

**RYERSON UNIVERSITY
POLICY OF SENATE**

COURSE MANAGEMENT

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COURSE MANAGEMENT: POLICY 166

1. PURPOSE OF POLICY

The central purpose of the course management policy is to provide a framework of common understanding for students and faculty concerning the structures, processes, objectives, and requirements pertaining to the delivery of undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education (CE) courses at Ryerson University (the “University”).

2. APPLICATION AND SCOPE

Learning and the pursuit of scholarship and research is a collaborative academic process in which faculty and students come together in an environment influenced by their disciplines, academic programs, the University, broader intellectual traditions, and the values and priorities of the community at large. It is through courses and course management that this is accomplished.

An academic course represents a discrete learning endeavour in which an intensive sharing of knowledge, expertise, experience, and perspective should occur. This policy applies to all undergraduate, graduate, and CE courses at the University.

Academic courses are highly varied in format, delivery, objectives, and structure. No course management policy can anticipate all possible circumstances and configurations.

3. DEFINITIONS

Constructive Feedback

Refers to any type of instructor response that serves to inform, guide, encourage, and/or instruct the student with respect to relevant coursework, research, or related aspects of their learning endeavour.

Chair/Director

Refers to the head of the department or school and includes Graduate Program Director and Program Director of Continuing Education at The G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education.

Continuing Education (CE)

Refers to the relevant, quality, educational programming geared to adult learners provided by the University.

Course Shell

“Shells” are the spaces in the online learning management system that are created for online course components and other collaborative projects. Shells can contain attached documents, learning materials, quizzes, assignments, discussions, and more. A "course shell" is associated with a specific course, in a specific term, at the University.

Department/School/Program

Refers to teaching departments, schools, graduate programs, and continuing education at The G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education.

Distance Education

Refers to online courses as well as a unique combination of in-class and online (e.g., blended) learning.

faculty (not capitalized)

Refers to the academic teaching staff of the University (see Policy 2: Undergraduate Curriculum Structure).

Faculty (capitalized)

Refers to the administrative unit (see Policy 2: Undergraduate Curriculum Structure).

Teaching Department

Refers to the academic unit that is responsible for the development, delivery, and administration of a course (see Policy 2 Undergraduate Curriculum Structure).

Test/Exam:

A test and an exam assess the knowledge of a student with a series of questions that are graded for a result. For the purposes of this policy, test and exam have the same meaning.

4. VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 The values stipulated in the University’s Senate Policy Framework are applicable and fundamental to this policy.
- 4.2 This policy recognizes the importance of diversity of learning and teaching styles and mode of course delivery, and in graduate courses advanced education, research, and scholarship, while
 - 4.2.1 defining the types of information that both students and faculty need in order to optimize the learning value of any given course.

- 4.2.2 making clear to students and faculty the principles and procedures that have been adopted by the University that bear upon the operation of academic courses.
- 4.3 Students earn grades that reflect their ability to demonstrate their knowledge of the course material through the means of evaluation.
- 4.4 Where possible, assessments should be structured such that students' knowledge can be demonstrated incrementally.
- 4.5 Timely and constructive feedback in response to student work is an essential element in the learning process.

5. REGULATIONS

5.1 Department/ School/ Program/ Graduate Studies Policies, Procedures, and Student Handbooks

- 5.1.1 All departments, schools, programs at the Undergraduate level, Yeates School of Graduate Studies and The G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education (The Chang School), must have an online Student Handbook that contains the policies, procedures, and items outlined in Procedures Section 8.3. Departments with programs must include information specific to the program.
- 5.1.2 Policies and Procedures established by Department/ School/ Program (including Graduate Program) Councils must be made available to faculty.
- 5.1.3 For CE courses, the policies and procedures of the teaching department apply. For CE courses that do not have a teaching department, The Chang School is to develop policies and procedures.

5.2 Course Outlines

- 5.2.1 At the beginning of each course, including Distance Education courses, faculty will provide students with a course outline, either electronically on the online learning management system or in hard copy that includes, as a minimum, the information specified in Procedures Section 7. Outlines may be supplemented by more detailed topical or project information periodically during the course.
- 5.2.2 All University Senate policy information will be available to students through the online learning management system within each course

shell and as well a link to the policy information provided in all course outlines. Policy information will be maintained by the Senate Office and is therefore not required to be incorporated into individual course outlines.

5.3 Assessments and Feedback on Student Performance

- 5.3.1 Different types of courses (e.g., lectures, labs, studios) have different types and numbers of assessments that may range from a number of smaller assessments spread over the term to as few as two exams (unless a variation exists see Policy Section 5.3.6).
- 5.3.2 In the majority of courses, individual work as a form of assessment should be the main priority. For further information on group work see Procedures Section 8.3.1.
Note: There is no restriction on the percentage of work dedicated to group work in Graduate Studies.
- 5.3.3 Timely (normally within ten business days unless an alternate date is warranted and indicated in the course outline) and constructive feedback in response to student work must be provided.
- 5.3.4 It is important that all work be graded and returned (where applicable) with reasonable promptness.
- 5.3.5 In the case of term work that faculty retain, the student must receive feedback on the content in addition to a numerical grade. This does not apply to final assessments.
- 5.3.6 Each course must have at least two individual assessments per term in the evaluation scheme. Where appropriate these assessments should be of different types. It is strongly recommended that a single assessment not be worth more than 50% of a student's final grade, but in no case shall it be worth more than 65%. In cases where an Undergraduate or Continuing Education course does not lend itself to two individual assessments per term, this must be clearly stipulated in the course outline, and requires approval from the Academic Standards Committee as a "course variation". For Graduate courses that do not lend itself to two individual assessments per term, this must be clearly stipulated in the course outline, and requires approval from Graduate Program Council as a course variation.
- 5.3.7 To enable students to assess their progress in a course, at least 20% of a student's grade that is based on individual work must be returned to the student prior to the final deadline for dropping courses without academic penalty. Note: This does not apply to Graduate courses.

- 5.3.8 All tests/exams, including those online, are assumed to be closed book unless stipulated otherwise in the course outline.
- 5.3.9 Student assessment must comply with the provisions of Policy 159: Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities.

5.4 Make-up Assessments

- 5.4.1 Students who enrol in a class after there has been an assessment must be given the opportunity to make up that assessment.
- 5.4.2 Students who miss an assessment or equivalent (e.g. studio or presentation) or final exam with appropriate notification and the required documentation, may have a make-up scheduled. (See Procedures Section 4 for when a make-up need not be scheduled).
- 5.4.3 The make-up must take place as soon as it can be scheduled, preferably in the same semester, and where possible, before the last date to drop a course.
- 5.4.4 Where possible, the make-up shall occur prior to the submission of the final course grade.
- 5.4.5 Students who miss a final exam with appropriate notification and the required documentation and who cannot be given a make-up exam prior to the submission of final course grades, must petition their instructor to receive an INC grade (as outlined in Policy 46: Undergraduate Grading, Promotion, and Academic Standing and Policy 164: Graduate Status, Enrolment, and Evaluation) and a make-up exam will be scheduled (normally within 2 weeks after the conclusion of that semester).
Note: If the course in which the student requests an INC is a prerequisite for a course being taken in the following term, the INC should be resolved as soon as possible within the first 2 weeks of the subsequent term. Students are allowed to stay in classes until the INC is resolved. If the INC results in an F grade, the department should drop the student from the course for which the prerequisite has not been achieved and fees refunded.
- 5.4.6 Make-ups must cover the same material as the original assessment but need not be of an identical format. Make-ups must be the same level of difficulty as the original.
- 5.4.7 Where a missed test, assignment, or other assessment is one of only two assessments in a course (e.g. there is one test and a final exam), or when the assessment is worth more than 30% of the final course grade, the provision of a make-up is required.

- 5.4.8 The consequences for a student missing a scheduled make-up assessment are provided in Procedures Section 5.

5.5 Return of Work/Grades

- 5.5.1 All grades (including final exams/papers) must be posted electronically via the online learning management system or made available to students through the return of their work. Course outlines must inform students of the method to be used for advising them of their grades.
- 5.5.2 Where graded work is returned to students, this must be done in a confidential manner, as determined by the department/ school/ program.
- 5.5.3 Final exams, and in some cases final papers, are not returned, but are retained for a period of one year after the end of the term. Departments/schools/programs must develop procedures to ensure that the retention and disposal of exams/papers respects the privacy of students' work. Work that is not returned must have the opportunity to be reviewed by the student in a supervised environment.
- 5.5.4 As there may be other considerations in the releasing of final grades, only the Registrar may release official course grades.

5.6 Change to an Announced Evaluation Scheme

- 5.6.1 During the term it is sometimes necessary or desirable to revise the plan of student evaluation contained in the course outline. When this is the case, Procedures Section 3 will apply.
- 5.6.2 In the case of emergencies, such as faculty illness, the Chair/Director of the teaching department (or a designated course coordinator) is responsible for restructuring the evaluation scheme, if required, in such a way as to maintain the course integrity while not creating undue disadvantage for students.

6. PERIOD OF PROHIBITION OF ASSESSMENTS (excludes graduate level courses)

- 6.1 For students in undergraduate courses, the last week of classes before the examination period is to be free of all undergraduate tests, examinations, submission of assignments, or other assessments.

Exceptions to this period of prohibition are specified in Procedures Section 6.

- 6.2 In unusual circumstances, there may be a justifiable exception from the period of prohibition on assessments, if approved by the Chair/Director.

RELATED PROCEDURES:

Course Management

RELATED POLICIES:

Policy 2: Undergraduate Curriculum Structure

Policy 46: Undergraduate Grading, Promotion, and Academic Standing

Policy 60: Academic Integrity

Policy 159: Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Policy 164: Graduate Status, Enrolment, and Evaluation

RESCINDED POLICIES:

Policy 145: Undergraduate Course Management

Policy 151: Yeates School of Graduate Studies Course Management

PROCEDURES: COURSE MANAGEMENT – Policy 166

1. PURPOSE OF PROCEDURES

The Course Management Procedures (the “Procedures”) outline the processes to be followed in carrying out Policy 166: Course Management and the roles and responsibilities of Chairs/Directors, departments / schools / programs, and faculty.

2. ASSESSMENTS AND FEEDBACK ON STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Where the test, exam, assignment, or other assessment requires students to build directly on the proficiencies developed through earlier work, they must have the benefit of feedback on the earlier work before the subsequent due date.

If a student defers any assessment such that a grade is not available for that component until the final deadline for dropping courses has passed, this is not grounds to request a late drop on course management grounds.

3. CHANGES TO AN ANNOUNCED EVALUATION SCHEME

3.1. If, during the term, it becomes necessary or desirable to revise the plan of student evaluation contained in the course outline, faculty will:

3.1.1. discuss the changes with the class as soon as possible

3.1.2. make such revisions as early as possible in the course

3.1.3. confirm the changes both orally in class and in writing via a handout, email, or a posting to the course website

3.1.4. post a revised outline on the course website, if one is used; and submit the revised outline to the department/school/program

3.2. When a change to an announced evaluation scheme involves only the extension of a deadline, a minimum of five business days’ notice is normally required. In the case of other changes (e.g., in the number, mix, and/or weighting of methods of evaluation), students will be given as much notice as possible in order to reasonably adjust their course work plans.

3.3. Once students have begun work on a particular component of the evaluation scheme, changes will be made to that component only under extraordinary circumstances. When such changes must be made, students will, if at all possible, be given the opportunity to complete the evaluation(s) as initially set out and with the same course weight, if they so wish.

- 3.4. When changes are made to the plan of student evaluation or to the nature of a particular assignment/test to address the needs of an individual student or of a group within the class, the nature of the changes will be outlined in writing, normally by email, with a copy retained by the student(s) and faculty.
- 3.5. Normal periods of notification may be waived in the case of emergencies such as faculty illness (see Policy Section 5.6).

4. ALTERNATIVES TO MAKE-UP ASSESSMENTS

- 4.1. Only if it is not possible to schedule a make-up may the weight of the missed work be combined with that of the final exam or another single assessment. If the missed work was a final exam, the weight of the final exam may not be redistributed to other work and must be rescheduled. (See also Procedures Section 5 for further details).
- 4.2. Where the value of a missed test, exam, assignment, or other assessment totals less than 30% of the final course grade, the instructor and student may agree to transfer the grades to other course assessments. Where the value of missed work totals less than 10% of the final course grade, the provision of a make-up is at the discretion of faculty.
- 4.3. Where a missed test, assignment, exam, or other assessment is part of a number of assessments given throughout the term, and where it can be shown that the objective of the missed work is assessed in some other way, the faculty and affected student may agree, in writing, to distribute the weight of the missed work to the final exam, or to another assessment or group of assessments. The redistribution of the weight of missed work may not cause the final exam or any single assessment to be worth more than 65% of the student's final grade. Where there is no agreement, the matter shall be referred to the Chair/Director for resolution.
Note: This may exclude some graduate courses if approval is received by the Graduate Program Council (See Policy Section 5.3.5).
- 4.4. Where it is not possible to schedule the missed work or test (e.g., it was presented in a group; it requires that a lab, studio, or other set-up be recreated) the weight may be distributed to the final exam or to another assessment or group of assessments. In this case, the redistribution of the weight of missed work should normally not cause the final exam or any single assessment to be worth more than 65% of the student's final grade. If it will, an alternate assignment should be considered on a case by case basis.
Note: This may exclude some graduate courses if approval is received from the Graduate Program Council (See Policy Section 5.3.6).

5. MISSING A MAKE-UP

- 5.1. On a case by case basis, a second make-up may be scheduled at the discretion of faculty. The student may be required to provide a detailed rationale supported by appropriate documentation for consideration.
- 5.2. If a student misses a scheduled make-up test, assignment, or other assessment, with the appropriate notification and the required documentation, the grade may be distributed over other course assessments even if that makes the grade on the final exam worth more than 65% of the final grade in the course. In cases where the regular final exam is not cumulative, and where missed work means that previous work has not been assessed, a comprehensive final exam may be administered. If there is no appropriate notification and/or the required documentation, a grade of zero (0) will be assigned.
- 5.3. If a student misses a scheduled make-up for a final exam, the grade should not be re-distributed except in exceptional circumstances. If the make-up for a final exam has been missed for exceptional circumstances that need to be strong and compelling and is supported with evidence, a student may make a request to their faculty that a second make-up exam be considered. Faculty may make this decision in consultation with the Chair/Director. If a second make-up exam is not granted, a grade of zero (0) will be assigned.

6. EXCEPTIONS/CLARIFICATIONS TO PERIOD OF PROHIBITION ON ASSESSMENTS (excludes graduate level courses)

If the structure of a course requires a justifiable exception from the period of prohibition on testing stipulated in Policy 166 Section 6, or to the following rules, the Chair/Director must approve that exception. Note: This Section does not apply to Graduate students.

- 6.1. Section 6 does not apply to courses taught intensively, at a distance, or otherwise outside the usual scheduled hours per week mode.
- 6.2. It is recognized that, in certain types of courses, it may not be possible to avoid tests or other in-class assessments in the last week of classes without creating undue problems in other areas of course management. Where absolutely necessary, a single assessment may be exempted from the above restrictions where it meets ALL of the following criteria:
 - 6.2.1. it is a logical continuation of a regular, ongoing series of term assessments (e.g., weekly or bi-weekly field placement, lab, or studio assignment); and
 - 6.2.2. it is held in the normal class/lab/field placement slot; and
 - 6.2.3. it is worth no more than 15% of the final course grade.

- 6.3. Any assessment given in lieu of a final exam, which cannot itself be made due prior to the last week of class, may be distributed during the final week of class, and may be due during the final exam period.
- 6.4. If an assignment involves a presentation component, and it is necessary for this presentation to be made in the last week of the semester, any written component of that assignment must be due the week prior to the last week of the class or during the final exam period and the presentation cannot itself be worth more than 15% of the final course grade.

7. COURSE OUTLINES – REQUIRED INFORMATION

NOTE: In lieu of repeating general department/school/program information in each course outline, faculty may refer to the Student Handbook. Course outlines shall contain:

7.1. General

- 7.1.1. course name and number; semester and year; prerequisites; and anti-requisites, if any
- 7.1.2. faculty's name; office location; scheduled consultation hours; office telephone number; email address; faculty/course website(s), if available;
 - 7.1.2.1. if any of these factors are unknown when the course outline is prepared, the information will be provided in writing (as a handout or via the course website) at the beginning of the course.
 - 7.1.2.2. Student consultation hours must be posted or disseminated by other means.
 - 7.1.2.3. Continuing Education students must be provided with an appropriate email address that is monitored regularly for the course.
- 7.1.3. the method of posting grades and method of returning academic work in a manner that respects the privacy of students
- 7.1.4. any instruction on student use of email for faculty contact, as well as any preference for means of student contact

7.2. Course Description

- 7.2.1. calendar course description

- 7.2.2. an explanation of the academic focus and scope of the course, the objectives and/or intended learning outcomes, and topics with their approximate sequence and schedule
- 7.2.3. texts, reading lists, and other course materials or equipment
- 7.2.4. a description of the teaching method(s) that will be used (e.g., lecture, laboratory, studio, cases, problem-based learning, seminar, field work, oral presentations, or combinations of these)
- 7.2.5. a schedule of any field trips or required activities outside of class time

7.3. Other Course Issues

- 7.3.1. specific requirements on any Information Technology (IT) requirements for courses utilizing IT in course work, assignments, or exams
- 7.3.2. specific requirements for field placements, if appropriate
- 7.3.3. policies on the appropriate use of cellular phones, laptop computers, and other electronic devices in the classroom

7.4. Variations within a Course

In cases where there are multiple sections of the same course with consequent variations in course delivery methods, grading, and/or methods of evaluation, etc., students must be provided with at least a brief section/faculty-specific description in addition to the generic course outline.

7.5. Department/ School/ Program/ Graduate Studies Policies and Procedures

- 7.5.1. Information must be given on all relevant department/ school /program policies which have been identified in Procedures Section 8.3. Where relevant information is available through Student Handbooks and/or websites, course outlines will provide direction to these.
- 7.5.2. Students must be reminded that they are required to adhere to all relevant university policies found in their online course shell and/or on the following URL: <http://ryerson.ca/senate/course-outline-policies> .
- 7.5.3. For courses involving research with human subjects/participants, the guidelines of the Research Ethics board must be clearly referenced.

7.6. Evaluation

- 7.6.1. a list and tentative schedule of all tests, exams, assignments, and other assessments, and general description of these. More specific information on each assessment will be provided by the course faculty as early in the course as possible. Exam format, length, and permitted aids will be communicated to students in advance of the exam.
- 7.6.2. the weighting of each test, exam, assignment, and/or other assessment
- 7.6.3. if the course does not lend itself to two independent assessments, this must be clearly stated
- 7.6.4. the inclusion of pop tests or other unscheduled assessments as part of the grading scheme, if applicable
- 7.6.5. an indication of approximately when each piece of graded work will be returned to students, bearing in mind the requirements of Policy 166 Section 5.3.7
- 7.6.6. if a course does not lend itself to early feedback, this must be clearly stipulated
- 7.6.7. policies on deadlines for the acceptance of assignments and/or take-home examinations, and any penalties that will be applied when such deadlines are not met

8. RESPONSIBILITIES

8.1. Faculty

- 8.1.1. prepare course outlines for their courses that adhere to Policy 166: Course Management and these Procedures and provide these course outlines to students
- 8.1.2. submit copies of all course outlines in the format requested, to their department/school/program at the beginning of each term; and revised course outlines when changes are made during the term
- 8.1.3. follow the requirements (see Policy 166 Section 6 and Procedures Section 3) when it becomes necessary or desirable to revise the plan of student evaluation contained in the course outline
- 8.1.4. assess only the work of officially registered students (i.e. the work of non-registered students is not to be assessed)

- 8.1.5. follow procedures established by the department/school/program for the confidential return of students' graded work
- 8.1.6. maintain a grade calculation sheet for each class they teach
- 8.1.7. forward a copy of all grade calculations sheets to the department /school/ program at the end of the term, to be retained for at least one year
- 8.1.8. retain all final assessments for a period of one year after the end of the term
- 8.1.9. forward all final assessments to the department/ school/ program (or make them otherwise accessible) if they are not returning the following term, or if they will be away for an extended period of time
- 8.1.10. dispose of records no longer required at the end of the required holding period in the manner established by the department/ school/ program

8.2. Chairs/Directors:

- 8.2.1. ensure that faculty submit course outlines and ensure that the information in the course outlines is in keeping with University and department/ school/ program policies/ guidelines
- 8.2.2. restructure, if required, the evaluation scheme for a course, in the case of emergencies such as faculty illness
- 8.2.3. access course shells on the Learning Management System in case of emergency and/or the need to reassign the course to another faculty
- 8.2.4. ensure that faculty submit detailed grade calculations for every course

8.3. Departments/ Schools/ Programs/ Graduate Studies:

NOTE: For CE courses, the policies and procedures of the teaching department/school apply; for CE courses that do not have a home teaching department, The Chang School is to develop policies and guidelines.

- 8.3.1. establish guidelines regarding **Group Work**, including:
 - 8.3.1.1. the maximum value of group work allowed in their courses
 - 8.3.1.2. procedures to ensure that students are afforded sufficient individual assessment

- 8.3.1.2.1. group work for which a student does not receive an individual assessment must not constitute more than 30% of a course grade
Note: There is no restriction on the percentage of work dedicated to group work in Graduate Studies.
- 8.3.1.3. fair, appropriate, and timely procedures for students who encounter difficulty with their working group
- 8.3.2. establish the amount and types of **course variation** that are appropriate among different sections of the same course. Course descriptions and overall objectives must be consistent and there should be comparable assignment structures and grading schemes in all sections of the same course
- 8.3.3. determine what policies, if any, are appropriate regarding the use of **class attendance** as a basis for grades
 - 8.3.3.1. if attendance grades are permitted, criteria must be established and included in the course outline
- 8.3.4. determine what policies, if any, are appropriate regarding the use of **class participation** as a basis for grades
 - 8.3.4.1. if participation grades are permitted, criteria must be established and included in the course outline
- 8.3.5. develop procedures for the confidential return of students' graded work
- 8.3.6. develop procedures for the disposal of examination papers, final papers, and other assessments/work not returned to student, in a manner that protects the privacy of students' work
- 8.3.7. distribute to faculty the policies and procedures established under this provision (Procedures Section 8.3)
- 8.3.8. develop an online Student Handbook for each program for which the Department/School/Program is responsible (Note: Yeates School of Graduate Studies has one (1) main Student Handbook, individual Programs may have their own handbook) that must contain the following:
 - 8.3.8.1. the policies and procedures outlined under this provision (Procedures Section 8.3)

8.3.8.2. a statement confirming that students with disabilities will be accommodated as per Senate Policy 159, including reference to Academic Accommodation Support

8.3.9 determine what other areas relevant to the department/ school/ program should be included in the course outline, ensuring that these are in conformity with overall University policy

RELATED POLICIES:

Policy 46: Undergraduate Grading, Promotion, and Academic Standing

Policy 60: Academic Integrity

Policy 167: Academic Consideration

Policy 168: Grade and Standing Appeals

Policy 164: Graduate Status, Enrolment, and Evaluation

RESCINDED POLICIES:

Policy 145: Undergraduate Course Management

Policy 151: Yeates School of Graduate Studies Course Management

RELATED DOCUMENT:

INC Form