

Charge S-2105: Exam Conflict Policies. *Review Rutgers University policies regarding final exam conflicts and possible impacts on students with disabilities. Make recommendations as appropriate. Please report to the Senate Executive Secretary by March 31, 2021.*

Rutgers University is responsible for providing equal opportunity and access to its constituents on a University-wide level. Existing policies seem to recognize only three situations that can be considered an exam conflict. For example, New Brunswick SAS policy defines an exam conflict as:

- More than two (2) final exams on one calendar day
- More than two (2) final exams scheduled in consecutive periods (ex: A student has exams scheduled for 4:00pm-7:00pm and 8:00-11:00pm on one day and 8:00-11:00am on the following day.)
- Two final exams scheduled for the same exam period¹
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The Camden policy is essentially the same with some additional language offering students guidance on how to proceed if they have a conflict:

A student shall be said to have an exam conflict if that student has:

- More than two (2) exams on one calendar day.
- More than two (2) exams scheduled in consecutive periods (e.g., a student has exams scheduled for 6:00pm-9:00pm on one day and 8:00am-11:00am on the following day.)
- Two exams scheduled for the same exam period.
- Exam times can be viewed on the Term Exam schedule on the Calendars and Catalogs page. In case of a conflict a student can print a list of final exams and share it with instructors. Students having an illness requiring medical attention or conflict due to a religious observance, should contact the instructor of the course(s) involved for information regarding the arrangements for the make-up examination. The instructor may re-schedule the examination during the examination period and is responsible for rescheduling, proctoring, and grading make-up examinations to accommodate students who have conflicts.²

For Spring 2021, in recognition of the fact that most instruction is online, the University has further expanded the policy to establish priorities in resolving exam conflicts:

Exam Conflicts

¹ <https://sasundergrad.rutgers.edu/degree-requirements/policies/final-exam>

² <https://registrar.camden.rutgers.edu/registration-information>

- For Spring 2021, a student shall be said to have an exam conflict if that student has more than two exams beginning in a 24-hour period or two exams scheduled for the same exam period.
- In resolving conflicts, priority will be given in the following order, with one being the top priority:
 1. Exams in remote synchronous and face-to-face courses
 2. Group exams
 3. Exams in remote asynchronous courses
 4. “By Arrangement” exams (exam code “A”)
- A student with three exams with equivalent priority (e.g., three group exams or three synchronous course exams) in a 24-hour period will try to reschedule one of the exams as a make-up. If the professors involved do not volunteer to give a make-up exam for such a student, then the middle exam will be rescheduled as a make-up.³

Historically, the Office of Disability Services has worked individually with faculty and staff when exam conflicts arise due to accommodations. Generally, for an 80 minute exam, a student with 50% extended time would be given 120 minutes while a student with 100% extended time would get 160 minutes. However testing accommodations can extend typically scheduled 3 hour finals to 4.5 or even 6 hour finals, which contributes to an unrealistic expectation that a student could take two of them in the same day.

Recommendation:

The University Senate recommends that:

Exam policies should be amended to state that students who have registered with the Office of Disability Services, have their Letter of Accommodations, and require time limit accommodations shall be said to have an exam conflict if that student has more than one exam scheduled on one calendar day.

³ <https://scheduling.rutgers.edu/scheduling/exam-scheduling/final-exam-schedule/final-exam-policies>