

**SPECIAL REPORT**  
of the  
**UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION COUNCIL**  
concerning  
**THE REVISION OF THE POLICY  
ON PRIORITY FOR EVENING EXAMS**

Presented at the  
654<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate  
May 18, 2006

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## ***Recommended Revision of the Policy on Priority for Evening Exams***

Proposed by the *ad hoc* Evening Exam Policy Subcommittee and endorsed by the Undergraduate Education Council, University of Massachusetts Amherst.

### ***Background***

The increasing demands on classroom space have forced a growing number of courses into the evening hours. Many such courses have been scheduled so as to conflict with the time period where exams have priority over all scheduled courses, 6:00 – 7:30p, as established by Academic Senate policy (as per Acad. Scheduling Office memo to Dept Scheduling Reps, with reference to Acad. Sen. documents 77-050, 82-014, 83-055, and provost memo P84-F8). In many cases, excused absences for several evening exams during a semester can have a significant impact on a student’s course work, especially when the affected course meets on a one-day-a-week schedule. However, many instructors — especially those running large or multi-section courses — need to hold evening exams for reasons of space, timing, and security. While some conflicts are inevitable, a policy designating a priority time period allows instructors giving evening exams to keep the number of students needing special arrangements to a manageable level.

### ***Proposed changes and rationale***

The committee recommends that (a) the priority exam time period be changed to 7 to 9 p.m. to reduce overlaps with evening courses. As shown in the table below, based on Spring 2006 courses, this change would decrease the number of courses that overlap with all or part of the exam period by about 40%. Extending the priority time period to 2 hours will benefit the many courses that currently hold 2-hr evening exams and offers added flexibility to those wishing to hold 1.5-hr exams. (Contracting this time period by 30 min on either end does not significantly reduce overlaps with courses.)

The committee also recommends (b) that certain one-day-a-week courses be given priority over exams on Monday and Tuesday evenings, while exams scheduled within the 7 to 9 p.m. time period retain priority over all classes on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. The number of one-day-a-week evening courses peaks early in the week, reaching a maximum on Tuesday, while the frequency of evening exams reaches a maximum on Wednesday, with few exams currently scheduled on Monday evenings.

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<i>data for S '06 courses</i>	overlaps with <b>6 - 7:30p</b>						overlaps with <b>7 - 9p</b>					
<b><i>Once-a-week eve courses</i></b>	<b>M</b>	<b>Tu</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>Th</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>tot.</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>Tu</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>Th</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>tot.</b>
<b>all courses</b>	36	60	31	25	1	<b>153</b>	22	36	23	11	0	<b>92</b>
courses = <b>10</b> students	25	47	28	14	0	<b>114</b>	15	28	19	7	0	<b>69</b>
courses = <b>30</b> students	9	15	8	5	0	<b>37</b>	6	8	8	2	0	<b>24</b>
courses = <b>100</b> students	2	3	0	0	0	<b>5</b>	0	2	0	0	0	<b>2</b>
 <b><i>Twice-a-week eve courses</i></b>												
<b>all courses</b>	<b>MW</b>	<b>TuTh</b>				<b>tot.</b>	<b>MW</b>	<b>TuTh</b>				<b>tot.</b>
	17	17				<b>34</b>	11	10				<b>21</b>
courses = <b>10</b> students	12	10				<b>22</b>	8	7				<b>15</b>
courses = <b>30</b> students	4	2				<b>6</b>	3	1				<b>4</b>
courses = <b>100</b> students	2	1				<b>3</b>	1	1				<b>2</b>

***Detailed recommendations***

1. That the “priority” exam time period be changed to 7:00 – 9:00 p.m., and that during this time period evening exams will have priority over all scheduled classes, *except*:
  - a. Lecture and other “primary enrollment” courses that (a) must meet on a one-day-a-week schedule and (b) for which student absences for evening exams will significantly impact the course will be granted priority over all exams on Monday and Tuesday evenings.
2. Instructors needing to schedule a course that meets one-day-a-week on either Monday or Tuesday evenings, *and therefore given priority over exams*, must submit a memo to their department head explaining why it is essential that the course (a) be taught on a one-day-a-week schedule, (b) impinge on the 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. exam time period, and (c) have priority over evening exams. These memos must be available for review upon request of the Provost’s Office.
3. Department scheduling representatives should discourage instructors from scheduling classes that impinge on the exam time period on any day of the week, except when essential for pedagogical or staffing reasons or when forced to do so by a lack of suitable classroom space. Instructors of classes that impinge on the 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. time period must be informed by their department scheduling representative of the policy giving exams priority, except as noted above.
4. Instructors needing to hold evening exams should make every effort to schedule the exams entirely within the 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. time period and on Wednesdays, Thursdays, or Fridays. Instructors using evening exams must be informed by their department scheduling representative of the applicable regulations, with particular emphasis on the rule giving priority to once-a-week classes on Mondays and Tuesdays.

**MOVED: 47-06 That the Faculty Senate approve the Revision of the Policy on Priority for Evening Exams, as recommended by the Undergraduate Education Council, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 06-042.**