

# Student Preference On Exam Frequency: A Short Study

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## ABSTRACT

*Examinations are used by most professors as an important assessment tool to aid in determining the level of student subject matter comprehension. We also use the feedback from examinations as an indicator of the appropriateness and effectiveness of the teaching methodologies we are utilizing in the classroom. This paper reports the number and types of exams/quizzes preferred by the students.*

## INTRODUCTION

As professors we are comfortable and familiar with designing examinations and examination schedules to meet our needs, we must remain aware that students also use examinations to obtain important decision making information. Students use the feedback from examinations to help them decide on the use of various available study techniques, time allocations, choice of major, and choice of career interest.

Examinations and examination feedback may be just as important or even more important to the student than it is for the professor and a good overall course assessment program must meet the needs of both.

For example, the use of the law school approach of only one examination for each course may be appropriate at some levels on instruction and may be particularly appealing to professors burdened with heavy teaching loads and large classes. However, while it may meet the professor's needs, the lack of early and frequent feedback may not meet the needs of the student nearly as well. Therefore, this paper begins a series of inquiry into student based assessment. The inquiry begins with a study of student preferences of type of and frequency of examination and quizzes

## SURVEY DESIGN

During fall and spring semester 2004-2005, a survey was conducted to determine how students prefer to be tested. The survey was given to student in two undergraduate and two graduate accounting courses. In past semesters, instructor had the students in prerequisite course and is aware of the grading policy that is based on one quiz from each chapter and three multiple-choice exams equally divided over the chapters covered.

Students were asked to rank the assessment alternatives in the following order:

1. Final grades to be based totally on one final compressive exam point.
2. Final grades to be based on one final exam over chapters selected by the instructor.
3. Final grades to be based on one final exam and several quizzes over three chapters only.
4. Final grades to be based over one final exam and quizzes over each chapter.
5. Final grades to be based over four objective type exams with one short essay question.
6. Final grades to be based on four objective type exams only.
7. Final grades to be based on three objective type questions with two short essay type questions.
8. Final grades to be based on three objectives type exams only.
9. Final grades to be based on short quizzes over each chapter.

**RESULTS**

The results suggest that there are major differences in the number and types of the exams preferred by undergraduate and graduate students. The results further suggest that there are differences in preference between male and female students. However, all students rejected the suggestion of one final comprehensive exam. When Martinis, Richardson and Tidd [1] administered a comparable instrument, they found that the least preferred option is one final exam.

**CONCLUSION**

Student’s choices varied. Short quizzes over each chapter seem to be the first choice for all students followed by one final exam over selected chapters.

<b>Table 1: All Students (39)</b>				
	Yes		No	
	Count	%	Count	%
1. One final comprehensive exam	0	0.00%	28	100.00%
2. One final exam on selected chapters	13	48.15%	14	51.85%
3. Final exam and quizzes over three chapters	10	38.46%	16	61.54%
4. One final exam and quizzes over each chapter	7	26.92%	19	73.08%
5. Four objective type exams with essay	10	35.71%	18	64.29%
6. Four objective type exams only	12	44.44%	15	55.56%
7. Three objective type exams with essay	11	36.67%	19	63.33%
8. Three objective type exams only	9	32.14%	19	67.86%
9. Short quizzes over each chapter covered	23	69.70%	10	30.30%
<b>Table 2: All Male Students (22)</b>				
	Yes		No	
	Count	%	Count	%
1. One final comprehensive exam	0	0.00%	15	100.00%
2. One final exam on selected chapters	6	42.86%	8	57.14%
3. Final exam and quizzes over three chapters	6	42.86%	8	57.14%
4. One final exam and quizzes over each chapter	3	21.43%	11	78.57%
5. Four objective type exams with essay	5	31.25%	11	68.75%
6. Four objective type exams only	6	42.86%	8	57.14%
7. Three objective type exams with essay	7	43.75%	9	56.25%
8. Three objective type exams only	6	42.86%	8	57.14%
9. Short quizzes over each chapter covered	10	58.82%	7	41.18%
<b>Table 3: All Female Students (17)</b>				
	Yes		No	
	Count	%	Count	%
1. One final comprehensive exam	0	0.00%	13	100.00%
2. One final exam on selected chapters	7	53.85%	6	46.15%
3. Final exam and quizzes over three chapters	4	33.33%	8	66.67%
4. One final exam and quizzes over each chapter	4	33.33%	8	66.67%
5. Four objective type exams with essay	5	41.67%	7	58.33%
6. Four objective type exams only	6	46.15%	7	53.85%
7. Three objective type exams with essay	4	28.57%	10	71.43%
8. Three objective type exams only	3	21.43%	11	78.57%
9. Short quizzes over each chapter covered	13	81.25%	3	18.75%

<b>Table 4: All Graduate Students (15)</b>				
	Yes		No	
	Count	%	Count	%
1. One final comprehensive exam	0	0.00%	13	100.00%
2. One final exam on selected chapters	2	15.38%	11	84.62%
3. Final exam and quizzes over three chapters	4	30.77%	9	69.23%
4. One final exam and quizzes over each chapter	3	23.08%	10	76.92%
5. Four objective type exams with essay	4	30.77%	9	69.23%
6. Four objective type exams only	4	30.77%	9	69.23%
7. Three objective type exams with essay	5	35.71%	9	64.29%
8. Three objective type exams only	5	38.46%	8	61.54%
9. Short quizzes over each chapter covered	8	57.14%	6	42.86%
<b>Table 5: All Under-graduate Students (24)</b>				
	Yes		No	
	Count	%	Count	%
1. One final comprehensive exam	0	0.00%	15	100.00%
2. One final exam on selected chapters	11	78.57%	3	21.43%
3. Final exam and quizzes over three chapters	6	46.15%	7	53.85%
4. One final exam and quizzes over each chapter	4	30.77%	9	69.23%
5. Four objective type exams with essay	6	40.00%	9	60.00%
6. Four objective type exams only	8	57.14%	6	42.86%
7. Three objective type exams with essay	6	37.50%	10	62.50%
8. Three objective type exams only	4	26.67%	11	73.33%
9. Short quizzes over each chapter covered	15	78.95%	4	21.05%
<b>Table 6: Under-graduate Female Students (11)</b>				
	Yes		No	
	Count	%	Count	%
1. One final comprehensive exam	0	0.00%	8	100.00%
2. One final exam on selected chapters	6	75.00%	2	25.00%
3. Final exam and quizzes over three chapters	4	57.14%	3	42.86%
4. One final exam and quizzes over each chapter	2	28.57%	5	71.43%
5. Four objective type exams with essay	3	42.86%	4	57.14%
6. Four objective type exams only	4	50.00%	4	50.00%
7. Three objective type exams with essay	2	25.00%	6	75.00%
8. Three objective type exams only	1	11.11%	8	88.89%
9. Short quizzes over each chapter covered	9	81.82%	2	18.18%
<b>Table 7: Under-graduate Male Students (13)</b>				
	Yes		No	
	Count	%	Count	%
1. One final comprehensive exam	0	0.00%	7	100.00%
2. One final exam on selected chapters	5	83.33%	1	16.67%
3. Final exam and quizzes over three chapters	2	33.33%	4	66.67%
4. One final exam and quizzes over each chapter	2	33.33%	4	66.67%
5. Four objective type exams with essay	3	37.50%	5	62.50%
6. Four objective type exams only	4	66.67%	2	33.33%
7. Three objective type exams with essay	4	50.00%	4	50.00%
8. Three objective type exams only	3	50.00%	3	50.00%
9. Short quizzes over each chapter covered	6	75.00%	2	25.00%

<b>Table 8: Graduate Male Students (9)</b>				
	Yes		No	
	Count	%	Count	%
1. One final comprehensive exam	0	0.00%	8	100.00%
2. One final exam on selected chapters	1	12.50%	7	87.50%
3. Final exam and quizzes over three chapters	4	50.00%	4	50.00%
4. One final exam and quizzes over each chapter	1	12.50%	7	87.50%
5. Four objective type exams with essay	2	25.00%	6	75.00%
6. Four objective type exams only	2	25.00%	6	75.00%
7. Three objective type exams with essay	3	37.50%	5	62.50%
8. Three objective type exams only	3	37.50%	5	62.50%
9. Short quizzes over each chapter covered	4	44.44%	5	55.56%
<b>Table 9: Graduate Female Students (6)</b>				
	Yes		No	
	Count	%	Count	%
1. One final comprehensive exam	0	0.00%	5	100.00%
2. One final exam on selected chapters	1	20.00%	4	80.00%
3. Final exam and quizzes over three chapters	0	0.00%	5	100.00%
4. One final exam and quizzes over each chapter	2	40.00%	3	60.00%
5. Four objective type exams with essay	2	40.00%	3	60.00%
6. Four objective type exams only	2	40.00%	3	60.00%
7. Three objective type exams with essay	2	33.33%	4	66.67%
8. Three objective type exams only	2	40.00%	3	60.00%
9. Short quizzes over each chapter covered	4	80.00%	1	20.00%

## REFERENCES

1. Martinis, K., Richardson, C., and Tidd, R. Student Perception of Exams: Frequency Preferences. Proceedings of the American Society of Business and Behavioral Science, 2005.