




OFFICE OF THE
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AND PROVOST
The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Instructional Faculty and Graduate Teaching Assistants

FROM: André-Denis Wright
Senior Vice President and Provost 

DATE: August 17, 2021

RE: **Honoring our Commitment to Our Students
University Policies Regarding Instruction
Academic Year 2021-2022**

In order to assist the instructors new to the University of Oklahoma - Norman Campus and as a reminder to all the returning instructors, the following pages include **important policies** that you need to consider throughout the academic year:

For classroom-related policies and guidance related to COVID-19, please bookmark the following website: <https://www.ou.edu/together/instructional-faculty>

To help provide a learning environment free of discrimination and harassment, along with the existing syllabus statement on disability and academic integrity (see pp. 8 and 9 below) including the following statements on all syllabi is recommended:

Adjustments for Pregnancy/Childbirth Related Issues

Should you need modifications or adjustments to your course requirements because of documented pregnancy-related or childbirth-related issues, please contact me as soon as possible to discuss. Generally, modifications will be made where medically necessary and similar in scope to accommodations based on temporary disability. Please see www.ou.edu/content/eoo/faqs/pregnancy-faqs.html for commonly asked questions.

Title IX Resources

For any concerns regarding gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, stalking, or intimate partner violence, the University offers a variety of resources, including advocates on-call 24.7, counseling services, mutual no contact orders, scheduling adjustments and disciplinary sanctions against the perpetrator. Please contact the Sexual Misconduct Office 405-325-2215 (8-5, M-F) or OU Advocates 405-615-0013 (24.7) to learn more or to report an incident.

The list of policies most relevant to classroom issues:

3.2.2	Academic Responsibility
3.10	Nondiscrimination Policy and Sexual Assault, Discrimination, and Harassment Policy and Grievance Procedure <u>(plus syllabus language)</u>
3.11	Consensual Sexual Relationships Policy
3.15.2	Religious Holidays
4.11	Returning Examinations, Papers, and Projects to Students
4.18	Commercial Term Papers
5.7	Class Attendance – Faculty (Outside Employment and Extra Compensation Policy)
4.25	Course Syllabi and Other Course Materials
5.4	Reasonable Accommodation Policy
13	Academic Integrity Code, Norman Campus (excluding Law)

You may also refer to these policies (and many others) that are in the Faculty Handbook via the Provost's webpage at <https://apps.hr.ou.edu/FacultyHandbook/>

Honoring Our Commitment to Our Students Overview of University Policies Regarding Instruction

3.2.2 Academic Responsibility

As teachers, faculty members encourage the free pursuit of learning in their students. They hold before them the best scholarly and ethical standards of their discipline. Faculty members demonstrate respect for students as individuals and adhere to their proper roles as intellectual guides and counselors. Faculty members make every reasonable effort to foster honest academic conduct and to ensure that their evaluations of students reflect each student's true merit. They respect the confidential nature of the relationship between faculty member and student. They avoid any exploitation, harassment, or discriminatory treatment of students. They acknowledge significant academic or scholarly assistance from them. They protect their academic freedom.

3.10 Nondiscrimination Policy and Sexual Assault, Discrimination, and Harassment Policy and Grievance Procedure

The University, in compliance with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, genetic information, age (40 or older), religion, disability, political beliefs, or status as a veteran in any of its policies, practices, or procedures. This includes but is not limited to admissions, employment, housing, financial aid, and educational services.

To help provide a learning environment free of discrimination and harassment, along with the existing syllabus statement on disability and academic integrity (see pp. 13 and 14 below), please include the following statements on all syllabi:

Adjustments for Pregnancy/Childbirth Related Issues

Should you need modifications or adjustments to your course requirements because of documented pregnancy-related or childbirth-related issues, please contact me as soon as possible to discuss. Generally, modifications will be made where medically necessary and similar in scope to accommodations based on temporary disability. Please see www.ou.edu/content/eoo/faqs/pregnancy-faqs.html for commonly asked questions.

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If a student contacts you in reference to either statement, please contact the Sexual Misconduct Officer.

Please refer to the University's Institutional Equity Office's policies and procedures for a more detailed explanation and complaint procedure: for the Nondiscrimination Policy: <http://www.ou.edu/home/eoo.html> and for the Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination and Harassment Policy; <http://www.ou.edu/home/misc.html>. Or, contact the Institutional Equity Office directly at: (405) 325-3549, Norman Campus and Norman-based Tulsa Campus programs: Room 102, Evans Hall and/or the Sexual Misconduct Officer at (405) 325-2215; Walker Center, Room W220. Tulsa-based programs may also contact (918) 660-3107.

3.11 Consensual Sexual Relationships Policy

(A) RATIONALE

Consensual amorous, dating, or sexual relationships have inherent risks when they occur between a faculty member, supervisor, or other member of the University community and any person over whom he or she has a professional responsibility. As noted in the Sexual Assault, Discrimination and Harassment Policy, the risks include a student or subordinate's feeling coerced into an unwanted relationship to ensure they receive a proper educational or employment experience; potential conflicts of interest in which the person is in a position to evaluate the work or make personnel or academic decisions with respect to the individual with whom he or she is romantically involved; a perception by students or employees that a fellow student or coworker who is involved in a romantic relationship with his or her supervisor or professor will receive an unfair advantage; either or both of the parties engaging in behavior destructive to the other or their academic or working environments if the relationship ends; and the potential that University/state resources are used inappropriately to further the romantic relationship.

Those with professional responsibility over others and with whom they have a romantic relationship should be aware that their involvement may subject them and the University to legal liability; consequently, such relationships are strongly discouraged. "Professional responsibility" is defined as performing functions including but not limited to teaching, counseling, grading, advising, evaluating, hiring, supervising, and making decisions or recommendations that confer benefits such as promotions, financial aid awards, or other remuneration, or that may impact upon other academic or employment opportunities.

Definitions-As used in this policy, the terms "faculty" or "faculty member" mean all those who teach at the University and include graduate students with teaching responsibilities and other instructional personnel. The terms "staff" or "staff members" mean all employees who are not faculty and include academic and nonacademic administrators as well as supervisory personnel. The term "consensual sexual relationship" may include amorous or romantic relationships and is intended to indicate conduct that goes beyond what a person of ordinary sensibilities would believe to be a collegial or professional relationship. Norman Campus – Faculty Handbook

(B) POLICY

(1) Faculty/Student Relationships

Within the Instructional Context

It is considered a serious breach of professional ethics for a member of the faculty to initiate or acquiesce in a sexual relationship with a student who is enrolled in a course being taught by the faculty member or whose academic work (including work as a teaching assistant) is being supervised by the faculty member.

Outside the Instructional Context

Sexual relationships between faculty members and students occurring outside the instructional context may lead to difficulties. Particularly when the faculty member and student are in the same academic unit or in units that are academically allied, relationships that the parties view as consensual may appear to others to be exploitative. Further, in such situations, the faculty member may face serious conflicts of interest and should be careful to distance himself or herself from any decisions that may reward or penalize the student involved. A faculty member who fails to withdraw from participation in activities or decisions that may reward or penalize a student with whom the faculty member has or has had an amorous relationship will be deemed to have violated his or her ethical obligation to the student, to other students, to colleagues, and to the University.

3.15.2 Religious Holidays

It is the policy of the University to excuse the absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and additional required classwork that may fall on religious holidays.

NOTE: Inclusion of the above statement is recommended in course syllabi.

4.11 Returning Examinations, Papers, and Projects to Students

It is recommended that students be allowed to see their graded papers, projects, or examinations within a reasonable time. A two-week time limit on the reporting of examination and quiz results is, in general, considered acceptable.

4.18 Commercial Term Papers

Any staff or faculty member who writes, compiles, or otherwise completes academic assignments for sale to students of the University shall be discharged from employment. Any student who commits such an offense shall be expelled from the University.

5.7 Class Attendance - Faculty (Outside Employment and Extra Compensation)

The missions of the University are teaching, research, creative/scholarly activity, professional and University service, and public outreach. As professionals, Norman Campus faculty are individually and primarily responsible for arranging their time among such academic functions as teaching assignments, research, service, continuing education, and consultation. Such arrangements will be subject to evaluation and approval by appropriate authorities as a part of a faculty member's total professional activity during the year with reference to department, college, and University criteria for merit salary increases, tenure, and promotion.

- (A) The professional expertise of the Norman Campus University faculty is normally available to the state and its citizens for incidental and minor services without remuneration. When, however, the services desired from outside the University exceed a reasonable limit agreed to by the appropriate vice president and the faculty member, direct extra remuneration may be accepted, provided the extent of the involvement does not infringe on the faculty member's regular University duties.
- (B) A person who accepts full-time employment on the Norman Campus in the University assumes a primary professional obligation to the University. Any other employment or enterprise in which he or she engages for income shall be secondary to his or her University work, and, after consultation with those reviewing requests for outside employment and extra compensation, shall accept the judgment of the President and Board of Regents as to whether he/she may engage in such employment and retain full-time employment on the Norman Campus faculty. In addition, the department chair should be informed and approve of arrangements that are made to dismiss classes or provide substitute teachers for them when the faculty members are to be absent from these duties. **Absence for more than one week at a time for outside employment when classes are in session will require prior written approval of the Senior Vice President and Provost. (See also Faculty Attendance policy.)**
- (C) All professional activities, whether within the University or without, whether for extra remuneration or for no remuneration of any kind, should contribute to the faculty member's professional growth or efficiency and to his or her teaching or scholarly competence.

4.25 Course Syllabi and Other Course Materials

Faculty members have responsibilities to their students. They shall encourage in students the free pursuit of learning and independence of mind, while holding before them the highest scholarly and professional standards. Faculty members shall show respect for the student as an individual and adhere to their proper role as intellectual guides and counselors.

Effective Fall 2010, Instructional Faculty shall post the required course syllabus on the University's course management system by the first day of the semester; providing a paper copy of the syllabus to students is optional. The syllabus should define the goals of the courses, and faculty members should devote their teaching to the realization of those goals. Where appropriate, course syllabi should state, in addition to the major goals of the course, instructor's office hours; university policies regarding reasonable accommodation and codes of behavior; list of required reading materials; list of all major reading, laboratory, and/or performance assignments for the semester; approximate dates for all graded assignments and approximate percentage each contributes to the final grade. Internships/practicum, directed readings/research, dissertation and thesis hours are exempt from this requirement.

Additionally, instructional faculty are encouraged to use the online course management system to distribute other course materials or to post links to websites with other course materials. Instructional faculty are also encouraged to use other good practices to keep instructional costs minimized including having electronic reserves in the library when feasible and possible, being careful to require only those instructional materials that will actually be extensively used during the course of the semester or term, and learning about and utilizing other emerging technology tools or resources in delivering their courses.

Accessibility and Disability Resource Center

The Accessibility and Disability Resource Center provides support services to students with disabilities. The office is committed to the goal of achieving equal educational opportunity and full participation for students with disabilities. In many cases, these services have been developed in response to expressed student needs. The Accessibility and Disability Resource Center sends all accommodation requests to faculty via their OU e-mail accounts. The Center offers a set of instructional tools developed by Project Pace at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. These tools are available on a set of CDs but have been modified to make them available on our website, www.ou.edu/drc. The list of instructional tools includes faculty development; tips for teaching students who are blind or have low vision; tips for teaching students who are deaf or hard of hearing; and tips for teaching students who have learning disabilities. If you have a need that cannot be met by any of the above, please contact Director Chelle Guttery at drc@ou.edu, 325-3852 voice, or 325-3494 (VP).

5.4 Reasonable Accommodation Policy

The University of Oklahoma will reasonably accommodate otherwise qualified individuals with a disability unless such accommodation would pose an undue hardship or would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of the service, program, or activity or in undue financial or administrative burdens. The term **reasonable accommodation** is used in its general sense in this policy to apply to employees, **students**, and visitors.

Reasonable accommodation may include, but is not limited to:

- (1) Making existing facilities readily accessible and usable by individuals with disabilities;
- (2) Job restructuring;
- (3) Part-time or modified work schedules;
- (4) Reassignment to a vacant position if qualified;
- (5) Acquisition or modification of equipment or devices;
- (6) Adjustment or modification of examinations, training materials, or policies;
- (7) Providing qualified readers or interpreters; or
- (8) Modifying policies, practices, and procedures.

NOTES regarding this policy:

- 1) You are strongly encouraged to make a statement in the opening session of your class and in the class syllabus such as this one:

“Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent the full demonstration of his or her abilities should contact me personally as soon as possible so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate your educational opportunities.”

- 2) Any student who responds to your announcement should be referred to the Accessibility and Disability Resource Center, (University Community Center, 730 College Ave, 325-3852) to make a formal request for accommodation.
- 3) Refer also to sections 5.2 Individuals with Disabilities and 5.3 Office of Disability Services of the Faculty Handbook. Please be assured that both the Accessibility and Disability Resource Center and the Provost’s Office will assist you in making appropriate accommodations.

13 Academic Integrity: Addressing cheating, plagiarism and other forms of misconduct

Notice to students. Students are required to understand and adhere to standards of scholarship from the time they are admitted to the university. Therefore a syllabus statement on academic integrity is not required. Nonetheless, drafting your own statement can be valuable. Students benefit from every reminder that their instructors care about integrity. If there are any course-specific rules, it is good to provide them in writing in case questions arise later. Adding a syllabus link to OU’s integrity website, <http://integrity.ou.edu>, is highly encouraged and will help if the need to report a case arises, as outlined below.

Integrity Pledge. The Student Government Association and Faculty Senate have encouraged the use of an integrity pledge on all major assignments. A suggested pledge is: *“On my honor, I affirm that I will neither give nor receive inappropriate aid in the completion of this exercise.”*

Turnitin.com. The University subscribes to the online plagiarism-detection service Turnitin.com. Turnitin is integrated into Canvas course management system. Papers submitted in Canvas automatically generate an originality report indicating passages identical to other student papers or Internet sources. Further information is available from the integrity website.

Addressing misconduct. Faculty have a professional obligation to maintain standards of integrity and to take action under the Academic Integrity Code when those standards are violated.

For truly minor infractions, typically those involving apparently unintentional violations, students may receive an **admonition (warning)** from the instructor without additional university involvement. Admonitions are especially appropriate for infractions such as minor plagiarism that appear to be unintentional and in the instructor's judgment are better addressed as an instructional issue. The admonition may be delivered either orally or in written form. The student should be told what the problem is, be allowed to respond, and be informed of the grade penalty to be imposed. The penalty may involve reasonable additional work such as redoing the assignment. The final grade penalty cannot exceed a zero on the assignment in question. To avoid repeat "first offenses," admonitions should also be reported centrally using the form available on the integrity website. Before choosing the admonition, an instructor may inquire whether the student has already received one. Contact the Office of Integrity Programs in the Provost's Office: Associate Provost Greg Heiser (325-8679, gheiser@ou.edu) or Associate Director Will Spain, 325-3224, wcs@ou.edu). The student should also receive a link IN WRITING to procedures for contesting the admonition. The best ways to deliver this information are with a syllabus link to <http://integrity.ou.edu> and/or by giving the student a copy of the completed report form. Admonitions permit no further university action or remediation beyond the grade penalty. Therefore, admonitions are not appropriate for intentional, significant, or repeated misconduct or for cumulative finals, semester-long assignments, and graduate work such as comprehensive examinations or theses.

For all other infractions, for example those involving intentional dishonesty or extensive plagiarism, the instructor should refer the matter to the university's Integrity Council within 15 days of discovery for review as a potential **Integrity Code violation**. Instructors may also contact the Integrity Council for assistance when the facts of a possible infraction are unclear or require additional inquiry. To report a Code infraction, use the same reporting form as for an admonition, available from <http://integrity.ou.edu>. If final grades are due before the case has been concluded, assign the grade of "N" (not "I") until the matter is resolved.

Penalties for misconduct. Once a Code infraction is established, the instructor is free to impose a penalty that may exceed the value of the assignment, up to and including an F for the entire course. Depending on the nature of the incident, a Code infraction may be appropriate for a remedial alternative such as a plagiarism tutorial or mandatory integrity training class. Infractions may also result in the following penalties: (1) an official reprimand ("censure") not noted on the transcript; (2) suspension with transcript notation that may be temporary or permanent; (3) expulsion.