



Severe Examination Distress

- A. Purpose of Policy:** Students are expected to make all efforts to take examinations as scheduled. In an effort to be fair both to students who experience severe distress, and to protect the integrity of the College of Law's assessment system, the College of Law has developed these policies and procedures regarding severe distress.
- B. Application:** This policy applies to final examinations and graded midterm examinations. For other graded assignments, such as oral arguments and presentations, the provisions in the professor's syllabus will control. If the professor's syllabus is silent, then the policies and procedures below may be used as guidelines to address the situation.
- C. Decision About Severe Distress:** The Associate Dean of Academics is authorized to determine whether a student is experiencing severe distress and whether some form of accommodation regarding the examination is warranted. Examples of severe distress include issues relating to the health of the student or a close family member, death of a close family member, or other issues judged by the Associate Dean to be sufficiently extraordinary. The Associate Dean has discretion whether to grant an accommodation; this decision is final. The Associate Dean may seek outside advice and may require documentation of a medical condition. The Associate Dean of Academics, or the Dean, may designate another faculty or staff member to make decisions authorized under this policy when the Associate Dean is not available.
- D. Student Procedure:** If a student seeks an accommodation for severe distress before or during the examination, the student should immediately notify the proctor, Registrar, or Associate Dean of Academics. If the student seeks an accommodation for severe distress after the time scheduled for the examination, the student normally should notify the Associate Dean of Academics within 24 hours of the scheduled time for the examination. To help preserve anonymity, the student should avoid communicating with the instructor.
- E. Possible Accommodations for Severe Distress:** The Associate Dean, or his or her designee, may accommodate severe distress in any of a number of ways. These include, but are not limited to:
1. Giving the student additional time to complete the examination, either in the designated examination room or elsewhere.
 2. Allowing the student to take the exam at a later time (this option is available only for a student who has not already started the examination or seen the examination), keeping in mind the College's grading deadlines.

3. Requesting the instructor to provide an alternative final examination; in this case, the student should be made aware that the examination might be graded without anonymity.
4. Allowing the student to take an incomplete (I) in the course and retake the examination with the same professor, if practicable, within the next two semesters. This option is most practicable for one-semester required courses.
5. Allowing a student to withdraw from the course. If the course is a required course, the student should be required to retake the course as soon as practicable.

F. Student's Failure or Refusal to Follow the Decision: If the student refuses to follow the Associate Dean's decision, or fails to complete the option selected, the student will receive a 0.0 (for courses graded on the 4.0 scale) or U (for courses graded on the S/U scale) for that course.

G. Impact on Other Students: If a distressed student disrupts the examination room, the Associate Dean (or designee) may extend the time of the examination for all students in the room. The Associate Dean may, in his or her discretion, report the general circumstances of the extension to the professor whose examination was being taken. If one or more other students reasonably assist the distressed student and thus lose time on the examination, the Associate Dean (or designee), as a matter of equity, may extend the time of the examination for those students so they receive the benefit of the full time period designated by the professor.

Cross-references: ADA Guidelines, Exam Conflict Policy, Grades Policy.

Amended by the faculty on April 8, 2009; November 14, 2017; February 26, 2020.