

Most frequently used passages from the Faculty Handbook

These passages are those to which we most commonly refer when problems arise with disabilities, timing of classes, prelims or exams; and grading (pages 83-89 in the 2010 *Faculty Handbook*). Passages most often used are highlighted.

Disability Accommodation Procedure for Students

Federal and state disability laws mandate that universities make the necessary modifications to their academic requirements to ensure that they do not discriminate or have the effect of discriminating against qualified students with disabilities.

To be considered a “qualified” individual with a disability, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires that a student meet the academic and technical standards for admission and continued participation in a university’s education program or activity. Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) define an individual with a disability as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a history or record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment. Examples of recognized disabilities include but are not limited to, blindness, deafness/hard of hearing, learning disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, chronic medical conditions, and mental health conditions.

Students with disabilities, the office of Student Disability Services (SDS) and course instructors all have roles in the classroom accommodation process.

The role of students in the disability accommodation process:

Students who wish to use disability accommodations must self-identify to SDS and provide disability documentation at their own expense. Documentation must meet established university guidelines. Upon request, the SDS office provides registered students with an accommodation notification letter for their instructors. These letters list the approved accommodations for the student. Students must give the notification letter to the instructor and discuss their specific needs for access in the course. Students are responsible for providing sufficient notice to allow the faculty member to make the necessary accommodation arrangements.

The role of Faculty in the disability accommodation process:

Faculty members are responsible for ensuring equal opportunity for students with disabilities in their courses by providing the accommodations identified on the accommodation notification letter prepared by SDS for students. Accommodations are approved for the broad academic environment. If an accommodation approved by SDS would fundamentally alter the academic structure or essential requirements of the course, the instructor should contact SDS as quickly as possible to discuss a modification to the approved accommodation. Timeliness is important to the accommodation process because it may affect the student’s ability to remain in a course.

Faculty members should provide disability accommodations only for students who have provided notification letters from SDS. Students who request accommodations without an accommodation notification letter should be directed to the SDS office to learn about the university's disability accommodation procedure. The exception to this procedure is students with obvious physical disabilities who may have immediate need for access (e.g. a student using a wheelchair who may need a table rather than a desk in a classroom). Those accommodations should be made immediately and the student should be directed to follow up with the SDS office.

It is reasonable to expect two weeks' notice of accommodation requests. However, if arrangements can be provided with less notice, a faculty member should do so. **A small number of students registered with SDS have episodic health conditions in which they may experience unexpected episodes such as seizures or systemic flareups. These episodes may require accommodations such as flexibility with an absence policy and/or the opportunity to take a make-up exam.** Students should disclose the potential for the need of this type of accommodation at the beginning of the semester.

When the instructor includes a statement about the accommodation procedure of the course in the syllabus, the university and the instructor are ensuring that students are well informed of their rights and minimize the potential for last minute requests for accommodations. Faculty members are encouraged to use the statement below:

Note to students with disabilities: If you have a disability-related need for reasonable academic adjustments in this course, provide the (Instructor, TA, Course Coordinator) with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Students are expected to give two weeks notice of the need for accommodations. If you need immediate accommodations, please arrange to meet with your (Instructor, TA, Course Coordinator) within the first two class meetings.

The role of the SDS in the disability accommodation process:

The SDS staff reviews disability documentation and determines eligibility for disability services and accommodations that ensure equal opportunity and non-discrimination. SDS will confer with the student and instructor about accommodations unique to a specific course to ensure that essential requirements are met while disability barriers are addressed. SDS addresses access needs by providing accommodations such as adaptive equipment, laptops for exams, lab assistants, alternate format materials, assistive listening devices and note taking assistance.

Confidentiality:

Students have the right to confidentiality of their disability status. Instructors may share accommodation information with academic support staff for the purpose of the provision of accommodations. Instructors should refrain from making any disability related comments in front of the class or in presence of other students, faculty or staff

who are not directly involved in the accommodation process. Disability documentation is maintained in the SDS office and should only be reviewed by the SDS staff.

Examinations and Academic Activities

Afternoon and Evening Scheduling. Certain hours shall be free from all formal undergraduate class or laboratory exercises: 4:25 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday; after 4:25 p.m. on Friday; after 12:05 p.m. on Saturday; and all day Sunday.

Review Sessions. Review sessions cannot be scheduled after 4:30 p.m. on any day unless an alternate session is made available for those with conflicts.

Preliminary Examinations

On *Monday and Wednesday evenings* only regularly scheduled courses, and prelims previously approved by the Office of the University Faculty are permitted. Other evening *academic* activities commencing at or after 7:30 p.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays are not allowed. Violation of these rules interferes with other university activities (athletic, musical, theatrical, employment, etc.).

Evening examinations may be given on *Tuesday and Thursday evenings after 7:30 p.m.* Large courses (over 30) may schedule evening exams only with prior permission from the Office of the University Faculty. No permission is required for examinations or make-up examinations involving small numbers of students (under 30) if given on Tuesday and Thursday.

Exceptions. Permission from the Office of the University Faculty to schedule examinations on evenings other than Tuesdays or Thursdays or at a time prior to 7:30 p.m. will be granted *only on the following conditions:*

- Conditions such as the nature of the examination, room availability, large number of conflicts, etc. justify such scheduling.
- An alternate time to take the exam must be provided for those students who have academic, extracurricular or employment conflicts at the time scheduled.

(See also ***Disability Accommodation Procedure for Students*** in this section.)

If there is a conflict between an examination listed on the schedule developed at the annual evening prelim scheduling meeting and an examination not on the schedule, the examination on the schedule shall have priority. The course not on the schedule **must** provide an alternate time to take the examination for those students faced with the conflict.

If a student has conflicting examination schedules, both of which are on the schedule developed at the annual evening prelim scheduling meeting or both of which are not on the schedule, the instructors of the courses involved must consult and agree on how to

resolve the conflict. Both instructors must approach this resolution process with a willingness to provide an alternative or early examination.

Courses utilizing evening examinations should indicate this in the course description listed in "Courses of Study," "The Course and Time Roster," and "The Course and Room Roster" and must notify students of the dates of such examinations as early as possible in the semester, preferably when the course outline is distributed.

Final Examinations and Other End-of-Semester Exercises

Advances in pedagogy and variations in practice across fields have broadened the range of commonly used end-of-semester evaluative exercises beyond traditional sitdown final examinations. The rules and guidelines that follow aim to protect students from unreasonable demands on their time while simultaneously providing instructors the flexibility necessary to design evaluative exercises appropriate to their courses. The Academic Calendar sets aside, after the last week of classes, a four-day study period followed by a period for final examinations. The Registrar's Office assigns to every course a specific day and time during final-examination period at which time the course's final exam, if any, will take place. The designated final exam days and times are scheduled carefully to minimize conflicts and spread students' workloads as evenly as possible over the exam period.

It is university policy to discourage more than two examinations for a student in one twenty-four hour time period. Members of the faculty are urged to grant student requests for a make-up examination, particularly if their course is the largest of the three involved and thus has the strongest likelihood of offering a makeup for other valid reasons, e.g. a student's illness or a death in a student's family. (See also **Disability Accommodation Procedure for Students** in this section.)

Legislation of the University Faculty (as last amended by the Faculty Senate on May 14, 2008) governing study period and examinations and other end-of-semester exercises is as follows:

1. No final examinations can be given at a time other than the time appearing on the official examination schedule promulgated by the Registrar's Office without prior written permission of the dean of the faculty.
2. No permission will be given, for any reason, to schedule final examinations during the last week of classes or the designated study period preceding final examinations.
3. Permission will be given by the dean of the faculty to reschedule examinations during the examination period itself if requested in writing by the faculty member, but only on condition that a comparable examination also be given for those students who wish to take it at the

time that the examination was originally scheduled. The faculty member requesting such a change will be responsible for making appropriate arrangements for rooms or other facilities in which to give the examination.

4. The final due date for a take-home final examination can be no earlier than the date appearing on the official examination schedule promulgated by the Registrar's Office without prior written permission of the dean of the faculty.

5. A course that requires a culminating end-of-semester exercise (for example, a paper, project report, final critique, oral presentation, or conference) (in lieu of or in addition to a traditional final examination, must advertise at the beginning of the semester the nature of the exercise.

6. A course that requires a culminating end-of-semester exercise and does not offer a final examination must allow students at least until the date appearing on the official examination schedule promulgated by the Registrar's Office to complete submission of materials associated with the culminating exercise. (For example, a student making a presentation during the last week of classes or during study period will have at least until that scheduled final-exam date to submit a final write-up or equivalent.)

Return of Exams, Papers, etc. Although there is no federal or state legislation that pertains to the manner in which graded work is to be returned to students, the returning of such materials should be handled in such a manner as will preserve the student's privacy. Students have a right to examine their corrected exams, papers, and the like, in order to be able to question their grading. They do not, however, have an absolute right to the return thereof. Exams, papers, etc., as well as grading records, should be retained for a reasonable time after the end of the semester, preferably until the end of the following term, to afford students such right of review.

Due Date for Submitting Final Grades. The due date for submitting final grades to college offices is set by each college independently but is normally within seventy-two hours of the completion of the examination. Prompt submission of final grades is essential inasmuch as a great deal of processing follows this submission.

Grades

Only the instructor of the course has the responsibility and authority to judge the quality of a student's work and assess the appropriate grade. No one can overrule instructors and require them to go against their judgment of the work. Grading must not be arbitrary or capricious or influenced by illegal discriminatory considerations. To avoid the influencing of grades by improper consideration or student pressure, a grade, once given, may only be changed if an error in the original grade is claimed by the instructor. The instructor should be willing to review the basis of an assigned grade with an inquiring student and correct the grade if an error is found. The evaluation of the quality of the student's work is solely up to the instructor, but the grade must not

contain a punitive element for an offense against academic integrity if the student has been found innocent of this offense by a duly constituted board.

Grading System

In May 1965, the University Faculty adopted the Cornell University Grading System, a letter system of grading with shadings of pluses, minuses, and variations in grade-point values, as well as a system of symbols to be used in lieu of grades. The grading system is attached as appendix 8. It is also available from the Office of the Dean of Faculty and available online at:

<http://www.theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu/handbook/APPENDIX8.pdf> .

The S-U System. Alongside the letter-grade system stands an *S-U* System, in which *S* means satisfactory, as defined by performance that would be graded C- or higher, and *U* means unsatisfactory, as defined by performance that would be graded below C-. Grades of *S* and *U* are not given grade-point values or taken into account in computing grade-point averages. **The purpose of the S-U System is to encourage students to venture into courses outside their main areas of familiarity without great risk to their academic record.** The border between *S* and *U* is not the same, however, as that between pass and fail in the letter-grade system. Credits toward the fulfillment of graduation requirements are earned for courses evaluated *S* but not for those graded *U*. The various schools and colleges differ in the restrictions they place on the election of *SU* grading over letter grading. But in those courses where college rules and course procedures allow it, the election is a student option that must be exercised within the first seven weeks of the beginning of the term. Students may not defer the decision in the hope of first seeing the letter grade they are likely to earn.

Incomplete. The symbol of *Incomplete* is only appropriate when two basic conditions are met: (1) The student has substantial equity at a passing level in the course with respect to work completed; and (2) the student has been prevented by circumstances beyond his/her control, such as illness or family emergency, from completing all of the course requirements on time.

An *Incomplete* may not be given merely because a student fails to complete all course requirements on time. Such a practice would be open to abuse; by deferring completion of some major course requirement, a student could gain advantage over his or her classmates by obtaining additional time to do a superior job. This is not an option that may be elected at the student's own discretion.

While it is the student's responsibility to initiate a request for an *Incomplete*, reasons for requesting an *Incomplete* must be acceptable to the instructor, who establishes specific make-up requirements. **An *Incomplete* allows a specified amount of time determined by the student's college of registry, for completing course work.** The instructor has the option of setting a shorter time limit than that allowed by the student's college. Several colleges require that a statement signed by the instructor be on file indicating

the reason for the *Incomplete* and the restriction, if any.

The consequences of failure to complete all course work within the time permitted will depend upon the policy of the student's college of registry. Some colleges convert the *Incomplete* symbol to a grade of *F*; others let the *Incomplete* stand on the student's transcript. In either case, the option to make up the work is lost.

It is the responsibility of the student to see that all *Incompletes* are made up within the deadline and that the grade change has been properly recorded with the student's college registrar.

Faculty under no circumstances should give an *Incomplete* due to pressure to meet the deadline for reporting grades. The symbol *Incomplete* becomes a permanent part of the student's transcript, even when a grade is later submitted.

Late Grades. Late grades should be avoided. They often result in unwarranted academic actions or even in students not being able to graduate on time. Furthermore, late grades must be posted by hand at considerable expense and do not appear on grade slips and may prevent students from receiving recognition for academic achievement.

Changes in Grades. Each semester's work is an entity and grades are to be assigned for work completed during the normal period of the semester. Subsequent changes in grade may be made only in the event that the instructor made an error in the assignment of the original grade. As a matter of equity, grades must not be changed after the end of a semester because a student may have subsequently done additional work.

Posting of Grades. Posting of student grades by name or a personally identifiable number is prohibited under the terms of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). However, a student waiver authorizing disclosure of educational records by means of a personally identifiable number (e.g. a student ID number) is acceptable provided that such consent is in writing, dated and signed by the student. **[NOTE: A name or social security number must never be used for this purpose.]** If instructors use this method, the waiver must be for a specific course; must be for a specified period of time (semester, academic year, etc.); must specify the records to be disclosed; and must be retained by the instructor of the course for a period of one year after its expiration. **Students should not be coerced into signing a waiver, as the law requires that it be voluntarily given. Instructors may post grades for students who do not want their student ID number used by establishing a unique identifier known only to that student and the instructor.**