

Faculty Responsibilities

Policy: FACULTY RESPONSIBILITIES

Effective date: July 1, 2017

Review date: July 1, 2020

Revised: July 1, 2022

Responsible Party: Office of the Provost

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1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Montana State University recognizes and supports the central role that faculty play in fulfilling the mission and strategic plan of the University. Faculty assume important responsibilities related to teaching, scholarship, and service that are essential to the mission of the land-grant University.

2. GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

In the performance of their responsibilities in the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service the faculty shall:

- Promote an environment where all members of the University community are free from abuse, threats, intimidation, bullying, discrimination, or unprofessional behavior.
- Contribute to a safe and effective working and learning environment that exemplifies the expectations defined in the [Ethical and Professional Standards Policy](#).
- Identify their personal views, beliefs, and opinions as such.
- Complete in a professional, timely and responsible manner all teaching and academic assignments the faculty member has been assigned or accepted.

- e. Comply with [all University policies](#), including without limitation the Relationships with Students Policy, International Travel Policy, Drug & Alcohol Policy, and Faculty Handbook.
- f. Utilize their official University email account for all University or job-related activities, including communications with students, other faculty, and administrators, pursuant to Board of Regents policy 1303.3 and the University Public Employee Responsibilities policy.

3. TEACHING RESPONSIBILITIES

Faculty are an integral part of the teaching mission of the University. In fulfillment of the teaching mission, the faculty shall:

- a. Play a major and central role in the design, revision, and implementation of the curriculum.
- b. Keep abreast of current advances in their disciplines and, as appropriate, regularly update course content.
- c. Ensure course content complies with the University's accessibility requirements.
- d. Foster and assess student achievement of defined learning outcomes in the courses they teach.
- e. Advise students on degree programs within their academic unit as well as future career decisions and refer students to appropriate advising for other educational and degree pathways.
- f. Integrate the use of library and/or other information resources as appropriate into the learning process.
- g. Provide a course syllabus that states in writing the specific course content, objectives, expected learning outcomes, office hours, any specific grading policies for the class, and any rules for attendance or make-up exams consistent with University policies (see [Examinations Policy](#) and [Code of Student Conduct](#)). The course syllabus will be made available to the students by the second class meeting or within a week of the start of the course for on-line courses.
- h. Teach assigned classes in accordance with official course descriptions, designated modality, and curricular goals. Present materials consistent with course objectives and learning outcomes.
- i. Meet classes at the times and locations in the published schedule for the allotted class minutes. Some courses are formatted to include off-campus events such as internships, field practice, and musical performances whose locations and times may arise during the course and may be referred to in the schedule or syllabus without the specific times and locations. Classes taught off-campus must be in compliance with the [Student Travel Policy](#).
- j. Articulate student classroom behavioral expectations in the course syllabus or other written material provided to the students. Faculty may establish reasonable expectations for classroom behavior in addition to those described in the Code of Student Conduct. In accordance with, the Code of Student Conduct, instructors shall report students violating classroom behavioral expectations or engaging in academic misconduct to the Office of the Dean of Students or Graduate Dean Office.

- k. Be prompt in meeting scheduled classes, be available for appointments with students at designated times, and be prepared for classes.
- l. Be fair and prompt in grading and returning class assignments and tests.
- m. Use the class meeting scheduled by the University for the final week of the semester for examinations or other instructional activities. (see [Examinations Policy](#)).
- n. State in writing the limits of assistance permitted between students on graded assignments when provided with collaborative learning opportunities.
- o. Respect students' rights to be free from discrimination and protect students' personal information in accordance with the University's [non-discrimination policy](#).
- p. Academic assignments, policies, or classroom procedures may be modified to provide accommodations approved by the Office of Disability Services or the Office of Institutional Equity. Instructors should refer students requesting accommodations due to disability to the Office of Disability Services. Requests for accommodations due to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions should be referred to the Office of Institutional Equity.
- q. Instructors who learn personal information about a student (religious and political views, sexual orientation, etc.) may not share such information with the class or others, except with permission of the student or in compliance with the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 \(FERPA\)](#).
- r. Maintain educational records in a manner consistent with state law and the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 \(FERPA\)](#), which affords students [certain rights](#) with respect to their education records. Records maintained by the University are considered education records and may not be disclosed except as allowed by state law and FERPA.
- s. Be available to students outside of class through regularly scheduled, in-person meetings and individual student appointments. As part of their student-focused duties, faculty are expected to post and observe at least three hours of in-person office hours per week during an academic semester in which they have teaching or instructional-related responsibilities. Office hours should be scheduled at times that are reasonably convenient to students, consistent and predictable, and held in accessible academic spaces on campus such as a faculty office, studio, or laboratory. Faculty will prioritize student meetings over other activities during posted office hours. When teaching online courses, virtual office hours may be used instead of in-person. Faculty will communicate their office hours in writing to their students, advisees and department office each semester, and provide reasonable notification if office hours need to be adjusted.
- t. Responsibly manage any instructor absences from class. Faculty shall teach classes at the scheduled times and locations. In case of absence (e.g., due to illness, emergency, or professional meetings), the faculty member shall notify the Department Head and make arrangements, if possible, to have the work of the class continue, either by arranging for an appropriate substitute instructor, by scheduling an examination, or preparing alternative work assignments for the students appropriate to the learning outcomes. If no instructor is available

to teach the class, the department will promptly notify students of class cancellation. Classes may not be cancelled for the convenience of the instructor.

u. Evaluate student performance.

v. Retain grade records. Grade records will be retained for at least five years. Following the retention period, disposal shall be conducted in a manner that protects students' rights of confidentiality.

I. Undergraduate students

Grading is the prerogative and responsibility of the instructor who must specify the grading policies for the class in the syllabus. The assigned final grade must reflect the performance of the student commensurate with the course content and objectives. If a student questions their grade, the instructor has a responsibility to discuss the matter with the student. If the instructor cannot resolve the matter to the student's satisfaction, the student may initiate [academic grievance procedures](#). Should a grievance be filed, the instructor will provide assistance, as necessary and appropriate, to process the grievance.

II. Graduate students

The evaluation of graduate students may involve more than the assignment of grades. Each department that offers graduate programs will establish and provide the students with notice of the manner in which academic progress in the graduate program will be assessed consistent with the policies of the Graduate School. Each department will include a mechanism for graduate students to receive regular feedback on their academic progress and to file academic grievances. Should a grievance be filed, the instructor will provide assistance, as necessary and appropriate, to process the grievance.

4. RETENTION AND AVAILABILITY OF STUDENT EDUCATIONAL RECORDS

Students are granted the right to inspect their educational records under FERPA. Therefore, graded examinations, papers, and other records of evaluation will be made available to the student for inspection. If the instructor chooses to retain these materials rather than return them to students, they must be kept for a period of one (1) year to provide the opportunity for review and to resolve any grade or other academic decision disputes. If graded materials are returned to the student, then any uncollected materials must be kept for one (1) year. Instructors shall arrange for storage with the department if they are no longer employed by the University.

5. SCHOLARSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES

Faculty engage in discovery and the advancement of knowledge through [scholarship](#). In fulfilling these responsibilities, faculty shall:

a. Develop and engage in scholarship activities in a professional manner.

- b. Mentor students in their scholarship activities.
- c. Respect and defend free inquiry and the exchange of ideas while respecting the views and rights of others when working with students and colleagues.
- d. Acknowledge the contributions of others to their own work.
- e. Create, seek, and share knowledge fairly, accurately, and objectively.

6. SERVICE RESPONSIBILITIES

Faculty have a responsibility to make contributions through service and outreach activities by committing to serve the University, as well as the state, the nation, and the international community. In fulfilling their service responsibilities, the faculty shall:

- a. Engage in service to others on and off-campus by applying their knowledge and expertise.
- b. Engage in service to their discipline or profession through professional organizations and activities.
- c. Provide honest and objective appraisals in judging the professional performance and evaluation of colleagues in accordance with the primary academic unit, college, and university criteria.
- d. Participate in governance at the primary academic unit, college, and/or university levels of the institution.
- e. Maintain an active and significant role in the selection of new faculty and members of the administration.
- f. Participate in the development of goals and plans of the department/school, college, and university.