

FOR APPROVAL**PUBLIC****OPEN SESSION**

TO: Committee on Academic Policy and Programs

SPONSOR: Professor Nicholas Rule, Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
CONTACT INFO: (416) 978-3948, vp.academicprograms@utoronto.ca

PRESENTER: Same as above.
CONTACT INFO:

DATE: May 6, 2025 for May 13, 2025

AGENDA ITEM: 10

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

Proposal to change the Petition for Examinations regulation, University of Toronto Mississauga

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

The establishment, termination or major amendment of University-wide policies governing academic regulations are considered by the Committee and forwarded to the Academic Board for approval, for example, but not limited to, policies on academic appeal procedures and standards of professional practice behaviour for students in professional faculties. Minor amendments to University-wide policies may be approved by the Committee. Amendments to divisional academic regulations that will have a major affect in the division or that would require an exception to some element of University-wide policy are considered by the Committee for approval. (AP&P Terms of Reference, Section 4.3)

GOVERNANCE PATH:

1. UTM Academic Affairs Committee [For Approval] (May 8, 2025)
2. **Committee on Academic Policy and Programs [For Approval] (May 13, 2025)**

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

None.

HIGHLIGHTS:

This is a proposal to change the undergraduate Petition for Examinations regulation at the University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM).

In recent years UTM has experienced a notable rise in student petitions to defer final examinations. Additionally, there has been a notable rise in cases where students, having been granted a deferral, fail to attend the rescheduled exam. There is presently no cap on the number of deferrals permitted for a single course. As a result, some students have been granted up to seven exam attempts—including the original—over a period that may extend as long as two years after the course's conclusion. This practice has contributed to extended periods of uncertainty for students and academic delays.

The proposed policy change would limit students to a maximum of two opportunities to write a deferred exam for the same course (in addition to the original exam sitting), resulting in a total of three opportunities to complete the final exam. Each deferral would require a petition with documentation.

The goals of the proposed change are:

- Improve student success.
- Support students in resolving exam deferrals in a timely manner, ensuring they can progress in their studies.
- Provide students who miss exams due to extenuating circumstances with a clearer and more timely understanding of their academic standing and CGPA, enabling them to make informed decisions about future course enrollment.
- Allow students to focus on their current coursework without the added burden of preparing for exams from previous terms or sessions, particularly when those exams have been deferred multiple times.

This change is effective September 1, 2025 for all new and in progress students. Students granted a first or further deferred exam from a previous term scheduled to be written in September 2025 or later and miss that exam, would have, if granted by petition based on supporting documentation, one additional opportunity to write the exam.

Consultation outside the University of Toronto Mississauga has taken place with the John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design, Faculty of Arts and Science and the University of Toronto Scarborough. All divisions were supportive of the change.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Any new financial obligations resulting from this change will be met at the divisional level.

RECOMMENDATION:

Be It Resolved,

THAT the proposed changes to University of Toronto Mississauga regulations, as described in the proposal from the University of Toronto Mississauga dated April 15, 2025, be approved to be effective on September 1, 2025.

DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED:

- Proposal to change the Petition for Examinations Policy, University of Toronto Mississauga

2024- 25 Curriculum Cycle Changes to UTM Academic Regulations

Proposed Change	UTM Academic Calendar: Deferred Examinations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section on Final Examinations: Deferred Examinations • Section on Petitions: Deferred Examinations
Division	University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM)
Proponents	Office of the Registrar, University of Toronto Mississauga
Contact	Renu Kanga Fonseca, Registrar & Assistant Dean, Enrolment Management, University of Toronto Mississauga
Version Date	April 15, 2025
Effective Date	September 1, 2025

Governance Path

1. UTM Academic Affairs Committee [For Approval] (May 8)
2. Committee on Academic Policy and Programs [For Approval] (May 13, 2025)

Summary

Over recent years, the University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM), along with the University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC) and the Faculty of Arts & Science (FAS), has experienced a notable rise in student petitions to defer final examinations. This trend has been observed consistently, with the exception of the pandemic period when in-person final exams were not held. Additionally, there has been a notable rise in cases where students, having been granted a deferral, fail to attend the rescheduled exam.

Currently, UTM students who miss a final exam due to extenuating circumstances may request a deferral by petition. If the student then misses the deferred exam, they may submit a subsequent petition for another deferral. There is presently no cap on the number of deferrals permitted for a single course. As a result, some students have been granted up to seven exam attempts over a period that may extend as long as two years after the course's conclusion.

This practice has contributed to extended periods of uncertainty for students and academic delays. When a deferred exam is approved, the course is temporarily assigned a Standing Deferred (SDF) notation. While the SDF remains in place, the course is excluded from GPA calculations and academic standing assessments. This can significantly affect students' ability to:

- Accurately monitor academic progress
- Meet requirements for Program of Study admission and progression
- Undergo timely cumulative GPA evaluations
- Receive up-to-date academic standing reviews (in good standing, on probation, suspension)
- Meet intended graduation timelines
- Make fully informed decisions about their current and future course enrolment.

Furthermore, when an SDF is eventually replaced with a final grade, it may retroactively alter the student's academic standing in previous sessions, creating additional administrative and academic complexities.

The proposed policy change would limit students to a maximum of two opportunities to write a deferred exam for the same course (in addition to the original exam sitting), resulting in a total of three opportunities to complete the final exam. Each deferral would require a petition with documentation.

The goals behind this proposed change are to:

- Support students in resolving exam deferrals in a timely manner so they can progress in their studies, and to support student success, as deferred exams have demonstrated a lower academic performance, even with the first deferral.
- Provide students who miss exams due to extenuating circumstances with a clearer and more timely understanding of their academic standing and CGPA, enabling them to make informed decisions about future course enrollment.
- Allow students to focus on their current coursework without the added burden of preparing for exams from previous terms or sessions, particularly when those exams have been deferred multiple times.
- Create alignment across divisions. UTM students taking courses in other divisions (e.g., FAS or UTSC) submit deferred exam petitions through UTM. To ensure consistency across divisions, FAS and UTSC are also moving ahead with similar proposals.

Calendar Copy Showing All Changes

Note: Appendix A contains the proposed text, with changes tracked

Current Text	Proposed Text
<p>Section on Final Examinations: Deferred Examinations https://utm.calendar.utoronto.ca/final-examinations#deferred</p> <p>Deferred examinations will normally be scheduled in the week following the regular exam period or, in the case of December exams, during Reading Week in February.</p> <p>Students who miss a deferred exam will receive a mark of zero for the exam in the calculation of the final grade. Only under exceptional circumstances (e.g., hospitalization or severe personal emergency), and when supported with strong and compelling evidence, will a petition for a</p>	<p>Section on Final Examinations: Deferred Examinations https://utm.calendar.utoronto.ca/final-examinations#deferred</p> <p>Examination dates are published well in advance and students are expected to be available during this period.</p> <p>Students who miss their final examination due to illness or unexpected extenuating circumstances may petition to write a deferred final examination. Petitions based on travel, employment or personal plans will not be considered. Students are advised to read Deferred Examinations on the Office of the Registrar website and Petitions: Deferred</p>

further deferred exam be considered. Students who are granted further deferrals of unwritten final examinations will write the exam the next academic session in which the course is offered.

Students who missed their final exam due to illness or extenuating circumstances are advised to read [Deferred Examinations](#) on the Office of the Registrar website for more information.

Section on Petitions: Deferred Examinations

<https://utm.calendar.utoronto.ca/petitions#deferred>

In case of illness or extenuating circumstances at the time of a final examination, afflicted students should consider not writing. Instead, they should seek medical attention on the day of the exam, declare their absence on their ACORN account, and [petition online](#) within 72 hours of the missed examination. All supporting documents and payment must also be submitted within 72 hours of the missed examination. Students cannot re-write an examination that they have already attempted. The examination period is published well in advance and students are expected to be available during this period. Students who make personal commitments during the examination period do so at their own risk.

Students who are granted a petition to defer their final exam are not excused from any of the work of the course, but may be allowed to write their examination at a later date.

Students will be required to pay a non-refundable fee of \$72 for each deferred examination.

Students who miss a deferred examination will receive a mark of zero for the examination in the calculation of the final grade. Only under exceptional circumstances (e.g., hospitalization, severe personal emergency), and when supported by strong documentation, will a petition for a further deferral be granted. Students should seek academic advising in the Office of the Registrar when submitting a

[Examinations](#) in the Academic Calendar, for more information.

Section on Petitions: Deferred Examinations

<https://utm.calendar.utoronto.ca/petitions#deferred>

In case of illness or unexpected extenuating circumstances at the time of a final examination, students should consider not writing. Instead, they should submit a petition for a deferred exam, with supporting documentation, and a non-refundable [deferred exam fee](#) payment within 72 hours of the missed examination. Students cannot re-write an examination that they have already attempted.

When a student's petition for a deferred examination in a course is granted, a notation of SDF ([Standing Deferred](#)) is assigned in place of the original grade on a student's transcript. Courses with the notation of SDF are not included in a [grade point average calculation](#).

Students who are granted a petition to defer their final examination are expected to complete all assignments and assessments for the course.

A student who writes a deferred examination in a course that serves as a prerequisite for subsequent courses may enrol in those courses at the discretion of the department, provided that the term mark in the deferred prerequisite course is at least 60%. Failure to pass the deferred course or to meet other departmental grade standards may result in cancellation of enrolment in the subsequent courses.

First deferred examinations will normally be scheduled in the week following the regular exam period or, in the case of December exams, during Reading Week in February.

Students who miss a first deferred examination will receive a mark of zero for the examination in the calculation of their final grade.

<p>request for a further deferral of their unwritten final examination.</p> <p>Students who are granted further deferrals of unwritten final examinations write the exam the next academic session in which the course is offered.</p> <p>When a student's petition for a deferred examination in a given course is granted, an "SDF" notation is assigned in place of the original grade on a student's transcript. Courses with the notation SDF are not included in grade point average calculation. If the student does not write the deferred examination, the "SDF" notation will be replaced by the original grade with a grade of "0" for the final examination in the calculation of the final grade. If a petition for a further deferral is granted, the SDF notation will remain on record until the deferred exam has been graded and the amended grade has been approved.</p> <p>A student who writes a deferred examination in a course that serves as a prerequisite for subsequent courses may enrol in those courses at the discretion of the department, provided that the term mark in the prerequisite (deferred) course is at least 60%. Failure to pass the prerequisite course or to meet other departmental grade standards may result in cancellation of enrolment in the subsequent courses.</p>	<p>Students have, at most, two opportunities to write a deferred examination for the same course, for a total of three opportunities to sit for an examination.</p> <p>Students who do not write their first deferred examination may petition for a second deferred examination for the same course. A second deferred examination petition will only be considered under extenuating circumstances supported by appropriate documentation. Should a petition for a second deferral be granted, the notation of SDF will be re-added to the student's transcript for the course. Deferred Examination Fee payment instructions will be provided in the petition decision email for granted petitions only.</p> <p>Students who are granted a second deferred examination will write the examination the next academic session in which the course is offered.</p> <p>Students who are granted a second deferral examination and do not write the second deferred examination, will have the SDF notation for the course replaced by a final grade that includes a mark of zero for the examination. Students are advised to contact the Office of the Registrar to discuss their situation and engage in academic planning.</p>
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Rationale

In recent years, UTM, like the FAS and UTSC, has observed a significant increase in petitions for first exam deferrals, and further exam deferrals (that is, subsequent deferred exams beyond the first deferral) for the same course, as shown in **Table 1** below. This trend has been observed consistently, with the exception of the pandemic period when in-person final exams were not held. Additionally, there has been an increase in the number of students who, after having their petitions for deferred exams approved, fail to attend the rescheduled exam. Examples of this are provided in **Table 2** below.

The introduction of a policy to state that students have at most two opportunities to write a deferred exam for the same course will help to:

- Support students in resolving exam deferrals in a timely manner so they can progress in their studies, and to support student success, as deferred exams have demonstrated a lower academic performance, even with the first deferral.

- Provide students who miss exams due to extenuating circumstances with a clearer and more timely understanding of their academic standing and CGPA, enabling them to make informed decisions about future course enrollment.
- Allow students to focus on their current coursework without the added burden of preparing for exams from previous terms or sessions, particularly when those exams have been deferred multiple times.
- Create alignment with FAS and UTSC who are making similar changes to their deferred exams policies

Table 1: Increase in deferred exams after the first approved deferral, for the same course

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Original (regular) Exam						
1st Deferred Exam						
2nd Deferred Exam	542	310	266	604	1064	898
3 rd Deferred Exam	96	33	29	11	213	197
4th Deferred Exam	21	9	10	24	60	77
5th Deferred Exam	6	1	4	4	20	36
6th Deferred Exam	1	2	0	1	9	16
7th Deferred Exam	1	0	0	0	2	6
Totals	667	355	309	644	1368	1230

Table 2: Deferred Exam Show Rates (includes all deferred exams, i.e. First and further)

Deferred Exam Period	Number of students scheduled to write a deferred exam	Number of students who did not write	Percentage of students scheduled to write a deferred exam that did not write
February 2025	1523	667	43.78%
August 2024	353	123	34.84%
June 2024	212	68	32.07%
April 2024	1797	588	32.78%
February 2024	1335	513	38.43%
December 2023*	29	23	79.98%
August 2023	353	113	34.84%
June 2023	238	88	32.07%
April 2023	2293	700	30.53%
February 2023	1635	571	39.92%

*Note: In December 2023, further deferrals from previous sessions were granted as an exception (courses not offered in 20239)

Impact

Students who miss a second opportunity, granted by petition, to write a deferred exam for the same course are advised to contact the Office of the Registrar to discuss their situation and engage in academic planning. Depending upon each student's individual circumstances and any supporting documentation that they provide that speaks to the timeframe of the missed deferred exam, the options that might be available to them following a missed second deferred exam would vary and might include a [Late Withdrawal after the Drop Date \(LWD\)](#) from the course or a petition for [Late Withdrawal Without Academic Penalty \(WDR\)](#) from the course. Only in extenuating circumstances supported by appropriate documentation, would a petition for a third deferral of an exam be considered. In the absence of appropriate documentation to support a student missing a second opportunity to write a deferred exam, it may be possible for the student to receive a mark of zero on the final exam.

Implementation

Upon University governance approval, the change will be implemented through the following means:

- UTM Academic Calendar: this change will be included on the 'New for 2025-2026' webpage designed to highlight new program, policy and regulation changes. The 2025- 26 UTM Academic Calendar will take effect as of September 1, 2025.
- UTM Office of the Registrar website: once approved, a notice announcing the update will be posted on the Exams webpages and Petitions webpages to ensure students are notified as promptly as possible of the change to take effect September 2025.
- At the time of approval for a second exam deferral, the student will be notified in their petition approval notification that this is their second and final deferral exam for the course.
- Communications to academic units and other UTM offices: once approved, stakeholders will be notified in writing of the academic regulation change to keep academic advisors and departmental leadership and administrators informed. Colleagues will be asked to direct questions from students to the Office of the Registrar.
- Students granted a first or further deferred exam from a previous term scheduled to be written in September 2025 or later and miss that exam, would have, if granted by petition based on supporting documentation, one additional opportunity to write the exam.

Resource Implications

No additional resource implications. Resources will be part of the regular Academic Calendar production process. Resources required to communicate changes to stakeholders as well as implement changes to the different UTM websites and systems will be supported by the Office of the Registrar.

Consultation

The UTM Office of the Registrar consulted with the following stakeholders:

- **UTM Office of the Registrar** (March 2025) - Supports the proposed policy change
- **UTM Office of the Dean** (March 2025) - Supports the proposed policy change
- **UTM Academic Unit Chairs and Directors** (April 2025) - Support the proposed policy change
- **UTM Accessibility Services** (April 2025) - Supports the proposed policy change
- **UTM Committee on Standing** (April 2025) - Supports the proposed policy change
- **University of Toronto Mississauga Students Union** (VP Equity, VP University Affairs, Programs & Research Coordinator) (March 2025) - Supports the proposed policy change
- **University Registrar's Office** (April 2025) - Supports the proposed policy change, following minor revisions which have been incorporated
- **Office of the Registrar, U of T Scarborough** (April 2025) - Supports the proposed policy change
- **Office of the Faculty Registrar, Faculty of Arts & Science** (April 2025) - Supports the proposed policy change, following minor revisions which have been incorporated
- **Office of the Registrar, John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design** (April 2025) – Supports the proposed policy change

Appendix A: Proposed Changes to UTM Academic Calendar Text

Notes on tracked changes:

- Relocated text appears ~~green strikethrough~~ (removed), and green underlined (relocated)
- Removed text is ~~red strikethrough~~
- New text is red underlined

Section on Final Examinations: Deferred Examinations

<https://utm.calendar.utoronto.ca/final-examinations#deferred>

~~Deferred examinations will normally be scheduled in the week following the regular exam period or, in the case of December exams, during Reading Week in February.~~

~~Students who miss a deferred exam will receive a mark of zero for the exam in the calculation of the final grade. Only under exceptional circumstances (e.g., hospitalization or severe personal emergency), and when supported with strong and compelling evidence, will a petition for a further deferred exam be considered. Students who are granted further deferrals of unwritten final examinations will write the exam the next academic session in which the course is offered.~~

~~The examination period is~~ Examination dates are published well in advance and students are expected to be available during this period.

Students who miss~~ed~~ their final exam~~ination~~ due to illness or unexpected extenuating circumstances may petition to write a deferred final examination. Petitions based on travel, employment or personal plans will not be considered. Students are advised to read [Deferred Examinations](#) on the Office of the Registrar website and [Petitions: Deferred Examinations in the Academic Calendar](#), for more information.

Petitions Section: Deferred Examinations

<https://utm.calendar.utoronto.ca/petitions#deferred>

In case of illness or unexpected extenuating circumstances at the time of a final examination, ~~afflicted~~ students should consider not writing. Instead, they should submit a petition for a deferred exam, with supporting documentation, and a non-refundable deferred exam fee payment ~~seek medical attention on the day of the exam, declare their absence on their ACORN account, and petition online within 72 hours of the missed examination. All supporting documents and payment must also be submitted within 72 hours of the missed examination.~~ Students cannot re-write an examination that they have already attempted.

~~The examination period is published well in advance and students are expected to be available during this period. Students who make personal commitments during the examination period do so at their own risk.~~

When a student's petition for a deferred examination in a ~~given~~ course is granted, a notation of SDF (Standing Deferred) an "SDF" notation is assigned in place of the original grade on a student's transcript. Courses with the notation of SDF are not included in a grade point average calculation.

Students who are granted a petition to defer their final exam are expected to complete all assignments and assessments for the course. ~~not excused from any of the work of the course,~~

~~but may be allowed to write their examination at a later date.~~

~~Students will be required to pay a non-refundable fee of \$72 for each deferred examination. You can see the fee posted at <https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/registrar/admin-fees>.~~

A student who writes a deferred examination in a course that serves as a prerequisite for subsequent courses may enrol in those courses at the discretion of the department, provided that the term mark in the ~~prerequisite~~ (deferred) prerequisite course is at least 60%. Failure to pass the deferred prerequisite course or to meet other departmental grade standards may result in cancellation of enrolment in the subsequent courses.

~~First deferred~~ Deferred examinations will normally be scheduled in the week following the regular exam period or, in the case of December exams, during Reading Week in February.

Students who miss a first deferred examination will receive a mark of zero for the examination in the calculation of the final grade. ~~Only under exceptional circumstances (e.g., hospitalization, severe personal emergency), and when supported by strong documentation, will a petition for a further deferral be granted. Students should seek academic advising in the Office of the Registrar when submitting a request for a further deferral of their unwritten final examination.~~

Students have, at most, two opportunities to write a deferred examination for the same course, for a total of three opportunities to sit for an examination.

Students who do not write their first deferred examination may petition for a second deferred examination for the same course. A second deferred examination petition will only be considered under extenuating circumstances supported by appropriate documentation. Should a petition for a second deferral be granted, the notation of SDF will be re-added to the student's transcript for the course. Deferred Examination Fee payment instructions will be provided in the petition decision email for granted petitions only.

Students who are granted a second deferred examination will ~~further deferrals of unwritten final examinations~~ write the exam the next academic session in which the course is offered.

Students who are granted a second deferred ~~deferral~~ examination and do not write the second deferred examination, will have the SDF notation for the course replaced by a final grade that includes a mark of zero for the examination. Students are advised to contact the Office of the Registrar to discuss their situation and engage in academic planning. ~~When a student's petition for a deferred examination in a given course is granted, an "SDF" notation is assigned in place of the original grade on a student's transcript. Courses with the notation SDF are not included in grade point average calculation. If the student does not write the deferred examination, the "SDF" notation will be replaced by the original grade with a grade of "0" for the final examination in the calculation of the final grade. If a petition for a further deferral is granted, the SDF notation will remain on record until the deferred exam has been graded and the amended grade has been approved.~~

~~A student who writes a deferred examination in a course that serves as a prerequisite for subsequent courses may enrol in those courses at the discretion of the department, provided that the term mark in the prerequisite (deferred) course is at least 60%. Failure to pass the prerequisite course or to meet other departmental grade standards may result in cancellation of enrolment in the subsequent courses.~~