (Form B) is used when a student misses an examination because of compelling medical or personal reasons.

~~40.~~39. Requests related to temporary or permanent disabilities, or for retroactive accommodations related to a disability are excluded from petitions and must be processed under the [*Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities*](#) policy.

~~41.~~40. Once a student has completed an examination, no special consideration will be granted.

~~42.~~41. A student who misses an examination because of compelling medical or personal reasons may submit a Petition for Special Consideration: Request for Deferred Examination (Form B) to the Faculty/Program Office, normally within five working days of the missed examination.

~~43.~~42. If the reason is medical, the approved McMaster University Medical Form must be used. The student must be seen by a doctor at the earliest possible date, normally on or before the date of the

missed exam and the doctor must verify the duration of the illness. Relief will not be available for minor illnesses. If the reason is non-medical, appropriate documentation with verifiable origin covering the relevant dates must be submitted, normally within five working days.

- ~~44.~~43. In deciding whether or not to grant a petition, the adequacy of the supporting documentation, including the timing in relation to the due date of the missed work and the degree of the student's incapacitation, will be taken into account.
- ~~45.~~44. It is the student's responsibility to check [Mosaic](#) Student Center > Deferred Exam Approvals or with the Faculty/Program Office for a decision on the request for a deferred examination. If the deferred examination is granted, the student will be informed officially by means of the notation DEF which will appear against the relevant course on the student's academic record and via Mosaic > Student Center > View My Grades.
- ~~46.~~45. Deferred examinations are written during the next official University deferred examination period. Default of the deferred examination will result in a fail for that examination.
- ~~47.~~46. Students who have been granted more than one deferred examination may be required by their Faculty/Program Office to reduce their course load during the term in which the deferred examinations are being written. The decision on a reduced load will be made and communicated with the decision on the request for deferred examinations.
- ~~48.~~47. At the discretion of the Faculty/Program Office, students who have been granted one or more deferred examinations, may not be allowed to enrol in a subsequent term until all deferred examinations have been completed and the Academic Standing calculated. Students will be notified of this decision by their Faculty/Program Office.
- ~~49.~~48. Students who will be living more than 160 kilometres from Hamilton during the deferred examination period and wish to write their approved deferred examination at an institution other than McMaster must submit a Request to Write Deferred Examination Off-campus Form at least 15 working days prior to the deferred examination period. Students are responsible for making arrangements for a presider to conduct the deferred examination at an outside institution and for paying any fees such as invigilation and return courier.
- ~~50.~~49. The authority to grant any petitions lies with the Faculty/Program Office and is discretionary. It is imperative that students make every effort to meet the originally-scheduled course requirements and it is a student's responsibility to write examinations as scheduled.
- ~~51.~~50. Decisions made on Petitions for Special Consideration are final. In accordance with the [Student Appeal Procedures](#), decisions made on Petitions for Special Consideration cannot be appealed to the Senate Board for Student Appeals. However, should students believe that a decision may be a violation of their human rights, they may wish to contact the [Equity and Inclusion Office](#) to identify appropriate avenues of recourse as per the [Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#).
- ~~52.~~51. Requests related to temporary or permanent disabilities, or for retroactive accommodations related to a disability, are excluded from Petitions for Special Consideration and, therefore, must be processed under the *Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities* policy.

SECTION J: PROTECTION OF PRIVACY

~~52.~~52. The [Privacy Governance and Accountability Framework](#) applies to all McMaster University faculty, staff and students when handling personal information or personal health information on behalf of the institution. The policy sets out the accountabilities for ensuring that all individuals involved in the planning, management and day-to-day operations of McMaster University are in compliance with the [Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act \(FIPPA\)](#), the [McMaster University Statement on the Collection of Personal Information and the Protection of Privacy](#), and the privacy policies, procedures and practices set out by the University.

~~54.~~53. Instructors should take care to protect student names, student numbers, grades and all other personal information at all times. For example, the submission and return of assignments and the posting of grades must be done in a manner that ensures confidentiality.

SECTION K: RELATED POLICIES

This Policy is to be read in conjunction with the following policies, guidelines, and statements. The University reserves the right to amend or add to the University's policies and statements from time to time (this is not a comprehensive list):

- [Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances, Policy on](#)
- [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#)
- [Conflict of Interest Guidelines – Undergraduate Studies and Graduate Studies](#)
- [McMaster University Statement on Collection of Personal Information and Protection of Privacy](#)
- [Privacy Governance and Accountability Framework](#)
- [Rights and Responsibilities of Undergraduate Students During Work Stoppages That Substantially Disrupt Academic Activities](#)
- [Statement on Building an Inclusive Community with a Shared Purpose](#)
- [Statement and Guidelines on Inclusive Communications](#)
- [Storm Emergency Policy](#)
- [Guidelines for Digital Learning Resources](#)
- [Undergraduate Course Management Policies](#)