CIA University Accreditation Program Preferred Practices

This document conveys the CIA’s position on practices that the Institute considers the preferred approach for accredited courses.

Consideration to the following preferred practices should be given in calculating candidate final grades within the required 80 percent from midterm and final examination as specified in section 10 a. of the UAP Policy. The remaining 20 percent of the grade calculation is at the discretion of the course instructor.

Where an instructor plans to deviate from preferred practices, they should provide advance notice to the accreditation actuary (AcA) at their university, and the AcA should work with the CIA to ensure that the course will meet the requirements for credit by the CIA.

Upon completion of each course offering, the instructor for each accredited course attests through the Instructor Acknowledgement Form, that the syllabus was covered appropriately and that it was tested to the specifications of the UAP policy and these preferred practices. Should an instructor have deemed that alternative practices actually enhanced the evaluation of the candidates, the instructor will document the deviation using the form and provide an explanation of how the alternate evaluation process provided a better assessment of the candidate.

1. Types of Examination and Test Questions

   Individual midterm and final exams\(^1\) only should account for the calculation of 80 percent of the final grade. The intent of section 10 a. of the CIA UAP Policy is that these evaluations be written or computer-based.

   Marks obtained in activities such as class participation, quizzes, and projects should not be included in the 80 percent of exam weight of the final grade. These types of activity fall under section 10 b. of the UAP policy as the remaining 20 percent of the final course grade that may be assessed at the discretion of the course instructor.

   The CIA considers long-answer-style questions to be preferred practice, but this does not preclude the university from using some multiple-choice questions where exam volume is an issue. Where multiple-choice questions are used, candidates should be provided with opportunities to demonstrate their work.

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\(^1\) Candidates should not be able to select which questions to answer.
No “best x of y” selection should be used among several assessment methods in a particular course.

The use of publicly available material, such as verbatim Society of Actuaries (SOA) and Casualty Actuarial Society (CAS) previous exam questions or other publications, is not considered preferred practice by the CIA. The content of UAP course assessments and evaluations should be original.

Transfer of weighting of examinations for the purpose of calculating the final grade may be done with midterm and final exams only due to extenuating circumstances, as deemed appropriate by the course instructor. The instructor should notify the AcA, and may be asked to provide the rationale to an external examiner or review panel.

2. Formula Sheets

Candidates should not bring self-prepared documentation into the examination or test environment. University course instructors may provide formula sheets to candidates for tests and examinations upon their good judgment.

It is the CIA’s position that formulas such as those provided in the SOA and CAS professional exams may be provided to candidates. However, an instructor may decide at their discretion to provide formula(s) where he or she believes that it is not reasonable that the candidate should already know it, or where it would be more beneficial for candidates to focus on the application of the formula(s) to demonstrate an understanding of the material, rather than to focus on the memorization of the formula(s).

3. Use of Calculators

Calculators may be used in test and examination environments at the discretion of the course instructor. The memory of any calculator permitted must be cleared prior to exam commencement.