

Course Instructional Guidelines

COURSE PROCEDURES

Each year a number of complaints and disputes about grades and course procedures come to department heads, deans, Provost's and Ombuds Offices, and the Student Center for Educational Research and Advocacy (SCERA). Perhaps the majority of those disputes could be avoided if faculty members took note of the guidelines listed below.

GUIDELINES

Make available to each student an up-to-date syllabus that will provide students with the following information:

- Course objectives
- Expectations and requirements such as papers, lab reports or exams
- Attendance policies
- Grading criteria and the approximate weight of each course requirement in the final grade
- Examination schedule and any make-up or rescheduling policies
- Policies on academic honesty
- Office, phone and mailbox numbers

If possible, try to avoid major changes once the semester is underway.

- Since grading policies often tend to be a focus of confusion or misunderstandings, please take special care to articulate your grading criteria and invite students to discuss related questions with you early in the course.
- Remind students of their responsibilities. For instance, students are responsible for taking exams at the scheduled times, to know the location of their exams, and to make alternative arrangements in advance if they have a legitimate reason for not being able to take an exam. It is their responsibility to provide appropriate explanation and documentation if they miss an exam without making prior arrangements. Remind students also of your particular policy and official University policy on make-up exams.
- Announce field trips and other special meetings, preferably in class and in writing. If these require activity on holidays and/or weekends, state this clearly.
- Unless it is your custom to return exams, lab reports, papers and projects, retain all of these materials for timely review with students both during the semester and after final grades. Students have the right to discuss their grades and other forms of evaluation with faculty.