

## CIA University Accreditation Program Preferred Practices

### A. PROVISIONS APPLICABLE TO COURSES USING ON-CAMPUS EVALUATION

This document conveys the CIA's position on practices that the Institute considers to be the preferred approach with respect to accredited courses.

Consideration to the following preferred practices should be given in calculating candidate final grades within the required 80% from midterm and final examination as specified in Section 10a of the UAP Policy. The remaining 20% 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\* only should account for the calculation of 80% of the final grade. The intent of Section 10a 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% of exams weight of the final grade. These types of activities fall under Section 10b of the UAP Policy as the remaining 20% 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.

\*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 University Accreditation Program (UAP) course assessments and evaluations should be original.

Transfer of weighting of examinations for the purpose of calculating the final grade may only be done with midterm and final exams, 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 the exam commencement.

## **B. PROVISIONS APPLICABLE TO COURSES USING REMOTE EVALUATION**

This section conveys the CIA's position on practices that the Institute considers to be preferred approaches with respect to accredited courses only where remote evaluation is being used due to events forcing universities to hold out-of-campus evaluations. The core principle underlying remote evaluation is that every effort should be deployed by universities to maintain academic integrity to a level similar to the one maintained with in-person supervised evaluations.

'Remote' refers to any online, take-home, or out-of-campus educational assessment that is not administered in an in-person supervised environment by the universities, due to events forcing universities to administer out-of-campus evaluations.

Consideration to the following preferred practices should be given in calculating candidate final grades within the required 80% from formal examination as specified in Section 10a of the UAP Policy. This 80% proportion may also include individual projects where collaboration is not allowed, up to a maximum weight of 15%. The remaining 20% 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 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. Technical measures enhancing academic integrity

Upon administration of remote examinations, the CIA considers the following measures as enhancing academic integrity of remote evaluations:

- Publish exams online at the same time for all candidates, with a total publication and completion time limit corresponding to the exam duration plus a limited period of about 15 minutes for upload if paper answers are to be uploaded.
- Hold multiple versions of exams, where questions are either randomized by online testing software or individualized for students.
- If an examination platform is used for completing an exam online, the platform should block internet and computer access over the duration of the examination, if possible and permitted by the university.
- Implement time-stamp examinations when accessed, closed, and uploaded by students.
- Establish exam proctoring with cameras, if possible and permitted by university.
- Where used, tailor individual projects so that collaboration is impossible, for instance by using different datasets or coding requirements.
- Include a statement based on honor to be signed by each candidate on each assessment, such as:

*I understand that this assessment is part of an accredited course under the University Accreditation Program of the Canadian Institute of Actuaries (CIA). In addition to the University rules governing academic integrity, I understand that I am subject to the [Code of Conduct and Ethics for Candidates in the CIA Education System](#) and related [policy](#). I swear on my honor to have completed the work on my own and in accordance with the assessment's rules and instructions.*

## 2. Types of examination and formal evaluation questions

Formal evaluations\* include midterms, final and other test-like assessments administered with control processes listed in Section 1. above. Formal evaluations and individualized projects as per Section 3. only should account for the calculation of 80% of the final grade. The intent of Section 10a of the CIA UAP Policy is that these evaluations be written for upload or computer-based.

Marks obtained in activities such as class participation and formative assessments administered without formal control processes listed in Section 1 above should not be included in the 80% of exams weight of the final grade. These types of activities fall under

Section 10b of the UAP Policy as the remaining 20% 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 or administration is an issue.

All exam questions should be designed with consideration of the availability of any reference material, such as textbooks, study manuals, or publicly available sample questions.

Where multiple-choice questions are used, measures should be taken to generate different answer keys for candidates, such as:

- permutation of questions;
- using different numbers in corresponding questions;
- using different questions.

The use of publicly available material, such as verbatim SOA and 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.

However, if SOA multiple-choice-style questions are used (or adapted to become long answer-style by removing the answer choice), a similar time allocation of 5–6 minutes per question should be applied.

Long-answer questions should also be designed to reflect availability of any reference materials:

- Focus should be on a thorough understanding of the material.
- Exam questions should differ from sample questions from reference material.
- The level of difficulty of questions should be adjusted accordingly.

\*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.

### **3. Projects**

Individual student projects are permissible to meet Section 10a of the UAP Policy (80% of the final grade based on formal evaluation) in remote courses, subject to the following conditions:

a) The projects' deliverables and components such as datasets and reports should be individualized in order to meet UAP requirements. If any coding is required by the students, coding should differ between candidates to avoid sharing.

b) Such projects cannot weigh more than 15% of the final grade.

#### **4. Transfer of weights of assessments**

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