

University of Rhode Island Faculty Senate
October 17, 2019

Faculty Senate Academic Calendar Subcommittee

Report on Final Examinations and Academic Calendar Scheduling

Background

During the 2018-2019 academic year, several issues surrounding academic calendars arose, including the condensed timing of the fall semester and days without classes during the fall, including Columbus Day, Veterans Day, Election Day, and the Wednesday before Thanksgiving. A brief timeline of events that occurred involving these issues follows:

- September 20, 2018 Faculty Senate Meeting: The URI chapter of the ACLU proposed URI students and faculty having Election Day off during presidential and mid-term elections, and a discussion in Senate ensued. The final motion was to request that the Provost declare November 6, 2018 a university-sanctioned event and that the Academic Calendar Subcommittee look into accommodations for having Election Day off.
- October 18, 2018 Faculty Senate Meeting: It was reported that the Academic Calendar Subcommittee had met to discuss having Election Day off and that they were subsequently looking into the number of days URI has for final exams. The Provost decided to not allow November 6, 2018 to be a university-sanctioned event.
- January 24, 2019 Faculty Senate Meeting: A discussion occurred on having Indigenous Peoples' Day instead of Columbus day, and it was recommended by the Provost that the official calendar be as is (Columbus Day) and having faculty and students celebrate Indigenous Peoples' Day on Columbus Day. Senator Meenach reported that the subcommittee is looking into shortening the final exam period.
- February 21, 2019 Faculty Senate Meeting: Senator Meenach reported that in order to allow Election Day off for 2020, it would require having classes on Veterans Day, due to University Manual limitations. A motion was made to suspend the requirement in that University Manual that calendar changes cannot occur within 18 months of the given semester to allow the Academic Calendar Subcommittee time to make changes to the 2020-2021 calendar. Senator Meenach brought up the possibility of changing the final exam period from 7 days to 6 days and exam times from 3 hours to 2 hours and eliminating the required weekday reading day (allowing for weekends to count as reading days), and a discussion in Senate followed.
- March 21, 2019 Faculty Senate Meeting: A motion to remove the requirement of a weekday reading day was approved. A motion to decrease the minimum number of final exam days from seven days to six days was approved. A revised 2020-2021 calendar incorporating having Election Day off and removing a final exam day was approved.
- April 18, 2019 Faculty Senate Meeting: Senator Meenach reported that the Academic Calendar Subcommittee will conduct a survey regarding final exams, and that changes might be implemented as soon as Fall 2021.

Informational Items

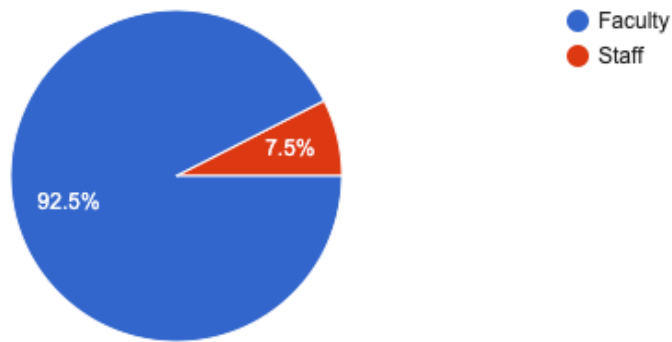
1. Fall 2019 final exam survey results (faculty and students)
2. Comparison of New England Fall 2018 Academic Calendars
3. Current Kingston Fall 2019 final exam schedule
4. Kingston Fall 2019 final exam schedule if only five days of exams
5. Email from Rachel regarding Academic Testing Center timing

Fall 2019 Final Exam Survey Results - Faculty:

258 responses (114,6 faculty) = 22.5% response rate

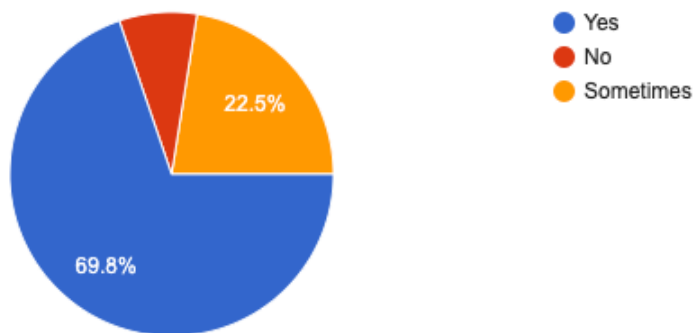
Please designate if you are faculty or staff below.

254 responses



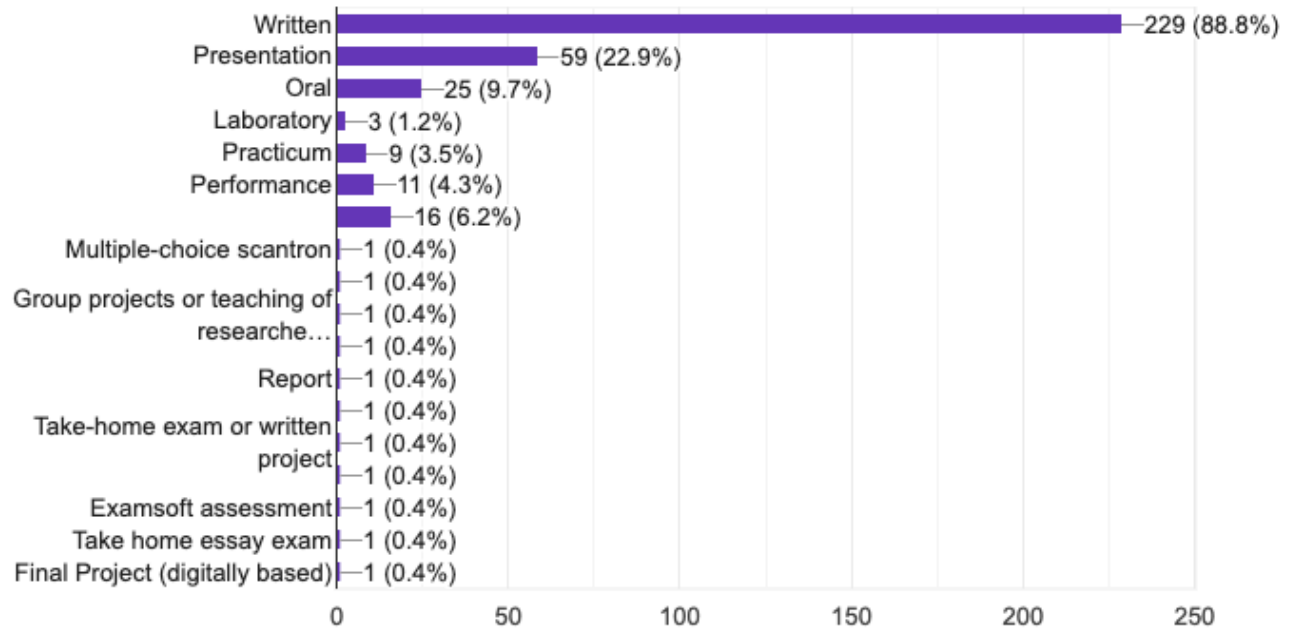
Do you typically give a final exam for your courses?

258 responses



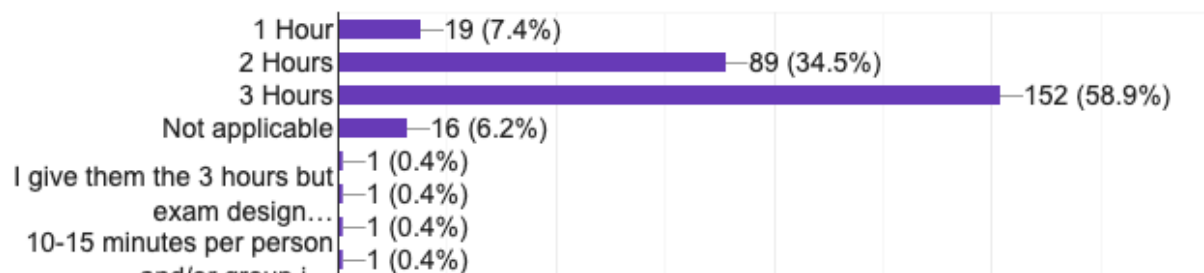
What type of final examinations do you typically give (select all that apply)?

258 responses



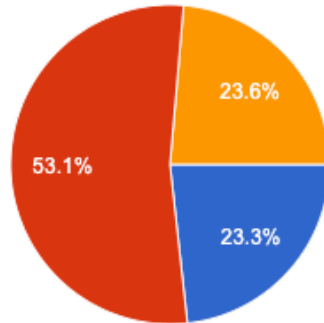
How much time do you typically give students for final exams? Select all that apply.

258 responses



Given the following final examination period options, which would you prefer?

258 responses



- 3-hour final exams (current schedule):
8:00-11:00am, 11:30am-2:30pm,
3:00-6:00pm, 7:00-10:00pm.
- 2-hour final exams: 8:00-10:00am,
10:30am-12:30pm, 1:30-3:30pm,
4:00-6:00pm, 7:00 - 9:00pm
- A combination of 2- or 3-hour final
exams: 8:00-10:00am,
10:30am-12:30pm, 1:30-3:30pm,
4:00-6:00pm, 7:00 - 10:00pm

Summary of faculty concerns:

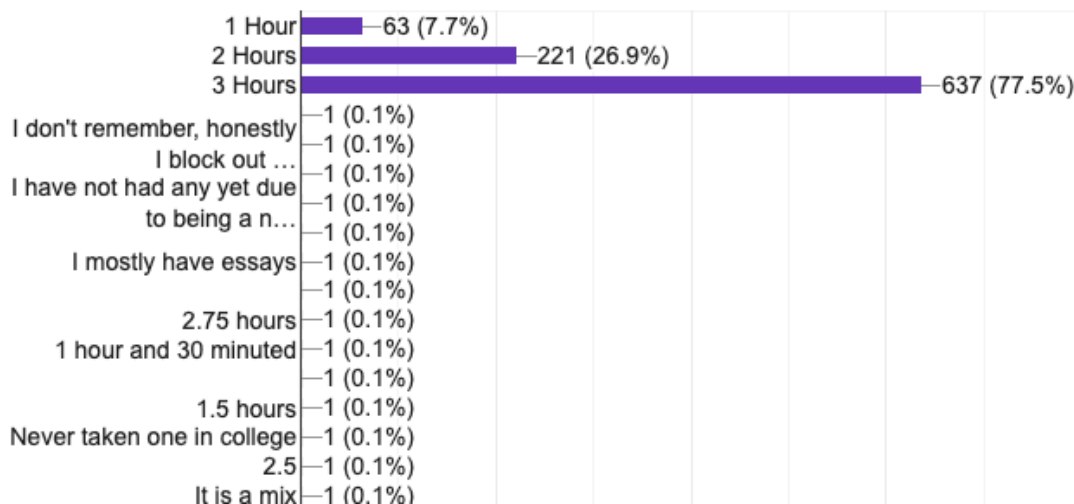
- Implementing combination of 2 hour and 3 hour exams would be different
- Disability accommodations
- Scheduling 5 exam slows per day increases the likelihood of having three+ exams in one day
- Reducing the final exam time could ease the requirements of earning a degree or reduce the rigor
- Final exam length should be related to the number of credits/amount of class time
- Weekend exam times in December should be included to shorten the exam period
- 2 hours will not give students enough time to complete the exam

Fall 2019 Final Exam Survey Results - Students:

822 responses (14,653 students) = 7.1% response rate

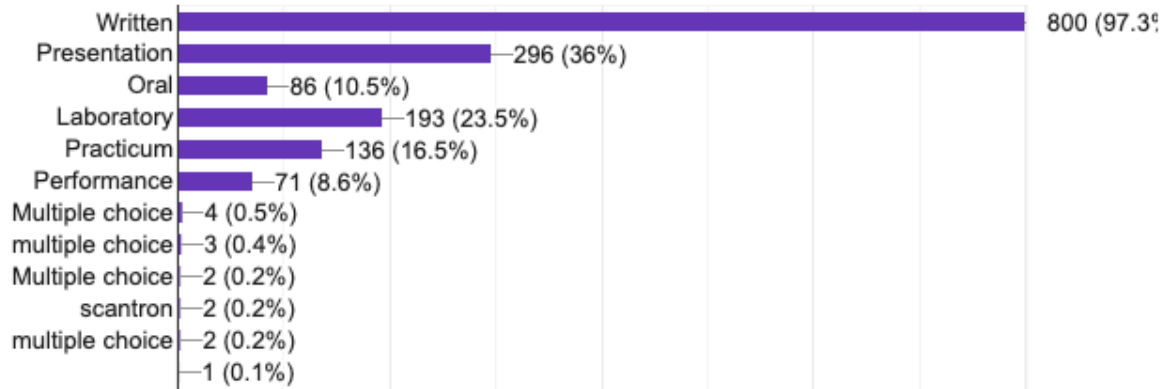
How much time are you typically given to complete final exams? Select all that apply.

822 responses



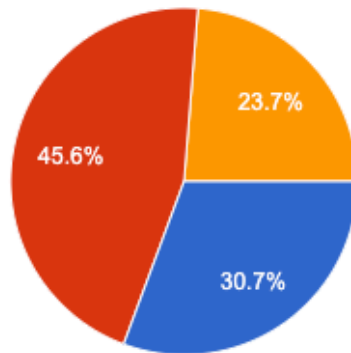
What type of final examinations are you typically given (select all that apply)?

822 responses



Given the following final examination period options, which would you prefer?

822 responses



- 3-hour final exams (current schedule):
8:00-11:00am, 11:30am-2:30pm,
3:00-6:00pm, 7:00-10:00pm.
- 2-hour final exams: 8:00-10:00am,
10:30am-12:30pm, 1:30-3:30pm,
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- A combination of 2- or 3-hour final
exams: 8:00-10:00am,
10:30am-12:30pm, 1:30-3:30pm,
4:00-6:00pm, 7:00 - 10:00pm

Summary of student concerns:

- That faculty will try to squeeze 3 hour exam into 2 hours
- Burnout from 3 hour exam time
- Students with disabilities

Comparison of Fall 2018 Schedules of New England Public Universities:

School	Exam Days	Exam Length	Exam Times/# Sessions	Exam Period
URI	7	3 hours	8am-10pm/4 Sessions	Th-Sa, M-Th, Dec 13-15, 17-20
UMaine	5	2 hours	8am-830pm/4 Sessions	M-F, Dec 17-21
UVT	4	2.75 hours	730am-1015pm/ 5 Sessions	M-T,Th-F, Dec 10-11, 13-14
UNH	5	2 hours	8am-8pm/5 Sessions	W-F, M-T, Dec 12-14, 17-18
UMass-Lowell	6	3 hours	8am-930pm/4 Sessions	Sa, M-F, Dec 15, 17-21
UMass-Amherst	5	2 hours	8am-8pm/4 Sessions	F, M-Th, Dec 14, 17-20
UMass-Dartmouth	6	3 hours	8am-930pm/4 Sessions	W-Sa, M-T
UConn	7	?	?	M-Su, Dec 10-16
RIC	5	2 hours	8am-8pm/5 Sessions	W-F, M-T, Dec 12-14, 17-18
CCRI	4	3 hours	830am-3pm/2 Sessions	M-Th, Dec 17-20

Current Kingston Fall 2019 final exam schedule:

EXAM DATE / TIME	8:00 am – 11:00 am	11:30 am – 2:30 pm	3:00 pm – 6:00 pm	7:00 pm – 10:00 pm
Thurs. Dec 12	TR 9:30	TR 12:30	TR 3:30, TR 4, TR 4:30, R 4-6:45	Common Exam
Fri. Dec 13	MWF 9	MWF 2	MWF 3, MW 3:30	Common Exam
Mon. Dec 16	Common Exam	MWF 12	MWF 1	MWF 4, MW 4, 4:30, M 4-6:45, M6#
Tues. Dec. 17	TR 8	TR 2	Common Exam	TR 5, TR 5:30, T 4-6:45, T 6#
Wed. Dec 18	MWF 8	MWF 10	MW 5, MW 5:30, W 4-6:45,	W6#
Thurs. Dec 19	MWF 11	TR 11	Common Exam	R6#
Fri. Dec 20	Common Exam	Common Exam	--	—

Kingston Fall 2019 final exam schedule if only five days of exams (as an example):

EXAM DATE/TIME	8:00 am - 10:00am	10:30am - 12:30pm	1:30pm - 3:30pm	4:00pm - 6:00pm	7:00pm - 9:00pm
Thurs. Dec 12	TR 9:30	TR 12:30	Common Exam	TR 3:30, TR 4, TR 4:30, R 4-6:45	R 6#
Fri. Dec 13	MWF 9	MWF 11	MWF 2	MWF 3, MW 3:30	Common Exam
Mon. Dec 16	Common Exam	MWF 12	MWF 1	Common Exam	MWF 4, MW 4, 4:30, M4-6:45, M6#
Tues. Dec 17	TR 8	TR 11	TR 2	Common Exam	TR 5, TR 5:30, T 4-6:45, T 6#
Wed. Dec 18	MWF 8	MWF 10	Common Exam	MW 5, MW 5:30, W 4-6:45	W 6#

Information from Rachel Leveillee regarding Academic Testing Center timing (February 2019):

- Randomly selected 3 half days to count
- Results:
 - Exams 2 hours or less = 82
 - Exams 2.5 hours = 14
 - Exams 3 hours = 9
- The majority of faculty that use the ATC do not write final exams intended to take 3 hours.

Future Implications and Support

- Information will need to be disseminated to faculty and students about the change
- Will need to change calendars from Fall 2021 and beyond (by February)
- The Office of the Advancement of Teaching and Learning will provide support to faculty needing to restructure the final exams and/or in course preparation in general.