

## Policies on make-up exams, cheating and unofficial withdrawals

### Make-up exams

**During the semester:** there is no departmental policy regarding make up exams during the semester (quizzes, midterms, etc). Some faculty have a strict "no make- up policy" and do not offer make up exams regardless of cause. These faculty members simply weight the final exam more heavily for students who miss exams during the semester. Other faculty members allow students to make up missed exams provided they have a good excuse for missing the test. I strongly recommend that you give a make-up exam to students who have legitimate excuses. It has been my experience that students who simply put all of the weight on the final exam are much more likely to then miss the final exam as well. I have a small set of questions that I use only on make-up exams and those exams are never returned to students. Thus, I can reuse them in future semesters.

Whichever option you choose, you should make it clear on your syllabus and you should mention it in class when discussing the class administration. So long as students are informed at the beginning of the semester what the policy is then they will not have cause to complain about the policy later on.

**At the end of the semester:** the university governs the administration of missed final exams. Students who cannot take your final exam (for whatever reason) must petition their school for an incomplete. If the school grants the incomplete, then the student has the right to take a make- up exam. That exam will be administered by the school at the start of the next semester. We have an understanding with the undergraduate schools whereby only one make up exam will be administered for each class regardless of the number of students who need an exam for the class and that the school would contact me rather than the faculty member to get the exams. I then follow up with individual faculty members to get make- up exams. **If someone from one of the undergraduate schools contacts you looking for a make=up exam, please forward that message to me. Do not send them your exam.**

### Unofficial Withdrawal

***AS of the spring of 2014, the grade of UW will no longer be available for CC, and GS students. The grade of W (withdrawal) will replace this grade. Students from these schools who contact you asking about a UW should be directed to their college advisors to discuss withdrawing. Prior to the pass/fail deadline, students will be able to elect a W in a class themselves. The decision to allow a student to withdraw from a class after that deadline is made by the school. You will not decide whether or not a student receives a W. A student who has withdrawn from your class will still appear on the grade roster at the end of the semester and the grade of W will already be entered for that student.***

However, students in other schools such as SEAS and Barnard, may still be eligible for the UW. If you have a student that requests the grade of UW then ask that student to have his or her School Adviser contact you to let you know what the guidelines are for that school. If the student fails to have an

adviser contact you then feel free to use the guidelines below (these are the rules that we used when CC and GS were eligible). The college/GS policy on the grade of *UW* is that it is to be granted only to students who have completed no substantial work in a class. The example given in the bulletin is that a student who has taken a midterm for a class is not eligible for this grade. The economics department enforces this policy. Unfortunately, many departments at Columbia use the *UW* as a way to avoid failing a student (either by granting it to students who do not show up to the final or who take the final and fail). Many students simply stop participating in the class after a poor midterm hoping that you will give them a *UW*. These students are dismayed to see the *F* on their transcript. To avoid this, you should make the departmental policy explicit on your syllabus and in the first class - students who complete a midterm (or any substantial work that you would like to name) are not eligible for the *UW*.

### **Cheating**

Cheating on exams is obviously not tolerated and if you or your TAs suspect cheating on an exam then you should bring it to my attention. Plagiarizing is equally egregious and should be brought to me. A grey area is cheating on other types of assignments such as a homework assignment. There is no set policy on what constitutes cheating on such assignments and what the penalty should be. You are free to set the rules that you would like students to follow regarding collaboration on work on and submissions of assignments (work alone, work in groups, open conversations between students, copying old answer sheets) and free to set the penalty for failure to comply with the rules (0 on an assignment, 0 on all assignments etc). Whatever policy you choose, you should make it explicit at the beginning of the semester by putting it on your syllabus and pointing it out in class.

**To sum up - my best advice for dealing with all three of these issues is to make the policy explicit at the beginning of the semester. If one of these issues crops up during the semester, then it is better for both you and the students to have a clear policy that you can rely on.**