

## Syllabi prep support, Part 2: Exam scheduling around professional leave

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Affairs has been up  
to lately-→



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# Curricular Affairs

Weekly Update - May 28, 2013

We had a bit of a break for commencement and Memorial Day, but are still working to assist course teams with course planning. Next week, we'll provide an update of how many teams have made their schedules official (turnout has been great so far!) and share a draft Assessment Grid for Fall 2013 showing known exam schedules to date. This week we wanted to fill you in on how we included the prospect of professional leave absences into our planning.

This is important to our students, residents and faculty, and knowing what the landscape of professional meetings looks like for the upcoming year can help us plan prospectively. At the same time, however, early planning is plagued by a few logistical challenges:

- 1) We know many, but not all, of the meeting dates that are likely to conflict with our exam schedule far in advance.
- 2) We obtained student input on which meetings are most likely to be targets for student travel. Of course, we cannot always predict which class years are most affected by a specific professional opportunity, and which students will want to travel to which events (this can be relatively easy to predict for some courses/class years, but not for all).
- 3) There are simply too many professional meetings, especially in the fall semester, to be able to avoid them all. Coupled with major holidays like thanksgiving, there are very few dates left that allow us to meet all the scheduling criteria such as, in addition to accommodating professional travel, using exam blocks and avoiding more than one exam on the same day for the same class year.

Because of this, if our goal is to prioritize and promote professional development by accommodating travel for professional meetings, a dual approach is needed. The Curricular Affairs office can try to accommodate the "big stuff" – major known yearly travel conflicts that affect large numbers of students and faculty. Where we can predict and accommodate smaller meetings we will also try to schedule for that in advance. The course shells we are rolling out to faculty teams will take this into account. We have also introduced a new color coded method of indicating on our 2013 Fall and 2014 Spring semester "Assessment Grids" where the major and minor meetings fall in relation to our scheduled exams (this will be posted on the "Academic Information" page of the SOP website in place of the 2012-2013 grids when they are completed). In a complimentary fashion, Professional Affairs will roll out a procedure for application and approval of accommodations for other travel events in advance (more to come on this!) An excused absence from an exam can be allowed by a course team under our missed exam policy. The piece that has often been missing (or at least inconsistent) is the advanced notice of the traveler's request, resulting in variability in what course teams are feasibly going to be able to accommodate. Our efforts to publish schedules in advance coupled with an expectation that requests be, in kind, submitted in advance should help with this.

*Dr. Rebecca Sleeper*