English Division Policy on Common Final Participation

In the English division, standard final examinations are used in three composition courses. English 189 is three levels below transfer-level English; English 191 is two levels below transfer-level English; and English 120 is one level below transfer level-English. Examinations are graded during day-long holistic grading sessions. Each exam is graded by multiple readers in order to ensure grading consistency. The English Division’s developmental composition committees assess the exams for English 189 and 191 while the division’s English 120 committee assesses the exam for English 120.

Specific information about the general scope of common final exams is below. As the division continues to discuss the scope of common final exams through meetings and retreats, the scope of each exam may change and these general descriptions will be updated:

**English 191 Common Final**
The coordinator of Developmental Writing (in consultation with English 191 instructors) selects short, one-page articles appropriate to the level of the course. Multiple exam essay prompts are then designed based on the articles. Students receive the short article and the prompt on the day of the final and are given time to read and annotate the piece. Instructors do not discuss the article with students, though they are permitted, at their discretion, to answer specific article-related questions from individual students. The coordinator organizes a meeting day and time when English 191 instructors can meet to norm and grade the finals. During the grading session, instructors first review the English 191 Rubric, as well as student essay samples, in order to norm their grading. Essays are graded holistically, and grading sessions generally last from four to five hours. Instructors are not permitted to grade their own students’ work. During SLO assessment semesters, instructors submit to the SLO database and to the coordinator a cover sheet with itemized skill areas (SLOs) for each essay. Results are then used to decide which skills most need to be addressed in upcoming semesters.

**English 120 Common Final**
The coordinator of English 120 (in consultation with the English High School Collaborative coordinator and GCC English 120 instructors) excerpts and edits selected, issues-based articles for the final exam. Multiple exam essay prompts are then designed based on the articles. The English 120 coordinator organizes faculty grading groups of five-six faculty members; each grading group receives a different set of topics. One week before finals, instructors distribute the packet of articles to students so that students may read and make marginal notes. Faculty are instructed not to discuss the articles with their students (though students may discuss the articles in class with each other). On the day of the final, instructors give a choice of two topics to students. Once finals are complete, each grading group meets to score the finals. (Instructors are not allowed to grade their own students.) Each grading group first reviews the English 120 Rubric and student samples, as well as “live” samples, to norm their grading. Grading sessions generally take from four to six hours, depending on how many sections of English 120 various instructors have. Instructors attach to each essay a cover sheet which itemizes six skill areas (SLOs). Following completion of grading, instructors submit to the SLO database and to the
coordinator a cover sheet with itemized skill areas (SLOs) for each essay. The English 120 coordinator then designs faculty workshops and best practices sessions based on this assessment.

**English 189 Common Final**

English 189 also has a common final. However, because we generally offer only two sections of 189, and they are taught by the same instructor (the Developmental Writing coordinator), we do not hold a separate grading session for English 189. Instead, finals from the two English 189 sections are graded during the grading session for English 191, following the same process outlined above for English 191.