

Gloucester High School Final Exams and Exam Exemptions 2015-2016

The Gloucester High School Leadership Team proposes the re-implementation of final exams for GHS students beginning in the 2015-2016 school year. This proposal is intended to increase the likelihood of GHS achieving the following desired outcomes:

1. creation of a structured opportunity for all students to demonstrate mastery of course objectives through a written exam, performance assessment, or other appropriate summative assessment, similar to the assessment systems in place in many colleges, universities, and other post-secondary institutions
2. establishment of an enhanced academic structure that will encourage appropriate academic engagement for all students through the final day of the academic year
3. creation of an incentive opportunity for students to attend school regularly and perform at high levels academically through the award of exam exemptions

General Parameters for GHS Final Exams

The GHS Leadership Team will develop necessary procedures and expected practices to ensure that final exams are appropriately implemented in all classes, so that all students will have consistent exam expectations, given the following general parameters:

- All GHS courses will include an appropriate final written exam or other appropriate summative assessment, such as a performance assessment, cumulative project or prepared presentation.
- The final exam will make up 10% of the final course grade. Each quarterly grade will make up 22.5% of the final course grade.
- All students will be expected to take the final exam or participate in the summative assessment activity during the scheduled exam time for each course. Students will not be allowed to take exams early, unless approved due to extenuating circumstances by an administrator.
- Exams should be closely aligned to significant course objectives and should provide an appropriate opportunity for each student to demonstrate their mastery of these objectives.
- Written exams should be no more than two hours in length. Other appropriate summative assessments, such as performance assessments or presentations, should be structured so that students remain engaged throughout the scheduled exam period.

Award of Exam Exemptions

Exemption Category I - for all students in grades 9-12 in SOL-tested courses

Exemption Requirements

1. *Final Exam Grade - Students may earn an exemption by passing the SOL test for a course with any scaled score of 400 and above. Such students are not required to take the final exam and do not receive a final exam grade. The final course grade would be an average of the four quarterly grades. Students may choose to take the final exam in order to improve their final course grade. The final exam grade would only count if it improves the student's final grade (this could be in addition to an attendance requirement)*

2. *Attendance - Students who have no more than 10 absences (20 absences for 1st block courses) from a course (excused and unexcused combined) will be awarded an exam exemption (this would be in addition to a passing SOL score requirement).*
3. *Course Grade - In addition to meeting SOL passing score and attendance requirements, students would also have to have a course grade of 80 or higher, as of the date of final exam administration, in order to be eligible for an exam exemption.*

Exemption Category 2 - For 12th grade students only

Exemption Requirements

1. *Course grade - Senior students who maintain a course grade of 80 or higher as of the date of the final exam will be awarded an exam exemption. (this could be in addition to an attendance requirement).*
2. *Attendance - Students who have no more than 10 absences (20 absences for 1st block courses) from a course (excused and unexcused combined) will be awarded an exam exemption (this would be in addition to the course grade average requirement).*
3. *Additional Requirement for Seniors enrolled in SOL-tested Courses - Students may earn an exemption by passing the SOL test for a course with any scaled score of 400 and above. Such students are not required to take the final exam and do not receive a final exam grade. The final course grade would be an average of the four quarterly grades. Students may choose to take the final exam in order to improve their final course grade. The final exam grade would only count if it improves the student's final grade (this would be in addition to the course average and attendance requirements)*

Exemption Category 3 - All students in grades 9-12 in CTE Courses

Requirements for Exemption

1. *CTE Credential Test - the student passes a corresponding state-approved industry credential test or licensure exam during the time of enrollment in the course, prior to the scheduled final exam*
2. *Attendance - Students who have no more than 10 absences (20 absences for 1st block courses) from a course (excused and unexcused combined) will be awarded an exam exemption (this would be in addition to the passing credential test score requirement).*
3. *Course Grade - In addition to meeting SOL passing score and attendance requirements, students would also have to have a course grade of no lower than 80, as of the date of final exam administration, in order to be eligible for an exam exemption.*

For all exam exemption categories

Attendance Requirement Appeal - In extenuating circumstances such as a lengthy medical absence that has caused a student to miss more than 10 class meetings (20 absences for first block courses) the parent may submit to the principal a written appeal of the exam exemption attendance requirement.

Note:

- *Unless otherwise stated above, all other provisions of the original exemption proposal would remain in place (for example, all courses will have a final exam or comparable final assessment).*

Endnotes:

1. *Students enrolled in English 11 must pass both the Reading and Writing SOL tests in order to be awarded an exemption.*
2. *For purposes of this policy, no distinction will be made between excused and unexcused absences. Students participating in approved school activities as authorized by the principal will be counted present. For purposes of this policy, accumulated tardiness will constitute one or more absences. Three unexcused class tardies will equal one class absence.*
3. *All absences and tardies will be determined to be excused or unexcused per the requirements of the GCPS attendance policy.*

Final Exam Scheduling

Final exams will be scheduled during the final four days of the school year. Two exams will be scheduled each day, according to the following general daily bell schedule. The proposed exam bell schedule includes a one-hour early dismissal for the final three days of the year that will allow teachers additional time for grading:

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|------------------|---------------------|
| 7:55 am | First Bell |
| 8:00-10:05 am | First Exam Block |
| 10:05-11:35 am | Study Block/Lunches |
| 11:40 am-1:45 pm | Second Exam Block |
| 1:45 pm | Dismissal |

The GHS End-of-Year Schedule for SOL testing and Final Exams for 2015-2016 will be as follows:

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| May 25-June 2 | Regular SOL Testing |
| May 31-June 6 | Senior Final Exams (senior grades due by 4:00 pm June 7) |
| June 3-June 9 | SOL Make-up and Expedited Retake Testing (seniors scheduled as needed) |
| June 10 | Final Exam 4A (afternoon exam block, no early dismissal) |
| June 13 | Final Exams 1 and 4B (1:45 dismissal) |
| June 14 | Final Exams 2A and 3A (1:45 dismissal) |
| June 15 | Final Exams 2B and 3B (1:45 dismissal) |