

# Examination Policy

**Policy Type:** School of Pharmacy

**Responsible Office:** Dean's Office

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## Policy Statement and Purpose

All students, course coordinators, and proctors will follow a common set of procedures for examinations administered to Doctor of Pharmacy degree seeking students at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) School of Pharmacy (SOP). All examinations are to be administered in person.

Noncompliance with this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. VCU supports an environment free from retaliation. Retaliation against any employee who brings forth a good faith concern, asks a clarifying question, or participates in an investigation is prohibited.

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## Who Should Know This Policy

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Students, course coordinators, and proctors at VCU SOP are responsible for knowing this policy and familiarizing themselves with its contents and provisions.

### Definitions

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None

## Contacts

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The Dean's Office (through the Curriculum Committee) officially interprets this policy. The Curriculum Committee is responsible for obtaining approval for any revisions as required by the policy *Creating and Maintaining Policies and Procedures* through the appropriate governance structures. Please direct policy questions to the Curriculum Committee Chair at VCU SOP.

## Policy Specifics and Procedures

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1. **Student Procedures:** The following are the student's responsibilities with regards to the examination policy.
  - a. Students must arrive at least ten minutes before the scheduled start time of an examination, planning their travel in anticipation of traffic delays. Students should not leave and reenter the examination room once the exam has started. However, if a student must leave the examination room, he/she may be asked to complete the sign-in/sign-out sheet maintained by the proctor(s). The student should bring all test materials to a proctor when he or she signs out. For computerized exams, the student should lower his or her computer screen so other students cannot see it.
  - b. Students are expected to be seated and ready to start their examination at the scheduled time. Proctors are not obligated to repeat verbal instructions given prior to the start of the examination or additional exam clarifications to students who have arrived late and students will not be granted additional time to complete the exam. Once a student turns in an exam, no other student is allowed to enter the room and begin taking the exam. Students who are tardy and unable to take the exam should submit for an excused absence by the Office of Admissions and Student Services.
  - c. Students will be required to purchase and use their own computer privacy screen during exams that are administered on the computer. (Ex. Exemplify, Canvas).
  - d. Paper examinations must be kept face down until all students have received their examination materials and are instructed to begin.
  - e. Students are responsible for seeking exam accommodations under the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), from the Division for Academic Success (<http://www.healthsciences.vcu.edu/das>). Students who are granted an ADA accommodation for examinations should inform the course coordinator(s) at all applicable campuses of their intention to utilize the accommodation at least one week prior to the exam date to guarantee appropriate arrangements.
  - f. Unless an assigned seating plan is posted students will self-select seats in the examination room as they enter. When possible, students should maintain an unoccupied seat or aisle between individuals. Students must relocate at the proctor's request – no reason need be given and no inappropriate behavior is implied.
  - g. All items that are not required for taking the exam must be placed in the front of the room or at a space designated by the proctor. Phones must be turned off, left with belongings, and not accessed during the exam.
  - h. Unless expressly stated, by the course coordinator, only the examination and any items required to take the exam – such as a laptop for exams administered electronically or writing instruments for paper exams - may be kept with the student during the examination. Prohibited items include, but are not limited to, those listed in Appendix 1.
  - i. Students are expected to work alone on all exams unless explicitly told at the beginning of

the exam by a proctor that group work is permitted.

- j. Students may only ask questions to determine if there are errors or mistakes on an exam. They may not ask content-related questions. Allowing students to ask content-related questions may pose an unfair advantage to some students as well as an unfair advantage to some locations given that students take exams on different campuses and testing accommodation sites.
- k. Students are reminded to uphold the highest standards of personal integrity and to report cheating and opportunities to cheat to the VCU Office of Student Conduct & Academic Integrity and the Course Coordinator.
- l. All components of an exam (e.g. answer sheets, computer scored test sheets, scratch paper, and the exam itself) must be handed in at the time specified by the proctor. Only when the course coordinator/proctor gives approval may students retain specific components of the exam.
- m. Students should be aware that all classroom activities, including exams, may be recorded.
- n. Exams are the intellectual property of and belong to the faculty members. Students may not distribute them in any manner without permission of the faculty.
- o. Violation of any component of this policy may result in penalties.
- p. Video recordings during exams or electronic exam data may be assessed to assure academic honesty and adherence to the VCU Honor System and Standards of Academic Conduct

**2. Course Coordinator Procedures:** The following are the course coordinator's responsibilities with regards to the examination policy.

- a. The course coordinator shall announce to the class, in advance of the exam, which materials may be used during an upcoming exam. Unless expressly stated, only the examination and items required to take the exam may be kept with the student during the exam. Prohibited items include, but are not limited to, those listed in Appendix 1.
- b. In addition to the VCU Honor System Pledge, "On my honor, I have neither given nor received aid on this assignment, and I pledge that I am in compliance with the VCU Honor System" all exams should contain the following statement on the front, in the instructions for completing the exam, unless students are permitted by the course coordinator to keep the exam or unless graded exams are returned to students by the instructor:

"Possessing, copying, photographing, distributing, reading, sharing, or otherwise using any part of this exam outside of the examination period, without the express approval of the course coordinator, is a violation of the cheating provisions of the VCU Honor System."

The text is designed to indicate to a student given an exam paper or questions from an exam by another student that they must not study this particular old exam/information nor should a student who has taken an exam share the content of the exam with another student. Nonetheless, course coordinators are encouraged to minimize the verbatim re-use of exam questions.

- c. All exam materials should be stored in a secure, locked area when not in use.
- d. Course coordinators or designated proctors may maintain a sign-in/sign-out sheet for students who leave and return to the exam room during the exam.
- e. Students seeking to use an ADA accommodation for an exam should have notified the course coordinator(s) at all applicable campuses of their intention to utilize ADA accommodations at least a week before the exam and should have made appropriate arrangements for taking the exam.
- f. If using paper exams, it is recommended to number and count the amount of copies that are made and distributed. It is best practice to randomize the questions even when using paper

exams.

- g. Course coordinators are ultimately responsible for the proper proctoring of their exams in accordance with the Proctor Procedures below. There should be a 1:25 proctor to student ratio for each test. Course coordinators should make sure proctors can contact them by phone on short notice – sharing cell phone numbers is strongly encouraged.
- h. Once a student turns in an exam, no other student is allowed to enter the room and begin taking the exam. Students who are tardy and unable to take the exam should submit for an excused absence by the Office of Admissions and Student Services.
- i. Students must communicate with faculty to schedule a missed exam within 24 hours of returning to campus following an absence. Faculty may schedule make-up exams or assignments prior to receiving confirmation of the excused absence through the Electronic Absence Request System (EARS). However, a grade for the exam or assignment will not count toward the student's overall course grade until an excused absence has been granted.
- j. Course coordinators who do not return exams to students must retain hand-graded exams and/or computer grading sheets for at least 1 year after the end of the semester or 1 year after the last action on an appeal. Exam materials should then be discarded in a secure manner.
- k. Course coordinators are responsible for ensuring all faculty, staff, graduate students, residents and fellows proctoring exams in their course are familiar with these examination procedures and any exceptions.

**3. Proctor Procedures:** The following are the proctor's responsibilities with regards to the examination policy. The role of proctors is to maintain academic integrity during an exam. It is a major responsibility. Failure to perform the responsibilities below may result in individuals becoming ineligible to serve as proctors; which in some cases, jeopardizes their position within the School.

- a. Prior to the Exam Procedure:
  - 1) Proctors may be course coordinators, faculty, staff members, preceptors, graduate students, or residents or fellows; but in all cases they must have read and familiarized themselves with their responsibilities as outlined below and those of the students taking exams before their first assignment. Proctors must stay in close contact with course coordinators concerning the details of administering each exam.
  - 2) Proctor to student ratio should be roughly 1:25.
  - 3) At the start of each semester and/or before every exam, proctors will receive confirmation of the dates, start times, duration and exam room location from the course coordinator. Proctors must contact the appropriate person for clarification if the instructions they receive are ambiguous.
    - a) For exams at Inova, the appropriate person is the Inova course co-coordinator.
    - b) For exams at UVA, the appropriate person is either the UVA course co-coordinator or designated appointee.
  - 4) Proctors and course coordinators should exchange contact information (ideally including cell phone numbers) at the start of each semester to efficiently handle unforeseen situations.
  - 5) Proctors must assume that an exam will proceed unless (a) they have definite information that it is canceled or (b) either the Inova, UVA, or VCU campus is closed due to an emergency (e.g. weather-related). Official sources of closure information are:
    - a) Email message from Inova
    - b) Email message from UVA
    - c) VCU - [www.alert.vcu.edu](http://www.alert.vcu.edu)

- d) Email from School of Pharmacy Dean's Office
- 6) If for any reason a proctor cannot fulfill a proctoring assignment, it is their responsibility to
  - (a) immediately inform the course coordinator, and (b) obtain the agreement of a colleague to fill in and provide contact details for the replacement proctor to the course coordinator. For graduate students, when this approach is impossible, the originally scheduled proctor must inform their department's graduate program director who will then assign a replacement proctor.
- b. During the Exam Procedure:
  - 1) Proctors should be in the exam room at least 10 minutes before the scheduled start time of an exam.
  - 2) Before passing out exams, proctors should:
    - a) Remind students that items not required to take the exam must be placed in the front of the room or at a space designated by the proctor. Phones must be turned off, left with belongings, and not accessed during the exam.
    - b) Announce to the class which materials may be used during examinations. Unless expressly stated, only the exam and writing utensils for paper exams or a laptop for electronically administered exams may be kept with students during the exam. Prohibited items include, but are not limited to, those listed in Appendix 1.
    - c) Remind students that paper exams must be kept face down until all students have received their exam materials and are instructed to begin. During the exam students may only ask questions to determine if there are errors or mistakes in the exam. They may not ask content-related questions.
    - d) Proctors will ensure that students have their privacy screens on their computers prior to the start of any computer examination
  - 3) Starting 10 minutes before, during an exam, and until all papers have been collected, proctors will vigilantly and continuously observe students. They will engage in no other activities including but not limited to reading papers, using a laptop/PC/smart phone or talking on the phone (except as noted below).
  - 4) Proctors should informally address minor problems; for example, asking students to remain quiet or to move to a different location in the exam room to permit easier observation.
  - 5) Proctors should provide a notification to students stating the time left for the exam period, at some point during the last 10 minutes of the exam.
  - 6) Except in emergency situations, a lone proctor must not leave the room. At least one proctor must be present in an exam room at all times. Proctors may use cell phones for only the purpose of communicating exam-related information between campuses or for summoning assistance.
  - 7) Proctors will collect all exam materials as students exit the exam room. Proctors will return all exam materials to the course coordinator or to authorized staff for secure storage.
  - 8) During or immediately after an exam, non-faculty proctors will note and report to the faculty member present or the course coordinator instances in which a student taking an exam does not appear to fully meet their responsibilities as listed under the "Student Procedures." This includes reporting any potential improprieties, rudeness, or behavior that raises the suspicion of academic dishonesty.

#### 4. Exam Review Process (if applicable)

- a. All items that are not required for taking the exam review must be placed in the front of the room or at the space designated by the proctor. Phones must be turned off, left with belongings, and not accessed during the exam review.
- b. Unless expressly stated, by the course coordinator, only the examination and any items required to view the exam – such as a laptop for exams administered electronically- may be kept with the student during the examination review. Prohibited items include, but are not limited to, those listed in Appendix 1.
- c. Taking pictures or recordings of the exam review or examination itself will be considered as a violation of the VCU Honor Code.

**Forms: Remote Examination Policy During Prolonged School Disasters\* (pending Faculty approval)**

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1IXu1izx\\_8rT1pfBurM5gWZhcXw2hGyf0wVzf6rTdiHA/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1IXu1izx_8rT1pfBurM5gWZhcXw2hGyf0wVzf6rTdiHA/edit?usp=sharing)

**Related Documents**

Appendix 1. Examples of items that students are not allowed to keep with them during an exam: *(Unless deemed appropriate use based on ADA, medical or religious reasons)*

- Cell phones
- Smart watch (i.e. Apple Watch)
- Pagers
- Electronic digital devices
- Recording devices
- Photographic devices
- Food
- Uncovered beverages
- Labeled beverage containers
- Tobacco products
- Hats, visors, sunglasses, or other head or face covering
- Headphones or earpieces

**Revision History**

This policy supersedes the following archived policies:

<b>Approval/Revision Date</b>	<b>Title</b> Examination Policy
Approval March 12, 2019	
Revision approved by Curriculum Committee 08/11/21	
Revision approved by Faculty 09/01/21	
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**FAQ**

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There are no FAQ associated with this policy and procedures.