



SFU

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

S.07-138

As amended by
Senate 5 Nov 07
(see attached email
from I. Forsyth)

MEMO

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ATTENTION Senate

FROM Alison Watt, Director, University Secretariat

RE Policy revision

DATE 18 October, 2007

Motion

That Senate approve and recommend to the Board of Governors the revision of Policy 1. 10.09 and the revision of T 20.01 effective immediately.

Alison Watt

SFU

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
THINKING OF THE WORLD

MEMO

Vice President, Legal Affairs
Special Projects Office

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CANADA

ATTENTION Judith Osborne, VP, Legal Affairs	TEL
FROM K.C. Bell, Director, Special Projects	
RE Policies I 10.09 (Retention and Disposal of Student Exams or Assignments) and T 20.01 (Grading and the Reconsideration of Grades)	
DATE October 18, 2007	
TIME 10:05 AM	

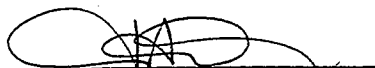
The investigation of a complaint made by an SFU student to the BC Information and Privacy Commissioner resulted in findings that the SFU policy framework for student grade appeals was deficient. The University agreed to make changes recommended by the OIPC as follows:

1. In I 10.09, minor changes are made in sections 2.1.3 and 2.1.5 to clarify the period for which student exams and assignments must be retained by the department when an appeal or dispute is involved.
2. In T 20.01, changes are made to draw specific attention to the responsibilities of students in retaining information needed to support a grade appeal.

The opportunity was taken to reformat both policies to be consistent with other recently approved and/or revised policies. These revised policies are forwarded for approval by Senate and the Board of Governors.

C: Ian Forsyth, Director, Archives and Records Management

I concur and so recommend:



Judith A. Osborne
VP Legal Affairs

I concur and so recommend:

Michael Stevenson
President and Vice Chancellor

2.



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Policies and Procedures

Date
January 12, 1998

Number
I 10.09

Revision Date October 2007

Revision No. A

Retention and Disposal of Student Exams or Assignments

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This policy is intended to ensure that student exams and assignments are managed in a way that ensures compliance with the privacy rules in BC's *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (RSBC 1996, c. 468);
- 1.2 To ensure that student exams or assignments used to make decisions directly affecting the rights of the student, when retained by the University, are kept for at least one year after final use; and
- 1.3 To ensure that the privacy of students is protected through the secure disposal of their exams and assignments.

2.0 Policy

2.1 Retention

- 2.1.1 Student exams and assignments are records of the University when retained by faculty and fall under the definition of personal information in the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. They document decisions made by University faculty that directly affect the student.
- 2.1.2 Graded examination papers or course assignments are returned to students or retained by the course instructor at his/her discretion. The exception is final examinations which are retained by the University.
- 2.1.3 When exams or assignments are not returned to the student, the University must retain that information for at least one year after using it so that the student has a reasonable opportunity to obtain access to it. This means faculty would retain these records for one year from the semester in which they were written and graded before disposing of the information unless there is an appeal (see point 2.1.5 below).
- 2.1.4 Students should be informed to retain exams and assignments that are returned in case they wish to appeal a grade.
- 2.1.5 If an exam or assignment is used as evidence in a grade appeal or some other dispute resolution procedure, it must be kept for one year from the date on which a grade appeal is finally decided or other dispute resolved.
- 2.1.6 A Records Retention Schedule and Disposal Authority (RRSDA) has been prepared by the Archives Department and approved by the University Registrar and Vice-President Academic for

common use by all University faculties and departments. The RRSDA provides administrative and legal authority for the retention and disposal of student exams or assignments after one year from date of final use.

2.2 Disposal

- 2.1 University records must be disposed of in a manner appropriate to the sensitivity of the information.
- 2.2 Student exams or assignments contain sensitive personal information and are to be disposed of by physical destruction in such a way that they cannot be retrieved or reconstructed. Departments disposing of these records would contact Facilities Management, Recycling Services to arrange for confidential shredding.

3.0 Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to all departments that administer student exams or assignments.
- 3.2 This policy applies only to graded examination papers or course assignments retained by University faculty. Students are responsible for the retention of exams and/or assignments that have been returned to them.

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

- 4.1 The University officials designated by the Board of Governors in the FOI/POP Schedule of Authorized Officers are responsible for ensuring the implementation of this policy (see Policy I 10.02, Schedule A).

5.0 Authority

- 5.1 The legal authority for this policy arises from the following provincial statutes:
- *The University Act (RSBC 1996, c. 468)*
 - *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (RSBC 1996, c. 165)*

6.0 Definitions

“**Final use**” means the exam or assignment has been graded and all grade appeals or other disputes regarding the exam or assignment have been decided or resolved.

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RETENTION AND DISPOSAL OF STUDENT EXAMS OR ASSIGNMENTS



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Policies and Procedures

Date

January 12, 1998

Number

I 10.09

Revision Date

Revision No.

Purpose

- To ensure compliance with the privacy rules in B.C.'s Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.
- To ensure that student exams or assignments used to make decisions directly affecting the rights of the student, when retained by the University, are kept for at least one year after use.
- To ensure that the privacy of students is protected through secure disposal of their exams and assignments.

Responsibility

The University officials designated by the Board of Governors in the FOI/POP Schedule of Authorized Officers are responsible for ensuring the implementation of this policy.

Scope

- This policy applies to all departments that administer student exams or assignments.
- This policy applies only to graded examination papers or course assignments that are retained by University faculty.

Policy

1. Retention

1.1 Student exams and assignments are records of the University when retained by faculty and fall under the definition of personal information in the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. They document decisions made by University faculty that directly affect the student.

1.2 Graded examination papers or course assignments are returned to students or retained by the course instructor at his/her discretion. The exception is final examinations which are retained by the University.

1.3 When exams or assignments are not returned to the student, the University must retain that information for at least one year after using it so that the student has a reasonable opportunity to obtain access to it. This means faculty would retain these records for one year from the semester in which they were written and graded before disposing of the information.

1.4 Students should be informed to retain exams and assignments that are returned in case they wish to appeal a grade.

1.5 If an exam or assignment is used as evidence in a grade appeal or some other dispute resolution procedure, it must be kept for one year from the date on which a grade appeal is decided.

1.6 A Records Retention Schedule and Disposal Authority (RRSDA) has been prepared by the Archives Department and approved by the University Registrar and Vice-President Academic for common use by all University faculties and departments. The RRSDA provides administrative and legal authority for the retention and disposal of student exams or assignments after one year from date of last use.

2. Disposal

2.1 University records must be disposed of in a manner appropriate to the sensitivity of the information.

2.2 Student exams or assignments contain sensitive personal information and are to be disposed of by physical destruction in such a way that they cannot be retrieved or reconstructed. Departments disposing of these records would contact Facilities Management, Recycling Services to arrange for confidential shredding.



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Policies and Procedures

Date
November 5, 1979

Number
T 20.01

Revision Date
~~October 1, 1992~~
~~May 12, 2005~~
October 2007

Revision No.
A
B
C
D (draft 1.2)

T 20.01 Grading and the Reconsideration of Grades

1.0 Purpose

1.1 This policy sets forth the basis of grading practices at SFU and establishes:

1.1.1 the basis on which grades will be assigned;

1.1.2 the responsibilities of the Instructor and the Chair with respect to grading; and

1.1.3 the responsibilities of the Student, the Instructor, the Chair and the Dean with respect to the reconsideration of a grade, and the role of Senate in any such reconsideration.

1.2 On the basis of 1.1 above, this policy is intended to ensure the maintenance of high academic standards, reasonably consistent and equitable evaluation practices within and across courses, and appropriate procedures on the reconsideration of grades.

1.3 This Policy is not intended to restrict unduly the basis on which final grades for a course are assigned, but to emphasize that students, the Instructor and the Chair should know in advance the general basis on which grades will be awarded. This may include, in various combinations, such items as results on a mid-term examination, a final examination, frequent tests throughout the term, classroom attendance/participation, projects, term papers, essays, laboratory work, evidence of extensive reading and so forth.

2.0 Policy

2.1 The Basis on which Grades Shall Be Assigned

2.1.1 Grades shall reflect demonstrated achievement in meeting course objectives.

2.1.2 The general procedures to be followed in arriving at the final grade shall be clearly communicated to students and the Chair in advance. This may include, in various combinations, such items as results on a mid-term examination, a final examination, frequent tests throughout the term, classroom attendance and participation, projects, term papers, essays, laboratory work, evidence of extensive reading and so forth.

2.1.3 Students shall be advised of the general manner in which a grade will be assigned for any specific work required throughout the term. For example, if an essay is to be graded for style, format or documentation, the student shall be informed of that.

2.1.4 Where a department has guidelines regarding the expected distribution of grades for particular courses or for a type of course, those guidelines will be published prior to the beginning of the course(s) and shall include a rationale for that distribution.

2.2 Grading – Responsibilities of the Instructor

2.2.1 The Instructor is responsible for providing the Department Chair (normally six weeks in advance of the start of the semester) with a course outline and a statement setting out the course requirements and how these will relate to course grades. If circumstances subsequently require a change in those requirements, the Instructor will provide students with a statement setting out those changes within the first week of classes. Course outlines usually should advise students how marks will be allocated among such activities as final exams, mid-term exams, tests, term papers, tutorial participation, projects, laboratory work and any other requirements.

2.2.2 The Instructor will grade and return as promptly as possible mid-term, essays and other course requirements.

2.2.3 The Instructor will provide the Chair, upon request, with a clear rationale for whatever grading approach is proposed.

2.2.4 If a Department Chair is unwilling to accept a proposed grading approach, the Instructor has recourse to the Faculty Dean, whose resolution of the matter will be considered final.

2.2.5 The Instructor is responsible for maintaining clear records of the marks given, to weight those marks to establish a final grade, and to ensure those records and any student work retained (exams, essays, etc.) are kept for at least one year following the end of the semester. Where a student requests the reconsideration of a grade, the Instructor is responsible to retain records and student work for one year following the final resolution of that reconsideration. Such records and material will be available to the Department Chair on request, and should be filed with and retained by the Department for the subsequent semester if the instructor will be absent. Upon request, a student shall be given access to his or her own work, as well as information about the evaluation, grading and weighting of it.

2.2.6 The Instructor is responsible for attempting to resolve each request from a student to reconsider a grade, and to cooperate with the Department Chair in the resolution of any request the Instructor is unable to resolve directly.

2.3 Grading – Responsibilities of the Chair

2.3.1 The Chair is responsible for obtaining from Instructors course outlines, including statements of course requirements and how they will relate to course grades, and for making these outlines available to students (normally six weeks in advance of the start of the course).

- 2.3.2 The Chair is responsible for considering requests from Instructors to assign letter grades on some basis other than that stated in 2.1.2 above and to approve those requests in which the evidence suggests the alternative approach is warranted.
- 2.3.3 In special cases (i.e., after the first week of classes), the Chair is responsible for considering requests from Instructors to assign letter grades on some basis other than that stated in 2.1.2, having considered the merits of the request, to approve or disapprove it.
- 2.3.4 The Chair is responsible for reviewing with the Instructor the grades assigned in each course to determine whether:
- a) grading has been done with reference to academic achievement (unless some other basis has been approved in advance);
 - b) that it is consistent with the course requirements and basis stated in advance; and
 - c) to countersign the grade sheet for a course when he/she is satisfied that students in the course have been graded appropriately.
- 2.3.5 When a Chair refuses to sign an Instructor's grade sheet, it is expected that the Chair and the Instructor will do everything possible to resolve the difference and, failing that, the Instructor will have recourse to the Faculty Dean, whose resolution of the matter will be considered final.
- 2.3.6 The Chair is responsible for reviewing grading practices from time to time in consultation with all faculty members of the department, for encouraging the department to consider issues related to grading, and for encouraging consistency in grading practices across the department.
- 2.3.7 When an Instructor and a Student are unable to reach agreement on the reconsideration of a grade, the Chair is responsible for assisting them to achieve a fair reconsideration of a grade.

2.4 Grading – Responsibilities of the Student

- 2.4.1 A Student is responsible for retaining exams and assignments that are returned in case the Student wishes to appeal a grade.
- 2.4.2 A Student who is unclear about the requirements for a course, or about the basis on which a grade will be assigned, or who is concerned about the marking of a particular assignment, is expected to seek clarification or to express his/her concern to the Instructor in a timely manner, normally within 10 days of receiving the information.
- 2.4.3 A Student who is seeking reconsideration of his/her final grade in a course is expected to raise his/her concern with the Instructor without delay, normally within 10 days of the release of the final grade.
- 2.4.4 The reconsideration of a grade may result in the grade being raised, lowered or remaining unchanged.
- 2.4.5 In the event that a Student is unable to contact the Instructor, or does not receive a timely reply from the Instructor, or wishes to pursue further a request for reconsideration of a grade after receiving a response from the Instructor, the Student may present in writing his/her request and supporting reasons for it to the Chair. Such a request will normally be submitted within 60 days of the release of grades.

2.5 When Reconsideration of a Grade is Requested

- 2.5.1** When a Student has requested a grade be reconsidered, it is the Student's responsibility to provide to the Chair all the relevant work returned by the Instructor, and it is the Instructor's responsibility to provide to the Chair all relevant work which has been retained.
- 2.5.2** A Student who is concerned that his/her request for reconsideration has been inappropriately addressed at the departmental level may convey his/her concern to the Dean. The Dean will review the events and:
- a. where he/she is satisfied that no new evidence has been presented and that judicious and proper procedures have been followed throughout, will confirm the grade awarded at the departmental level;
 - b. where significant evidence appears not to have been appropriately considered at the departmental level, the Dean may refer the reconsideration back to the Chair with instructions;
 - c. where, in his/her judgment, the matter cannot be resolved at the departmental level, the Dean may initiate reconsideration by alternative means.
- 2.5.3** The Chair shall first seek to resolve the concern through consultation with the Student and the Instructor. If the matter cannot be resolved during this consultation, the Chair will arrange for an appropriately qualified person (or persons) to reevaluate the work and establish a grade, or to take such other steps as are necessary. Should the student request anonymity in such a re-evaluation, reasonable steps shall be taken to ensure it.
- 2.5.4** The decision of the Dean shall be final, subject only to an appeal to Senate. Such appeal may go forward only with the permission of the Chair of Senate on clear evidence satisfactory to her/him that there have been improper procedures in reconsideration as undertaken. The Chair of Senate periodically will report to Senate on the disposition and nature of such requests to appeal to Senate which have not gone forward to that body.

2.6 Retention of Examinations and other Records

- 2.6.1** In a course which includes a final examination, the marked examinations shall be retained by the Instructor. If the Instructor is to be away from campus, all pertinent papers and items are to be filed with and retained by the department for at least one year following the semester in which they were written. Should a request for the reconsideration of a grade still be pending longer than one year later, the marked examinations for that course will be retained as long as it is pending plus one year after a final decision or resolution is reached.

3.0 Scope

- 3.1** This Policy applies to all courses offered by Simon Fraser University and for which a grade is assigned based on work submitted by students.

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

- 4.1** Roles and responsibilities are set out in section 2 of the Policy above.

5.0 Authority

5.1 This Policy is administered under the authority of the University Senate.

6.0 Definitions

“Dean” means Dean of the Faculty responsible for offering the course.

“Instructor” means the faculty member, sessional instructor or other person with primary responsibility to grade the work of students within the course.

“Chair” means the Chair of the department offering the course for which a grade is being assessed and/or reconsideration of a grade is being requested.

Records created as a result of actions under this Policy will be managed in accordance with a Records Retention Schedule and Disposal Authority (RRSDA). The University Archivist is responsible for approving all RRSDAs.

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GRADING PRACTICES AND GRADE APPEALS



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Policies and Procedures

Date	Number
October 1, 1992	T 20.01
Revision Date	Revision No.
May 12, 2005	A

Approved by Senate November 5, 1979

I. Objectives

1. To set forth the basis of grading practices at SFU and, specifically to clarify:
 - a. the basis on which grades will be assigned,
 - b. the responsibilities of the instructor and the Department Chair with respect to grading, and
 - c. the responsibilities of the student, the instructor, the Department Chair, and the Dean with respect to reconsideration of a grade, and the place of Senate in such reconsideration.
2. On the basis of 1 above, to ensure continued maintenance of high academic standards, reasonably consistent and equitable evaluation practices within and across courses, and appropriate procedures on grade reconsideration.

II. The Basis on which Grades Will Be Assigned

This paper is not designed to restrict unduly the basis on which final grades for a course are assigned, but to stress that students, the instructor and the Chair should know in advance the general basis for awarding of grades. This may include in various combinations such items as results on a mid-term examination, a final examination, frequent tests throughout the term, classroom attendance/ participation, projects, term papers, essays, laboratory work, evidence of extensive reading and so forth. There should be clear indication of the general procedures to be followed in arriving at the final grade. Grades will reflect demonstrated achievement in course objectives.

In addition, students should know the general manner in which a grade will be assigned for any specific work required throughout the term. For example, if an essay is to be graded for style, format or documentation the student should be informed of that.

Should departments have guidelines on expected distributions in particular types of courses they will be made public prior to the beginning of the course and will be accompanied by a rationale for the expected distribution.

III. Grading

A. Responsibilities of the Instructor

1. To provide the Department Chair (normally six weeks in advance of the start of the semester), with a course outline and a statement of the course requirements and how these will be related to course grades. If circumstances require a change in requirements, to provide such statement of such changes to students within the first week of classes. Course outlines usually should advise students of allocation of marks as between final exams, mid-term exams, tests, term papers, tutorial participation, projects, laboratory work and any other requirements.
2. To grade and return as promptly as possible mid-term, essays, and other course requirements. (Ref: III A 4.; IV 5., 6.)
3. To provide the Chair, upon request, with a clear rationale for whatever grading approach is proposed. (Ref: III B 2., 3.)
 If a Department Chair is unwilling to accept a proposed grading approach the instructor would have recourse to the Faculty Dean whose resolution of the matter would be considered final.
4. To maintain clear records of the marks given and to weighting of those marks to establish a final grade and to ensure that those records and any student work retained (exams, essays, etc.) are kept for at least one year following the end of the semester (and

after that until any outstanding request for reconsideration of a grade is resolved). Such records and material will be available to the Department Chair on request, and should be filed with the Department for the subsequent semester if the instructor will be absent.

5. To attempt to resolve each request from a student for reconsideration of a grade and to cooperate with the Department Chair in the resolution of any request the instructor is unable to resolve directly. (Ref: IV 2., 3., 4.)

B. Responsibilities of the Department Chair

1. To obtain from instructors and make available to students (normally six weeks in advance of the start of the semester), course outlines including statements of course requirements and how these will be related to course grades. (Ref: III A 1.)
2. To consider requests from instructors to assign letter grades on some basis other than that stated in II above and to approve those requests in which the evidence suggests the alternative approach is warranted. (Ref: III A 3.)

In special cases - after the first week of classes to consider, and then approve or disapprove, requests from instructors with class approval to assign letter grades on some basis other than that stated in III A 1.

3. To review with the instructor the grades assigned in each course in order to ascertain that grading has been done with reference to academic achievement (unless some other basis has been approved in advance), and that it is consistent with the course requirements and basis stated in advance, and to countersign the grade sheet for a course when he/she is satisfied that students in the course have been graded appropriately. (Ref: III A 1., 3.)

If a Department Chair has refused to sign an instructor's grade sheet, it is expected that the faculty member concerned and the Chair will do everything possible to resolve the difference and, failing that, the faculty member would have recourse to the Faculty Dean whose resolution of the matter would be considered final.

4. To review grading practices from time to time in consultation with all faculty members of the department, to encourage the department to consider issues related to grading, and to encourage consistency in grading practices within the department.
5. To assist an instructor and a student in achieving fair reconsideration of a grade in the event the instructor and student are unable to achieve such reconsideration without assistance. (Ref: III A 5.)

IV. Reconsideration of a Grade

1. A student who is unclear about course requirements or the basis for grading, or who is concerned about the marking of a particular assignment, is expected to seek clarification or to express his/her concern to the instructor in a timely manner.
2. The student who is seeking reconsideration of his/her final grade in a course is expected to raise his/her concern with the course instructor without delay. (Ref: III A 5.)

A grade reconsideration may raise the grade, or lower the grade or leave the grade unchanged.

3. The student who is unable to contact the course instructor, or who receives no reply from the course instructor after a reasonable period of time, or who wishes to pursue a request for reconsideration of a grade after receiving a response from the instructor, may present his/her request together with the reasons for it in writing to the Chair of the Department in which the course is offered - normally within sixty days of the release of grades.
4. The Chair shall first seek to resolve the concern by dealing with the student and the instructor. If it cannot be resolved at that level it is the responsibility of the Chair, after consultation with the student and the instructor, to arrange for a re-evaluation of the work on which the grade was based by an appropriately qualified person(s) and the establishing of a grade taking account of that re-evaluation, or to take such other steps as are necessary. Should the student request anonymity in such a re-evaluation reasonable steps shall be taken to ensure it.
5. In the event of a request for reconsideration of a grade, it is the student's responsibility to provide all the relevant work which has been returned to him or her and it is the instructor's responsibility to provide all relevant work which has been retained. (Ref: III A 2., 4)
6. In the course which includes a final examination the marked examinations shall be retained by the instructor or, if the instructor is to be away from campus, all pertinent papers and items are to be filed with the department to be retained for at least one year following the semester in which they were written. (Should a request for reconsideration still be pending longer than one semester later, the marked examinations for that course will be retained as long as it is pending.) (Ref: III A 4.)
7. The student who is concerned that his/her request for reconsideration has been dealt with inappropriately at the departmental level may convey his/her concern to the Dean of the Faculty. The Dean will review the events and
 - a. confirm the grade awarded at the departmental level if he/she is satisfied there is no new evidence and that judicious and proper procedures have been followed in the consideration at that level;
 - b. if there appears to be significant evidence not considered at the departmental level, the Dean may refer the reconsideration back to the Department Chair with instructions;
 - c. initiate reconsideration (by alternative means where necessary) if, in his/her judgment, the matter cannot be resolved at the departmental level.

The decision of the Dean shall be final, subject only to an appeal to Senate. Such appeal may go forward only with the permission of the Chair

of Senate on clear evidence satisfactory to her/him that there have been improper procedures in reconsideration as undertaken. The Chair of Senate periodically will report to Senate on the disposition and nature of such requests to appeal to Senate which have not gone forward to that body.

X-Spam-Level: Spam-Level
To: "K.C. Bell" <kbell@sfu.ca>
Cc: Alison Watt <Alison_Watt@sfu.ca>, Judith Osborne <josborne@sfu.ca>
Subject: Proposed changes to T 20.01
From: Ian Forsyth <iforsyth@sfu.ca>
Date: Thu, 1 Nov 2007 13:51:34 -0700

I drafted a revision to address the matter raised by Kevin Harding that the same standard of timeliness should apply to university employees who perform responsibilities in the reconsideration of grades procedure. I propose that the following statement be added as article 2.5.1 and the existing articles in that section be re-numbered accordingly:

2.5 When Reconsideration of a Grade is Requested

"2.5.1 At each step in the process of responding to a student request to reconsider or appeal a grade decision, the Instructor, Department Chair, Dean and Chair of Senate shall respond in a timely manner, normally within 10 days of receiving the request."

I also propose minor changes in two other articles. These changes are unrelated to the one above. The purpose of the changes is to make the meaning of the statements in the two articles the consistent. My changes are denoted by uppercase text:

2.2 Grading - Responsibilities of the Instructor

Article 2.2.5, second to last sentence: "Such records and material will be available to the Department Chair on request, and ARE TO be filed with and retained by the Department for the subsequent semester(S) THAT the instructor IS absent."

2.6 Retention of Examinations and other Records

Article 2.6.1, starting at second to last sentence: "If the Instructor is to be away from campus, all STUDENT WORK THAT WAS KEPT AS WELL AS RECORDS USED TO ESTABLISH A FINAL GRADE are to be filed with and retained by the department for at least one year following the semester in which they were written. Should a request for the reconsideration of a grade still be pending longer than one year later, the marked examinations AND OTHER STUDENT WORK KEPT for that course will be retained as long as it is pending plus one year after a final decision or resolution is reached."

Ian Forsyth
University Archivist / Information & Privacy Coordinator

Archives and Records Management Department
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