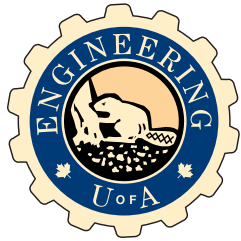


# Faculty (University) Regulations, Rulings from Dean's Office, Other Insights/Suggestions

K C Porteous, PhD, PEng  
Associate Dean (Student and Co-op Services)

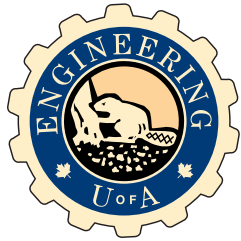
New Faculty Forum January 15, 2013



# Cited References

The explanations of various regulations and policies derive from the 2012/2013 University Calendar and the current version of the Code of Student Behaviour. The actual section number from which the information is taken is cited. All of these cited sections are included as Appendices to this document.

Faculty of Engineering Academic Regulations appear in Section 83.3 of the University Calendar references to Section 83.3 (X) refer to subsection “X” of the academic regulations.



# Topics

1. Admissions to Faculty of Engineering
2. Measurements:
  - Course Weight
  - University Grade Scale
  - Course Grading
3. Grade Point Average and Academic Standing
4. Graduation Requirements
5. Requests to Write Exams at Alternate Times
6. Deferred Exams and Reexaminations
7. Grade Appeals/Grade Changes
8. Code of Student Behaviour/Instructor's Role

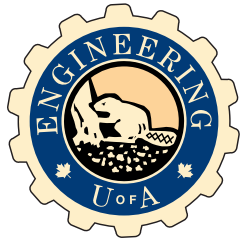
Attachment 1: Section 13.5.5, University Calendar

Attachment 2: Faculty Academic Regulations, Section 83.3 and 83.4 University Calendar

Attachment 3: Absence from Term Work or Term Examinations/Final Examinations,  
Sections 23.3 (1) and 23.3(2) University Calendar

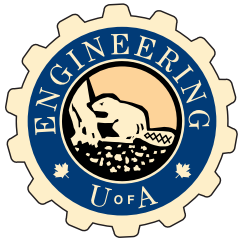
Attachment 4: Reexamination and Deferred Examinations Policies, Sections 23.3.5 and 23.5.6 University  
Calendar

Attachment 5: Academic Misconduct, Section 30.3.2 and 30.3.6(4) and 30.3.6 (5) Code of Student Behaviour



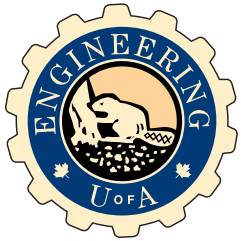
# Admissions to Faculty of Engineering

- Two points of admission 1) First or Qualifying Year 2) Degree Programs starting in second year.
- Obligated to admit only students falling into one of two categories, others admitted on a space available basis.
- **Qualifying Year:** students coming directly from high school, must present five required Alberta Grade 12 subjects (English 30, Chemistry 30, Physics 30, Mathematics 30-1, Mathematics 31) or equivalent and meet the minimum average across these subjects (reviewed annually, see Faculty web site [www.engineering.ualberta.ca](http://www.engineering.ualberta.ca)).
- **Degree Programs:** students coming from our own first year or from one of the seven (six?, future of program at University of Lethbridge is unclear) official engineering transfer programs; eligibility dependent on having completed a minimum number of course units and having a minimum satisfactory GPA (2.0 or above for students from U of A qualifying year, 2.5 from transfer programs); students must qualify in one Fall/Winter (two terms); all degree programs have a limited number of spaces); all admissions to degree programs are competitive and based on performance in first year.
- **ADMISSION DECISIONS ARE NOT APPEALABLE** (see Section 13.5.5).



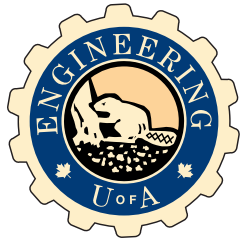
# Course Weight/Numbering

- **Course Weight Measurement:** All undergraduate courses taught within the Faculty plus those taught in other Faculties which are core to any of our degree programs are measured in engineering units.
- Each course description in the last section of the calendar is preceded by a \*X. In the case of engineering courses the “X” represents the weight of the course in engineering units.
- All course descriptions in the last section of the University Calendar also include a numeric designation, eg (3-0-3), which represents (# of lecture hours per week - # of seminar hours per week - # lab hours per week).
- **Engineering units** = # of lecture hours per week + 1/2 # seminar hours per week + 1/2 # lab hours per week; a (3-0-3) has a weight of 4.5 engineering units.
- **Course Numbering:** 100 level (first year) through 400 level (fourth year) undergraduate courses, 500 level senior undergraduate/graduate courses, 600 level graduate courses



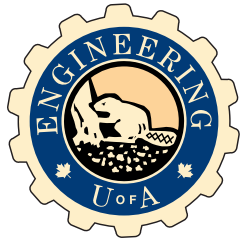
# University Grade Scale

- U of A uses a letter grade or four point grade scale (Note: letter grade scales are not universally identical).
- **U of A Letter Grade Scale/Grade Point Values:**
  - A+ = 4.0 grade points
  - A = 4.0 grade points
  - A- = 3.7 grade points
  - B+ = 3.3 grade points
  - B = 3.0 grade points
  - B- = 2.7 grade points
  - C+ = 2.3 grade points (Minimum Graduate Student Passing Grade)
  - C = 2.0 grade points
  - C- = 1.7 grade points
  - D+ = 1.3 grade points
  - D = 1.0 grade points (Minimum Undergraduate Passing Grade)
  - F = 0.0 grade points



# Course Grading

- **Marks vs Grades:** Marks are given for each of the course elements – assignments, labs, midterm exam(s), final exam etc. Grades represent the conversion of the total marks earned in a course into a letter grade indicative of a student's overall performance in the course.
- The University has some general guidelines for median and average grades in courses by course level. The Faculty has additional guidelines with respect to the normally expected range for a course average by course level.
- These are guidelines and should never replace sound judgement in assessing students.
- Complete details on the guidelines and ranges are available through the Department. An Excel spreadsheet has been developed to aid the grading process in terms of displaying grade distributions, computing class averages etc.

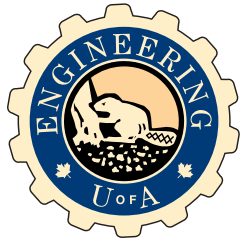


# Grade Point Average and Academic Standing

- Students are evaluated after Fall/Winter unless they are on academic warning or probation.
- Co-op students are evaluated after Spring/Summer where this is a scheduled 13 week term in their program (Chemical and Mechanical only).
- **Grade Point Average** or GPA is the weighted average of the grade points earned in each course where the weighting factor is the course weight in engineering units.
- U of A GPAs are only calculated to one decimal, truncation of the third decimal and rounding on the second decimal.
- **Satisfactory Standing:** GPA = or > 2.0, continue.
- **Marginal Standing:** GPA = 1.7 to 1.9, continue on academic warning.
- **Unsatisfactory Standing:** GPA = 1.6 or less, required to withdraw.
- **First Class Standing:** GPA = or > 3.5 while carrying at least 35.0 units.
- Faculty of Engineering Academic Regulations governing the clearing of probation or academic warning, returning after a requirement to withdraw, appeal of academic decisions and grades, and acceptable calculators are explained in Sections 83.3 (5), 83.3 (8), 83.3 (15) and 83.4.

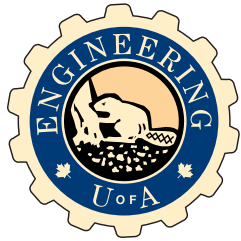
Note: Satisfactory standing for graduate students requires a CGPA of at least 2.7.





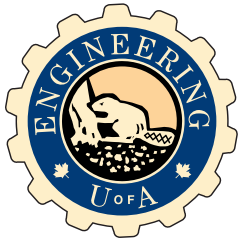
# Graduation Requirements

- Students must complete their degree within six years of being admitted to a second year program (see Section 83.3(3)).
- There are three other degree requirements which ALL graduating students must meet (see Section 83.3(2)).
  1. ALL course requirements for the degree have been met
  2. The student must be in satisfactory standing over the last Fall/Winter, GPA = or > 2.0.
  3. The student's **Engineering Graduation Average**, EGA, must be 2.0 or greater (The EGA is a CGPA calculated over the last 70.0 units of courses going back in whole terms, excluding Spring/Summer except where these are scheduled academic terms in a Co-op degree program).
- **Graduating With Distinction:** EGA = 3.5 or greater and the 70.0 units are completed over the last four terms.



# Requests to Write Exams at an Alternate Time

- There is no formal University or Faculty policy but the paramount issues are maintaining the integrity of the examination and fairness to other students in the class.
- It is an instructor decision but in most cases instructors say no for final exams. The student can apply for a deferred exam. The Deans Office is more sympathetic to such requests if the student is in first year.
- In the case of Fall term finals, arrangements may have already been made to leave for warmer climes before the end of the final exam period. Hardly a valid excuse since the period for final exams is fixed and published almost a year ahead of time and students can call up their individual exam timetables on Bear Tracks in about October. Students in second year and beyond should be quite familiar with these protocols.
- If it is the last final exam, the instructor may get the student to sign a declaration that they will not divulge the content and the student writes the exam almost as they are getting on the airplane.
- In the case of midterm exams, reasons typically relate to some personal commitment. Generally, if the commitment relates to an event which could bring some value to both the student and the University, eg varsity athletics, competing at an international level in athletics etc, instructors can consider various accommodations. Most varsity coaches are willing to administer the exam on the road. The ultimate fix is providing a “deferred” midterm ie rolling the value of the midterm onto the final.



# Deferred Exams

When a student is unable to write an exam for a compelling reason (family affliction, illness, religious conviction etc), the student may be awarded a deferred exam.

In the case of illness students can no longer be required to provide a medical note. However, other forms of proof can be required in situations not involving illness eg a copy of a death certificate, a police report documenting an accident etc.

Deferred exams are a privilege not a right.

**Midterm or Term Exams:** The Faculty has a policy whereby midterm exams are not possible in any engineering course. An instructor, at his or her discretion, may provide alternate relief by rolling the value of the midterm onto the final. This decision rests completely with the instructor. (see Section 83.3 (10)).

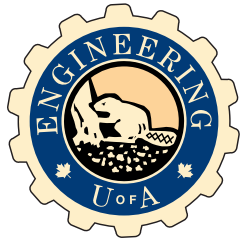
**Final Exams:** This decision rests with the Faculty offering the course. In the case of engineering courses, students must come to the Dean's Office to obtain approval. Apart from there being a compelling circumstance for missing the exam, eligibility for a deferred final exam requires that the student has completed (not necessarily passed) at least one half the value of all the term work.

**Timing of Deferred Final Exams:** Deferred final exams in courses offered in the Faculty are written at the following times:

Fall Term Deferred Final: Winter Term Reading Week (mid February)

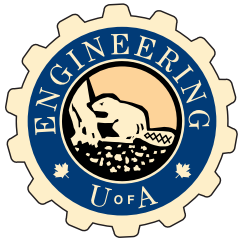
Winter Term Deferred Exams: Victoria Day (3<sup>rd</sup> Monday in May) week

The general University policies which apply to deferred midterm and final exams can be found in Sections 23.3(1) and (2) and 23.5.6.



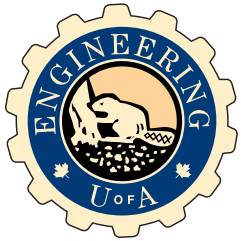
# Reexaminations

- Reexaminations recognize the fact that any student, who is otherwise a reasonable student, may have a bad day in the exam room.
- Eligibility for a reexam requires that the final exam in the course was written, the course was failed, and the student's GPA including the failed course is 2.0 or above (see Section 23.5.5)
- A student can only have one reexam over Fall/Winter.
- Other Faculties may demand some reasonable level of performance in the term work as a further condition for granting a reexam.



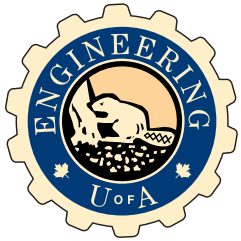
# Grade Appeals (Changes) (Student Side)

- There is a documented Faculty process for students to follow in appealing a course grade (see Section 83.3(15) b).
- Step 1: The student should meet with the instructor to discuss the course grade. There is no University requirement for an instructor to show a student his or her final exam. However, the Faculty does encourage this practice. During this meeting, it may be determined that no mark was recorded for a particular assignment or lab which the student can show was marked, the instructor forgot to mark one question on the final exam, an error was made in adding up the marks on the final exam etc. These legitimate oversights are unusual but when they do occur they may well cause an instructor to change a student's grade through a formal grade change approved by the Chair.
- Step 2: When a student is not satisfied with the instructor's response and refusal to change the grade, the student should arrange to meet with the Chair to discuss the course grade. Following that meeting, the Chair would normally meet with the instructor before making any decision on a grade change. It is certainly possible that the Chair may grant a grade change, however this occurs infrequently.
- Step 3: The student has 60 calendar days after the final exam period to appeal the course grade to the Faculty Academic Appeals Committee. This requires the student to write a letter to the Dean.



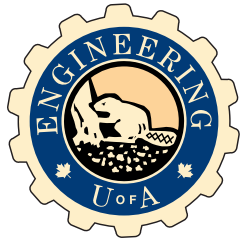
# Alternative to Grade Appeal Process

- It is possible for a student to apply for a formal reappraisal of his/her final examination (see Section 23.5.4 (2)).
- An application is made to the Department or Faculty Office by February 1 or June 22 for Fall and Winter term courses respectively.
- The Department Chair is responsible for managing the reappraisal process.
- While most Departments would try to find another instructor to do the reappraisal, there is no University requirement that prevents the reappraisal from being done by the original course instructor. For higher level courses, there may not even be another instructor familiar enough with the course material to reassess the exam.
- If the student's grade changes as a result of the reappraisal, the new grade replaces the original one and may be either higher or lower.



# Grade Appeals (Changes) (Instructor Side)

- In the Faculty process, students must discuss the matter with the instructor.
- Many (most) of the students who come to see an instructor about a grade change are in academic difficulty. “If you could raise my grade by one level in your course I would clear academic warning and avoid being required to withdraw.”
- The reality is that the student often requires grade changes in more than one course and is selling the same story to the instructors two or more courses. (Otherwise known as “grade shopping”)
- If as mentioned previously there is legitimate error oversight in assigning a final grade, the grade must be changed.
- The governing principle with respect to making grade changes is fairness to all the students in the class.
- If a student is arguing for more marks on a particular question or is right at the margin of the next higher grade level, what should you do? Providing an “after the fact” opportunity to makeup missed term work is not an option unless it is extended to all students in the class.
- In the absence of an obvious error or oversight, NEVER agree to a grade change during the first meeting with a student. Tell the student you will review the situation and ask him/her to meet with you again. This gives you time to reflect on the students situation in an objective and unpressured way. Perhaps the student does deserve another mark or two on one question but you were overly generous with the marks on another question. Was this student just below the cutoff for the next higher grade level or were there several other students between this student and the cutoff or the next higher grade level? Are you comfortable with the cutoff which you set? Are you prepared to change the grades for all students above this student at his/her current grade level?
- ALL GRADE CHANGES REQUIRE SIGNOFF BY THE DEPARTMENT AND THE FACULTY AND WILL NOT BE APPROVED WITHOUT A SOLID RATIONALE.
- “Sympathy” grade changes should not be entertained and will not receive approval.



# Code of Student Behaviour

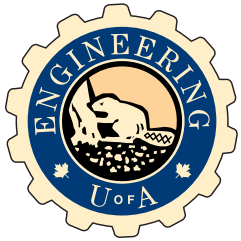
- Comprehensive document dealing with processes and procedures to be followed in dealing with student misconduct – academic and non academic.
- Available at [www.governance@ualberta.ca](http://www.governance@ualberta.ca)
- Dean of the Faculty offering the course is responsible for dealing with all academic misconduct – undergraduate and graduate students
- Deans normally delegate this responsibility to an Associate Dean
- Types of academic misconduct:
  - plagiarism
  - cheating (in various forms)

(Note: Research and Scholarship Misconduct relates to graduates students and such cases are the responsibility of FGSR; Section 30.3.3 Inappropriate Behaviour in Professional Programs is linked to programs with practica so does not apply to Engineering)

in certain situations these may also involve the offences of:

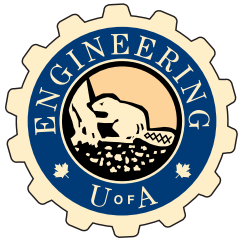
- misrepresentation of facts
- participation in an offence
- See Sections 30.3.2(1), 30.3.2(2) a through e, 30.3.2(3), 30.3.6(4) and 30.3.6(5) of the Code of Student Behaviour for formal definitions
- Students found guilty of violating the Code can be assessed sanctions, depending on the seriousness of the offence and whether it is a first offence, which include a warning, a grade reduction (down to an F if deemed appropriate), addition of an 8(undergraduate) or a 9(graduate) to indicate the grade is the result of a disciplinary sanction, suspension or expulsion
- The authority to adjudicate cases and impose sanctions rests exclusively with the Dean or designate. This centralized model is an attempt to guarantee some consistency in the degree of sanction imposed for a particular type of offence.





# Instructor's Role in the Discipline Process

- Instructors' responsibilities in suspected academic misconduct cases is strictly investigative.
- Instructors have no authority to impose any sanction (even a minor one such as a zero on an assignment) on a student for suspected academic misconduct.
- When an instructor believes that academic misconduct may have occurred, the instructor must arrange to meet with the student(s). In asking the student(s) for a meeting, the instructor must explain that the purpose of the meeting is discuss possible academic misconduct.
- The instructor should have another person, preferably the Associate Chair (Undergraduate) or Associate Chair (Graduate), present during the meeting
- If, after the meeting, the instructor believes that there has been no academic misconduct, the matter is ended.
- If the instructor's suspicions are confirmed, he/she must document the findings including the actual evidence and forward it to the Dean or designate.
- If there has been no decision on the case prior to submitting the final course grades, the instructor should assign the student a grade of IN.



# Minimizing Academic Misconduct Incidents

Instructors can do a number of things to minimize the number of potential academic misconduct incidents in their courses:

1. The course syllabus must clearly indicate the instructor's expectations with respect to collaboration on assignments, labs, etc. For example, everyone must work alone, students can work in groups no larger than X students and each group hands in one product which includes the names of all group members, etc
2. Do not assign the same problems every term or make the assignments worth zero or a very small portion of the total marks.
3. Make minor changes to lab experiments and report requirements such that copying an old lab report is not very helpful.
4. Be aware that students can buy the solutions to all the problems in almost any engineering textbook off the web.
5. Hold exams in rooms where students sit far enough apart so that copying is not possible.
6. A proctor must be present at all times during an exam.
7. If you have concerns about the integrity of certain students, assign these students seats which are distant from each other.