

## Faculty of Arts & Science Academic Handbook for Instructors

This Handbook is intended to provide instructors with essential information about rules, regulations and mandatory expectations for undergraduate teaching in the Faculty of Arts & Science (FAS). It is also intended to offer helpful suggestions and guidance on best practices. In addition to the many suggestions about best practices, you will note that **elements that are required rather than recommended are signaled by bold-face type (\*R\*)**.

The order of topics below generally follows the progress of a course, beginning with the syllabus and ending with student appeals, and is then followed by a number of appendices. An explication of relevant people and services, and a list of acronyms are appended at the end. The document will be updated regularly, and the most current version will be posted on the FAS website in the Faculty & Staff section: <https://teaching.artsci.utoronto.ca/teachinginas/academichandbook/>.

Throughout the document, the term ‘academic unit’ refers to the department, program, college or other entity with administrative responsibility for the course involved. ‘UG Coordinator’ refers to the person with academic responsibility, e.g. Associate Chair or Program Director; ‘UG Administrator’ refers to the admin staff person, e.g. UG Advisor or Program Administrator, usually supporting the UG Coordinator in the unit.

Two other documents will be useful to you. The Arts & Science [Calendar](#) contains the rules and regulations as they are presented to students, in addition to the usual descriptions of courses and programs. The online version on the Faculty website is the official version as it is the most up-to-date: <http://www.artsandscience.utoronto.ca/ofr/calendar/>.

The other is the [Academic Integrity website](#). This describes fully the rules and processes about cheating, plagiarism and other academic integrity issues, and provides good advice for instructors on how to design courses, assignments and tests to minimize these kinds of problems.

Instructors have a number of professional resources available to assist them to be effective teachers, most notably the suite of resources provided by the [Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation](#) (CTSI). You will find an annotated list near the end of this Handbook, and guidance on where to direct questions.

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## *Preface: Our UofT Teaching Culture*

As an instructor who participates in the teaching culture at the University, you have a great deal of latitude for how you teach your course. Your teaching, however, also contributes to our collective mission as undergraduate educators. To that end, members of the FAS Committee on Teaching & Learning have worked together to identify several principles that FAS values in undergraduate teaching:

- Establishment of an environment conducive to learning, one where ideas can be exchanged freely and easily.
- Engagement of students in learning, where students are motivated to learn, intellectually stimulated and challenged.
- Support for student learning, where students have access to the academic help they need from instructors and from across the institution.
- Integration of assessment into student learning, where assignments and tests are part of the learning process, give students an opportunity to demonstrate their understanding and provide students a sense of progress in the course.

Our teaching culture is also shaped by our diverse U of T community. Our support for diversity and equity is part of our UofT-wide commitment to a teaching and learning environment that is not only free of harassment and discrimination as defined in the Ontario *Human Rights Code* but one that values the ways diversity enriches our teaching and contributes to the diversification of ideas and perspectives.

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## **SECTION 1. COURSE SYLLABUS**

This section is intended to offer you guidance as you create a syllabus for your course. It contains 3 sorts of items that are relevant to syllabi:

- 1) those specifically required by University or Faculty policy,
- 2) those that your students will consider necessary or helpful, and
- 3) many you may find useful in shaping your students' expectations and behaviour.

What follows is a sample set of syllabus headings, sorted into broad clusters for your convenience, with the required headings marked as such with (\*R\*). Following each is a brief discussion and sometimes bits of suggested or required text, with links to spots later in the *Handbook* where the topic receives a fuller discussion. In the online version we have included a few sample syllabi for illustration. The topics to be included – other than the required ones – and their order are of course yours to decide, as the Faculty recognizes that individual syllabi vary widely by instructor and course. You might also find helpful [a CTSI resource](#) on the designing the syllabus.

The course syllabus has two dimensions: (i) it is essentially your “contract” with your students for the requirements in your course; (ii) it is the best place to put useful course-related information as the syllabus must be distributed in class and/or posted on your course website.

**You are required to include in your syllabus anything that contributes to the student's mark, e.g. the marking scheme, and any policy or rule that affects the mark, such as late penalties.** A great deal is left to your academic judgement. A few Faculty policies define limits to what you can require of students, as will be explained below, but students generally know they must abide by what you put in your syllabus, and so you are advised to make full use of the syllabus as part of course management. Note that strict policies specify the rules for making changes to certain syllabus elements after the course begins (see Section 5.2).

**A copy of your marking scheme must be deposited with the UG Administrator** of your academic unit by the first day of classes. **Your marking scheme must include all major assessments, their percentage weight in the course mark, their method (test, essay, etc.) and their timing in the course.** You must make your syllabus readily available to students, either by posting it on your course website, or by distributing a copy to students in the first or second class in the course. You should also draw attention to its major elements as you introduce your course.

## **SECTION 2. DESIGNING YOUR SYLLABUS**

### **High-level Course Overview**

#### **2.1 Calendar Course Information**

It may seem too obvious to mention but you should include the Calendar and Timetable basics on your syllabus, including your name. You would be surprised how many students cannot remember the course number or instructor's name to write on their final exam script.

#### **2.2 Course Objectives**

Best practice recommends that you articulate the pedagogical objectives you have for your course, e.g. what learning outcomes you expect from your students by the end. Your objectives may seem quite clear to you or be seen as patently obvious by those in your discipline, but students are often very unclear about these things. Explicitly stated learning objectives may serve as a reference point throughout the course, allowing students to track their progress toward your destination.

#### **2.3 Tutorial Objectives**

Tutorials are worthy of separate mention in this regard. If tutorials are a part of your course, best practice recommends you be specific about their pedagogical purpose within the course. Both students and TAs have mentioned this as often lacking in their experience. Tutorials are discussed in more detail below in Section 5.3 but you should consider articulating:

- the overall purpose of tutorials in the course,
- your expectations about student attendance, preparation, participation, etc.,
- the intended role of the TA in the course.

### **Basic Logistical Information**

#### **2.4 Course Contact Information (\*R\*)**

Your contact information should be given in conjunction with an explanation in class about your expectations regarding communicating with you. If you do not want to receive phone calls about

late assignments etc., you should not include your number. If you expect communication to be done through TAs or only through email, make that clear.

## 2.5 Office Hours (\*R\*)

All instructors are required to hold office hours throughout the term. The number and distribution of these hours are not specified in policy; however, they should be arranged to facilitate interaction with students. Best practices point to a minimum of 2-3 hours per week. You should keep in mind that many students have work or family obligations off-campus and so may be most available in hours adjacent to the class hours.

## 2.6 Quercus Information

Students are generally used to using online learning platforms for courses, and so you should make your Quercus course page available if you are using one and explain what they should expect to find there and what use you expect them to make of it.

## 2.7 Relevant Dates

You will find the Faculty's sessional dates in the *Calendar* and you would be well advised to include on your syllabus those that impinge on your course.

## Assignments & Assessment

## 2.8 Marking Scheme (\*R\*)

**You must provide your course marking scheme to your department by completing the Course Marking Scheme Form and submitting it to the UG Administrator in your unit at the start of your course.** On this form, you must itemize:

- i) **each assignment or test** that is to be marked
- ii) its **weight** in the final course grade,
- iii) its **due date or the timing** of each assessment,
- iv) as well as whether the course will have a **final exam** in the Final Examination Period.

**You must communicate this to students in your course at the start of the course, preferably no later than the end of the first week of classes and absolutely no later than the last date to add courses.** Once the last date to add courses passes, strict policies govern when and how you may change this marking scheme (see Section 5.2).

## 2.9 Modes & Number of Assessments

University policy states, and good pedagogy suggests, that student performance “be assessed on more than one occasion. **No one essay, test, examination, etc. should have a value of more than 80% of the grade.**” This refers to what you indicate as the “normal” marking scheme for all students in the course; it does not restrict accommodations you may make for individual students who have circumstances that in your judgement justify an exception. (More about that in Sections 7 & 8.) Note that independent study or project courses are included under this rule: some piece of work other than the main project must be marked and returned by the deadline (see below Section 2.11).

## 2.10 Assignment Due Dates (\*R\*)

**Term work deadlines should be within term and not normally extended into the Final Examination Period.** A clear separation of term work from exam preparation allows students to best manage their time and their work. You are permitted to grant informal extensions into the Final Examination Period (see Section 8.3), but you should set your initial or published deadlines within the term.

## 2.11 Assignment Weights & Return Dates – Faculty Rules (\*R\*)

University policy dictates that instructors must return “at least one piece of marked term work before the last date to drop the course,” normally about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way through the course. F courses, in early November; Y courses, in February before Reading Week; S courses, in early March.

Faculty policy makes this requirement more specific:

- i) **Instructors shall return by the deadline one or more marked assignments worth a combined total of at least 10% of the total course mark for H courses and 20% for Y courses.**
- ii) **The deadline for returning such marked work shall be the last regularly-scheduled class meeting prior to the Drop Date, with one exception: for courses that run the entire Fall/Winter Session (Y1Y or H1Y courses), the deadline shall be the last regularly-scheduled class meeting of the first week of classes in January.**

This is a very strict requirement with no exceptions. If some extraordinary circumstance prevents you from meeting this deadline for your whole class or a significant part of it, you should notify your UG Administrator immediately. In such cases, the students are normally allowed to drop the course after they have received back the marked work, even if it is beyond the deadline. This is not the case, however, for an extension beyond the deadline you grant to a individual student based on the student’s request or exceptional circumstances. In such cases you are not obliged to meet the deadline.

## 2.12 Term Test Dates – Faculty Rules (\*R\*)

**Term tests must be scheduled within the term, between the first and last day of classes.** No term test (i.e. constituting an element of the term mark and administered by the instructor or TAs) may be scheduled in the Final Examination Period, nor in the November Break, Reading Week or the Study Period after the end of classes and before the beginning of the Examination Period.

The one exception to this rule is for Y courses in the Fall/Winter session: such courses may schedule a term test in the December Examination Period. UG Administrators should contact the Faculty Registrar’s Exams Office to have such a test included in the December Exam Schedule.

**No term test or combination of term tests having a value greater than 25% of the final mark may be held in the final two weeks of classes at the end of any session - Fall, Winter, or Summer. This includes "take-home tests" and assignments where the topics or questions are**

**both assigned and due within the last two weeks of classes.** Note this regulation is a strict rule and is not negotiable with your class.

It is certainly permissible –even normal– to collect an assignment worth more than 25% in the last 2 weeks of term, provided it was assigned before the final 2 weeks. This allows the student to manage his or her time in that intense period. However, a test, take-home test or essay that is due in that 2-week period where the question or topic is assigned or revealed to students within the last 2 weeks is unfair to the student and to other instructors, since it necessarily commandeers an unacceptable amount of the student’s time in that critical period with no possibility for the student to manage in advance the competing elements of his or her workload.

### **2.13 Final Examinations (\*R\*)**

The *Grading Practices Policy* states that normally “in all courses that meet regularly as a class there shall be a final examination held under divisional auspices.” The policy allows for divisional implementation, and the Faculty implements it as follows:

- **All 100-series courses (except 199Y courses) must have a Faculty-run final examination, and that examination must carry a weight of at least 1/3 and not more than 2/3 of the final mark.**
- Courses at the 200 level normally have final examinations.
- Courses at the 300/400 level often have final examinations, but many units have decided that this is not necessary or appropriate for some of these courses.

Requests for 100-series exemptions are made through the academic unit to the Dean’s Office via the Faculty Registrar; requests for exemptions in 200-level courses are made in the academic unit; normally decisions about 300/400-series courses are left to the instructor. Consult your UG Coordinator on local practices and expectations for exams in courses beyond the 100 level.

The weighting of final exams in 200+series courses is a pedagogical matter for the instructor to decide; however, instructors are asked to consider whether a Faculty final exam with a very small weight is worth the cost of administering it.

For scheduling reasons, **all Faculty final exams must be either 2 or 3 hours in duration.**

### **2.14 Assignment Submission Policy**

If you have specific directives for your class about how they should submit assignments (e.g. electronically, in person, at the departmental office), you should spell those out clearly in your syllabus. Many departments have a protocol for students submitting assignments at the departmental office, and you should take those into account.

### **2.15 turnitin.com**

**If you intend to use turnitin.com as your method for receiving written assignments, you must inform students of this at the beginning of your course. You must also inform them that use of turnitin.com is voluntary,** and provide alternate means of submitting assignments should a student

not wish to use turnitin.com. If you use this tool, you must include the following text in your syllabus along with your instructions: **(\*R\*)**

Turnitin.com “Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University’s use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site”.

For more on turnitin.com, see Section 5.8.

## **2.16 Late Penalty Policy**

**If you intend to accept and apply penalties to late assignments, you must spell out the rules in your syllabus**, such as: whether or not you require prior notification of impending lateness; the penalty that will be applied per unit of time; maximum possible penalty; ultimate deadline when work will no longer be accepted; documentation required, if relevant; etc. Late penalty policies vary widely among instructors, given the diversity of subjects and modes of assessment. Your UG Coordinator can offer advice if you have questions. In general, you are advised not to be overly generous or vague at the outset, as it is more difficult to tighten up later than to grow more generous. (Also see Section 8.1 regarding legitimate absence or lateness and Section 7.3 on documentation.)

## **2.17 Missed Test Policy**

Rules and guidelines surrounding this issue are treated more extensively below under Section 7. Again, you have great latitude in designing a policy that will work in the context of your course (within the limits specified below), but any policy works best if it is stated clearly from the outset and applied fairly and consistently.

## **2.18 Re-Marking Policy**

The Faculty makes available to you helpful limits on requests for re-marking (see Section 5.14). With these in mind, you may wish to lay down your re-marking procedures and set the expectations for your students in order to head off frivolous or blanket requests that you or your TAs re-mark assignments that have presumably already received your best attention.

## **2.19 Accommodations for Disability**

A full section below is given over to accommodations for students with disabilities (Section 13). In your syllabus, you can signal that you recognize the need for such accommodations and point out the University’s requirement that students register with Accessibility Services in order to receive such accommodations. You may wish to include this text, provided by Accessibility Services:

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or Accessibility Services at (416) 978 8060; [accessibility.utoronto.ca](http://accessibility.utoronto.ca)

If approached, you should definitely refer the student to Accessibility Services and indicate that you will work with the Service on any needed accommodation.

### **Course Management & Expectations**

#### **2.20 Online Communication Policy**

If you are using Blackboard or a course website as your primary “official” vehicle to communicate with your students, you should specify that students are responsible for checking it regularly. For students, the University has a policy requiring that they have a UofT email address and check it regularly, as it is the only address to which official University business will be sent.

The Faculty does not specify that instructors have any particular email policy for their courses. However, if you do have a policy, you should communicate it clearly. It is also wise to set expectations for students at the outset so they can govern their communication with you or your TAs accordingly. For example, you should indicate when you will and will not respond to email (on weekends, just before class, etc.), how long students should expect to wait for a response (24 hours, 2 days, etc.), what you will and will not discuss by email (subject content reserved for office hours and lecture, non-course business, marking appeals to be sent to TAs, etc.), and any protocols that will help you sort your email (course number in subject line, e.g. CSC323H).

#### **2.21 Academic Integrity Message**

You are advised to put text into your syllabus regarding plagiarism and inappropriate collaboration, giving enough detail to guide students’ behaviour rather than simply alluding to the terms on the assumption students will know what they mean in the context of your course. Students often plead ignorance, which is more easily countered if the rules and expectations are clearly spelled out in your syllabus. (See section 12 for more on this, and Appendix A for sample syllabus language.)

### **Detailed Course Business**

#### **2.22 Course Business, Required Texts, Weekly Readings etc.**

Needless to say, the syllabus is the appropriate place to outline in as much detail as you think useful what students should be doing each week to prepare for or follow up from class.

## **SECTION 3. ENROLMENT IN COURSES**

### **3.1 Enrolment in Your Course**

#### **3.1 Enrolment in Your Course**

Enrolment in FAS courses is a registrarial matter and not generally within the control of instructors. It is handled electronically via ROSI/ACORN through a system of priorities and Wait Lists. Eligibility, checking of pre-requisites, required permissions, etc. are handled electronically and by staff in academic units. Students are not enrolled in a course unless they are enrolled on

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**ROSI/ACORN, so you should not tell students they are enrolled in your course if they are not enrolled in ROSI/ACORN.**

After the enrolment deadline, late enrolment in courses may be granted on a case-by-case basis at the department/instructor's discretion. If space permits, you may request late enrolment on behalf of a student through the UG Administrator in your department.

**You must not mark assignments or tests for students who are not officially enrolled in your course.** Your best response to inquiries or questions is to direct the student to ROSI, to your UG Administrator, or to their College Registrar.

Note: A student may have enrolled on ROSI in your course after your copy of your class list was printed; your Blackboard class list does not have a live connection to ROSI and so a lag may occur before your list is updated. Note also that adding students to your Blackboard class list does not enrol them or guarantee enrolment. Have the student enrol through ROSI and have ROSI update your Blackboard class list.

### **3.2 Pre-requisite/Co-requisite/Exclusion Waivers**

Departments have differing practices regarding enforcing pre- or co-requisites. Unless your unit has explicitly given you permission to deal with these for your course, you should not do anything that would appear to be a waiver. If relevant, you can make a recommendation to your UG Administrator about an individual student, but leave the waiver to the department. This also applies to participation in a course when the student has an outstanding deferred exam in the pre-requisite course. Refer the student to your UG Administrator.

Exclusions are a different matter, and are completely outside an instructor's jurisdiction. (One course is an "exclusion" for another if the two overlap in content such that the second would be "repeated work," and hence the excluded course is ineligible for degree credit.) Exclusions are identified by an academic unit but enforced by the Faculty Registrar, and so they are out of an instructor's jurisdiction. Erroneous information to a student on this issue could result in a completed course later being denied degree credit, even well after it was completed. Refer the student to your UG Administrator.

### **3.3 Changing Courses**

Students have a brief interval at the beginning of the course when they may still add a course that is underway, provided there is space available. The Faculty's processes are set up to allow you to begin teaching in earnest right from the beginning of the course, and you should expect students who join the course in that brief interval to catch up on what they have missed.

Should a student petition and be granted late entry into your course for legitimate reasons, it is the student's responsibility to discuss arrangements for catching up on missed material or assignments. You will likely have been consulted about the advisability of such a late add by your UG Administrator.

### **3.4 Dropping Courses**

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This section is for your general information, to explain some student behaviour you may observe. Students may cancel their enrolment in a course “without academic penalty” in a number of ways, depending on the timing. This is normal practice in the Faculty and should cause you no special concern.

Cancel: Students may cancel a course on ROSI and have it disappear from their academic history up to the “Drop Date,” a deadline that is roughly  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way through the course. The Drop Dates are listed in the [Calendar](#).

LWD (Late Withdrawal): Students may withdraw from a course after the normal drop date under certain circumstances. The Faculty has a policy that allows students to LWD up to 3.0 credits in their degree, provided they do so by the last day of term. Their enrolment in the course ends, but a notation of LWD goes on their academic record showing they were enrolled at one point. In order to drop a course this way, students must consult their College Registrar and explain their situation. LWD is meant to allow students to re-group, learn from their mistakes, and proceed immediately to salvage what is left of a term. You may find that some students disappear from your final marks sheet or your Blackboard class list when you are trying to enter their final mark. This may be the explanation.

WDR (Petitioned Withdrawal): After the LWD deadline, or after the Drop Date if they have used up their 3.0 LWDs, students must petition to have a course dropped from their record. If they have legitimate reasons and the petition is granted, a WDR will appear on their record. You may be consulted about their term work as the Faculty responds to the petition, and so it is best to keep your marks records clear and up-to-date so the information will be easily available to your UG Administrator.

Students have advising staff available to them with whom they can discuss these decisions. Each student belongs to a college, and the College Registrarial staff provide them with holistic advising that looks at their entire situation. If students have questions or are undecided about whether or not they should drop your course, feel free to advise them about their situation in your specific course. But a student’s College Registrar is his or her “first stop for reliable advice,” especially if their circumstances affect more than just your course.

### **3.5 Repeating Courses**

Although there are some specific exceptions, the general rule in the Faculty is that students may not repeat courses in which they have already achieved a passing mark. If a student approaches you about this, refer them to their College Registrar.

### **3.6 Auditing Courses**

The University and the Faculty have delegated rules and restrictions about auditing courses to the academic units. Some departments have strict policies about this; others leave it to the instructor’s discretion. If a student asks to audit, i.e. sit through the course without enrolling for credit and a final mark, you should not agree to this before clarifying your department’s policy on this. Some

units forbid it entirely; others charge a fee if the student wants some documentation of a completed audit.

To be clear, there will be no notation on a transcript to recognize auditing. If the auditor wants documentation of a completed audit, then the student must speak to the UG Administrator in the academic unit sponsoring the course: the department may issue a letter and collect a fee equivalent to tuition for the privilege of a documented audit. In general, if you agree to allow an auditor, you should make clear what the expectations and limits are: Are they permitted to sit in and listen only? Allowed or expected to participate in discussion? to submit assignments and write tests that will be marked? Some instructors do not mind an additional listener in a lecture course if there is space, but few allow more participation than that.

## **SECTION 4. COURSE/CLASSROOM PROCEDURES**

### **4.1 Setting Expectations**

Students, particularly first-year students new to university, may be uncertain about appropriate behaviour in your class and will appreciate you making your expectations clear. CTSI has a very helpful [Tip Sheet](#) on “First Class Strategies.”

If you have preferences or requirements on such matters, you should take the time to describe and explain them. Most are not worth the trouble of making full-blown rules or policies about, as most students will comfortably abide by your preferences if they know what they are. If you intend to enforce any of these with course marks, then you must be explicit at the outset.

### **4.2 Attendance & Participation Policies**

The Faculty does not have a general policy requiring that students attend classes. Instructors may have an attendance requirement for their own particular courses.

If you think there is a specific pedagogical need for an attendance requirement in your course, you must be mindful of what such a rule requires: i) you must be prepared to take reliable attendance at each class; ii) you must be prepared for all the bureaucratic business that goes with exceptions, illnesses, documentation, etc.; iii) you should consider that the only real way to enforce such a policy is to designate some portion of the course mark to reflect this requirement; and iv) you should always take into account the possibility that some student may have a disability affecting attendance. Best practice suggests you design the workings of any such policy precisely to achieve your pedagogical objectives. In doing so, you may wish to reflect on the difference between “active participation” and “mere bodily presence.”

A portion of the mark for participation can signal to your students that you expect them to be actively engaged with learning in your classroom. It also allows you the opportunity to recognize in your assessment different learning styles, since some students demonstrate their insight and knowledge better orally than on written tests. If you do have a participation mark, you have a responsibility for designing it such that the size and classroom circumstances of your course offer students the opportunity to earn the marks you apportion for participation. You should also clarify

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for students what kinds of activity will make for a good participation mark, and also consider offering alternative ways of participating for those who may have a problem speaking out in front of others.

#### **4.3 Use of Electronic Devices in Class (Laptops, iPods, iPads, phones, etc.)**

For some instructors, student use of laptops and other electronic devices can feel like a barrier to establishing an interactive and engaged classroom environment. Indeed, a number of studies acknowledge that handwritten notes can better support retention of information, and that sitting next to a laptop user is distracting for other students. Consequently, some instructors wish to limit the use of these devices in their classrooms. However, such prohibitions create new challenges:

- Many students have adapted their learning and study habits to a digital environment. They may read and annotate texts, take and organize their notes, and otherwise manage their course materials entirely online or on a computer. Moving to an analog environment can add stress and diminish learning by disrupting study habits and organizational practices.
- A number of students use laptops to support accessibility, or are acting as a volunteer notetaker for another student. Instructors must both accommodate student accessibility needs, and ensure that they do so in a way that respects student privacy. This means that students with an accessibility need, or who are supporting other students' accessibility needs, cannot be allowed an "exemption" to an otherwise blanket policy prohibiting electronic devices. Such an approach both violates student privacy and does not accommodate undeclared accessibility needs.

Instead of a classroom policy restricting laptop use, you might find it useful to:

- Discuss your pedagogical goals with students, and share with them the reasons why you are concerned about the potential for computers to interfere with their learning or that of their classmates.
- In discussion with students, set guidelines for the use of devices in class. (You may find that students have excellent feedback on what peer behaviours are most distracting, and what limits might be most effective.)
- We know that student computer use can be distracting to other students. One strategy to address this issue is to designate a section of the classroom for those who wish to use computers. Ensure that this area doesn't disadvantage computer users – for example, in a lecture theatre, you would not want to send all computer users to the back rows, but you could designate a particular block of seats on one side of the classroom for computer users.

#### **4.4 Questions in Class**

Different subjects, modes of teaching and classroom environments mean the appropriate time and place for questions vary widely. Yet students pay remarkably close attention to signals as to whether an instructor is approachable and "interested in their learning." You should indicate that

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you are indeed interested in questions, and offer them some guidance by explaining at what time or place you would find them most welcome. Some instructors with large classes have found it well received by students when they schedule one or more Q&A sessions outside class, perhaps in lieu of an office hour or two at some time during the term. Students often appreciate the opportunity even if they may not use the opportunity themselves.

#### **4.5 Taping/Recording/Photographing Lectures etc.**

Lectures and course materials prepared by the instructor are considered by the University to be an instructor's intellectual property covered by the Canadian Copyright Act. Students wishing to record lecture or other course material in any way are required to ask the instructor's explicit permission, and may not do so unless permission is granted. This includes tape recording, filming, photographing PowerPoint slides, Blackboard materials, etc. Such permission is only for that individual student's own study purposes and does not include permission to "publish" them in any way. It is absolutely forbidden for a student to publish an instructor's notes to a website or sell them in other form without formal permission. If you have strong opinions about this happening in your class, you should state the Faculty's policy at the beginning of the course, and reiterate it when needed to individual students. If you find your copyrighted material on a website, you should contact the site administrator, notify them of the copyright violation, and ask that the material be removed immediately.

In the matter of taping lectures etc., you should keep in mind that a number of students with disabilities have been granted the taping of lectures as an appropriate accommodation for their disability (see Section 13). For this reason, it is best to speak privately with any student you think may be contravening the policy so you do not put a student with a disability – or yourself – in an awkward position in front of the whole class. Note, however, that it is still the case with accommodations that tapes are only for that student's exclusive study use and may not be shared without permission. (See also CTSI's [Tip Sheet](#) on this topic.)

#### **4.6 Talking in Class**

Students often come from high schools where "classroom chatter" is tolerated or even taken as a sign of active learning. In a lecture setting, even a modest amount of chatter can disturb everyone else in the room. Subtle classroom management techniques are usually enough to correct this: stop speaking momentarily, look directly at those chattering, wait for them to stop, then proceed. In large classes, it may be necessary to remind students and verbally caution the class. It is never a good idea to "dress down" or humiliate a student, even an offending one, in front of classmates or to allow other students to do so.

#### **4.7 Dealing with Disruptive Students**

Classroom management being one of an instructor's responsibilities, occasionally you may encounter a student whose behaviour is a real problem – anything from monopolizing the discussion to being repeatedly or intensely disruptive. It is best not to confront such a student in front of other students. Low-grade repeated behaviour may be addressed in a private conversation after class to point out that you are not finding the behaviour helpful. This is usually enough. Try to present it as

being about the other students' learning rather than your own comfort level. Students sometimes don't know how their behaviour looks to others.

If subtler techniques are ineffective, or if the behaviour is intensely disrupting, you can adjourn the class momentarily, ask to speak to the student aside from the class, and make it clear that the problematic behaviour disturbs the business of the class. Direct the student clearly and definitely to stop the behaviour. If the behaviour persists or escalates, you can end the class session and consult your UG Coordinator.

If at any time you believe your safety, the safety of the other students and/or the disruptive student is in jeopardy, end the class immediately and contact Campus Police. Notify your UG Coordinator as soon as possible. If the behaviour occurs outside the classroom setting, you should definitely alert your UG Coordinator to it. In such circumstances, it is best not to meet the student without another person present. This provides a safer environment for the instructor, makes available another potential witness for anything that happens, and demonstrates that the problem has reached another level. Important to remember, there may be an underlying health issue contributing to the student's behaviour; by alerting others in the university to the disruptive behaviour, you ultimately may be helping a student in difficulty.

The University has resources and policies to support you in dealing with disruptive students (see Section 14) or students with serious on-going problems that make them a problem in your class. The Student Crisis Response team or Campus Police will intervene as necessary to assist you or protect the learning environment in your course. No one expects you to tolerate disruptive or abusive behaviour, but note that you yourself do not have the authority to "evict" duly-enrolled students from your course. If you run into a problem of this sort, it is always best to seek help from you UG Coordinator or other University officials. See Section 16 for contact information.

## **SECTION 5. TERM WORK**

### **5.1 General Background**

Other than the specific rules arising from Faculty or University policies, term work is an academic matter under the instructor's purview. You are allowed wide flexibility as a matter of academic professionalism in the way you manage term work – as opposed to final exams etc., which are administered by the Faculty and surrounded by many Faculty-level rules. The general principle about term work is that if you are going to enforce a rule or policy, you must tell the students about it at the outset so they know the "terms of engagement" for your course.

### **5.2 Changing the Course Marking Scheme**

**University policy dictates that, after you have made your marking scheme available to the students in your course, you may only change the announced marking scheme in a course by the following procedures:**

- i) You must hold a vote in a regularly-scheduled class and obtain the consent of at least simple majority of those attending the class.

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- ii) The vote must be announced no later than the class previous to the one in which the vote will take place.
- iii) After consent has been achieved, you must deposit the revised marking scheme with the department sponsoring the course.

You may wish to use your course website or Blackboard to announce any such vote.

### **5.3 Tutorials**

Students sometimes find tutorials less than satisfying even though surveys show they want small-group experiences. Given the number of TA hours available to you in your course, it may not be possible to have your TAs attend lecture to better prepare them to relate your lecture material to their tutorial. A number of best practices can help make your tutorials as effective as possible under the circumstances:

- Communicate explicitly to the students – and your TAs – the goals for the tutorials within the context of the course, e.g. supplementary to lectures, review, discussion, new material, skills training.
- Articulate the connection between tutorials and the lecture material.
- Consider communicating an objective for each tutorial session in relation to what is going on in the course/lecture.
- Before an assignment or test, focus the tutorials on what will be due shortly.
- Clarify and communicate the role of the TA, e.g. necessary first contact for re-marking, initial contact for missed tests, assignment extensions, etc.

You may wish to review the [“Report on the UG Tutorial Experience”](#) for other suggestions on best practices.

### **5.4 Designing Assignments & Tests**

Good pedagogy normally includes providing students with regular assessment and meaningful feedback about their grasp of the material and their standing in the course. While instructors are the best judges of what kind of assignment or test is most appropriate for their pedagogical objectives and subject matter, two observations may be useful:

- The complaint most often heard from students is that the assignments or tests in a course were not clearly related to the course material as it was presented in lecture. It could be that they just do not see the connection, or that the assignment was meant to assess only a particular part of the material, but students tend to extrapolate from even limited assignments to the course as a whole. It may help to explain your assignment’s objective so they may interpret their results appropriately.
- A well-designed assignment is often the best pre-emptive defense against plagiarism or other forms of misbehaviour.

See in Section 12 for more on academic integrity, including the [Academic Integrity website](#). Other UofT resources on assessment and designing assignments can be found on the [CTSI](#) website and on the [Writing](#) website.

## 5.5 Teamwork & Peer Assessment

With all assignments, you should be explicit about the extent to which students can discuss their work with, and help one another on projects or assignments. However, this is especially the case when you plan to have students work in teams. You should spell out clearly your expectations about teamwork and the proper limits of collaboration, as lack of clarity frequently leads to problems in an experience that can otherwise be very rewarding for students. CTSI has a number of [helpful documents](#) online to guide you in constructing such assignments.

While you may use some forms of “peer assessment” or “peer feedback” in your courses, **you must not use “peer marking” as part of your marking scheme**, that is, where one student directly assigns another student a mark that contributes to the student’s course grade. There are two reasons for this.

First, marking is the responsibility of instructors and TAs under the supervision of instructors; peer marking opens a student to the possibility of being victimized by another student’s irresponsible behaviour. Second, grading and marking are tasks governed by labour contracts in the University, and so marking and assigning of grades should be reserved to instructors and TAs, the only two groups designated for this duty under these contracts. Allowing students to assign marks to one another opens the possibility of a grievance under our collective agreements.

That being said, some form of peer assessment or feedback can be useful to students, but two steps should be taken to distinguish it clearly from peer marking: i) it should be clearly titled ‘feedback’ and ii) it should take the form of non-mark feedback from the student (e.g. rating scale, written feedback) that will provide information to the student and possibly to the instructor who may then consider it when forming the assessment that becomes part of the course grade.

The important point to remember is that marking and the assigning of grades are the responsibility of the instructor and TAs.

## 5.6 Ethics Review for Student Projects

If you are an undergraduate course instructor with an assignment that involves human participants (surveys, interviews, etc.), **policy requires that you get ethics clearance** before students begin the assignment. This includes assignments where other students, even in the same course, are the human participants.

You will need to complete an [Undergraduate Review Course Template Form](#) and submit it to the appropriate Delegated Ethics Review Committee. This is an expedited process and many academic units have their own such committee. Ask your UG Coordinator for further details and see the Research & Innovation website under “[Undergraduate Research](#).”

## 5.7 Collecting Assignments

Students are responsible for ensuring you receive their assignments on time. You should specify acceptable ways to turn in assignments and accept no responsibility in cases where students do not follow these instructions. Your UG Coordinator can advise you of appropriate departmental procedures for collecting assignments submitted outside of class time (many departments have a drop box with sign-in sheet). If you accept or prefer hard copy submission, you may wish to request students also submit an electronic copy, which will provide an electronic date stamp and a searchable version should questions arise. Students should always be advised to retain copies of their assignment and earlier drafts until they receive the assignment back.

## 5.8 turnitin.com

Turnitin.com is a diagnostic tool that many instructors find helpful, and for which UofT has a license. It notes commonalities in phrasing between a student's essay and other sources. It does not necessarily identify plagiarism and is to be used in conjunction with an instructor's judgement.

**If you elect to use turnitin.com, you must inform your class at the beginning of the course, include the following text in your syllabus, and say explicitly that use of the tool is voluntary for students:**

“Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.”

Those considering using turnitin.com should go [CTSI web pages on turnitin.com](#) and read the policies and recommendations surrounding its use. Students have the right to refuse to use it, in which case you must set other mechanisms by which they turn in assignments. You can design ones that are also meant to deter plagiarism; CTSI provides examples. Also, students should be allowed to submit assignments by email or hardcopy to meet the deadline if they encounter problems when submitting to turnitin.com. Again, see the CTSI site for further information. You may also call Pam Gravestock, Associate Director of CTSI, to discuss any turnitin.com issues (946-8585).

## 5.9 Returning Assignments & Test Papers

Timely feedback is part of good pedagogy. University policy states that “students should have access to commentary on assessed term work and the opportunity to discuss the assessment with the instructor.” Best practice is to return all term work within at most two weeks of the submission date. When additional time is needed to complete marking, the students should be informed of this. The longer the time taken before the feedback is received, the less useful that feedback will be to the student.

**Assignments are the property of the students and must be returned to them in an appropriately secure manner.** Under no circumstances should you leave term work outside your office or in a stack at the front of the classroom to be picked up by students, as this is an invitation for it to be appropriated by someone else for illicit use or sold to an "essay bank" etc. Privacy

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considerations also dictate that you and your TAs should not put the student's mark on the cover sheet of the assignment but inside where it is not visible to casual viewers.

Advise students to retain all returned assignments until the course is complete and they are satisfied the final course mark has been calculated correctly. Unclaimed assignments should be retained for one year before being destroyed.

### **5.10 Explaining Test & Assignment Marks**

Marks on assessments should be explained or contextualized sufficiently to allow a student to interpret this feedback appropriately. ('Assessment' here will be used as the term for any student work that is marked – test, essay, lab or project.) In essence, students need to know where they stand in a course.

Marks are often thought to be self-explanatory; they seldom are. The challenge becomes clearer if one considers marks a form of short-hand, whereby the evaluation of a student's insight into a problem, mastery of content, consideration of alternatives, clarity of thought, grace of expression, and rapidity of response is reduced to a two-digit number or a letter grade and handed back to the student. The significance of a 67% versus a 64% may be clear to an experienced marker, but not necessarily to a student – particularly a first-year student with limited experience of university marking.

If circumstances do not permit more individualized commentary on assessments, an instructor should provide some general information to the class:

- basic statistical information about the whole class's performance, e.g. mean and/or median mark, and distribution across the ranges if the class is large enough to make it meaningful;
- a verbal interpretation of the different zones on the scale;
- a sense of whether the test or assignment was particularly challenging or basic;
- a sense of which marks ranges indicate a student is in trouble or should seek help, or is doing particularly well.

Students appreciate such feedback on their marks, and explaining your marks clearly and fully will help you get the maximum benefit from the effort that went into the marking.

Note: if you return letter grades rather than numerical percentage marks on assignments, you should anticipate questions from students for more precise information, since they are usually continually calculating and projecting toward their final percentage course mark.

### **5.11 Calibrating Raw Scores**

A number of steps, some of them contentious, may make up the process of transforming raw scores into marks that are communicated to the student, and marks into the final course grade.

A score is the raw number of points a student earns on an assessment; a mark is the result when that score has been calibrated to take into account the difficulty or ease of the testing instrument or the variation of marking standards among different TAs. Calibration is a perfectly acceptable – indeed, a

responsible – practice, since it is totally unreasonable to expect an instructor to design test after test at precisely the same level of difficulty, and TAs vary in their experience and judgement. Calibration is the corrective process to ensure fairness in marking.

Although it is a best practice to do some comparison marking when training TAs, it is probably unrealistic to do extensive trial marking of any given test to achieve a calibrated rubric before marking the whole batch. And so one usually does the calibration after-the-fact by taking into account past experience, the size of the sample and other relevant factors, and then uses this calibration to translate the raw scores into the marks students receive as feedback.

**Calibration of test scores should be done fairly and equitably, and bear a justifiable relation to academic performance.** Policy explicitly forbids manipulating marks to fit into a “normal curve” or any other prior expectation – in the language of the Policy: “academic assessment must not be predetermined by any system of quotas that specifies the number or percentage of grades allowable at any grade level.” (See also Section 10.4 below.)

However, this does not necessarily mean that calibration requires a linear manipulation (i.e. adding or multiplying by the same single number for all students). A test might have been too easy to allow the best students to demonstrate what they know, or too difficult for the competent students to demonstrate a basic grasp of the material. Calibrating to remedy this would be appropriate. (Further discussion of particular methodologies and some detailed examples are provided in Appendix B.)

Instructors are advised to keep in mind that the *Grading Practices Policy* requires them to explain the method of calibration to students upon request, and so the method chosen should be clear enough to be understandable by a student and academically justifiable, i.e. defensible in light of the nature of the test or assignment.

### **5.11 Collecting & Maintaining Assignment/Test Marks**

**Instructors are responsible for having in their possession at all times the most up-to-date version of term marks in their course.** TAs may mark assignments and update a marks database, but the course instructor should keep the master copy throughout the course, and collect assignment marks from TAs as soon as they become available, not wait until the end of the course.

If you are using a grade book function on Blackboard, or some other database for your marks, you should make back-up copies regularly and keep them separate from the master copy to prevent disaster. The Blackboard team at the Teaching Technology Support office has instructions and a helpful [Tip Sheet](#) on these and other matters.

### **5.13 Adjusting Term Marks**

Occasionally, one finds that the distribution of term marks is trending unexpectedly and unjustifiably high or low. Section 10 on Final Course Marks outlines the Faculty’s policy and practice for reviewing these, but some suggestions on best practice may help avoid problems at the end of the course:

- **To the extent possible, adjustments to marks should be done assignment-by-assignment rather than to the entire term mark at the end.** As above, marks are most useful if they allow students to get an accurate reading on their progress in the course as they go along. Allowing low scores to go unadjusted until the end of the course may sap students' morale, or lead some to drop the course on the mistaken understanding they are doing more poorly than they are. Allowing high scores to go unadjusted and then depressing them at the end of the course, or creating a ferocious exam to depress the marks, may cause students rightly to feel misled.
- **Leaving some portion of the course mark as a “overall assessment mark” (including, for example, participation) allows you to reflect students' individual effort and engagement in the course.** [See Section 4.2 on participation marks.]

In sum, regular feedback through marked work designed to reflect mastery of the course material, properly calibrated and adequately explained, is what students appreciate, and they indicate this – or its absence – year after year on their course evaluations.

#### 5.14 Requests to Re-mark Assignments & Term Tests

All instructors and TAs these days get many requests from students to re-mark assignments or tests. Be advised that assessment is an academic matter and so falls on one side of a clear divide separating different sorts of appeals: petitions deal with appeals against rules and regulations and so go through the student's college Registrar to the Faculty; appeals of marks are academic matters and so go first to the instructor and then up to the academic head of the unit, e.g. the UG Coordinator and Chair. Marks appeals are not a subject for petitions. (See Section 11.1 for a fuller discussion of the difference.)

Below is a full description of the various levels of an academic appeal as they relate to remarking requests. This process applies only to term work; appeals for re-reads of final examinations are handled directly by the Office of the Faculty Registrar.

##### Instructor Level

- A student who believes an individual item of work has been incorrectly or unfairly marked may ask the person who marked it for a re-evaluation.
- **Students should make such requests as soon as reasonably possible after receiving the work back, but no later than 2 weeks after it was returned.**
- **If a TA originally marked the work, the remarking request should go first to the TA and any appeal of that should go to the course instructor.**
- Such a request entails a remarking of the work. **Hence, if a remarking is granted, the student must accept the resulting mark as the new mark, whether it goes up or down or remains the same.** Continuing with the remark or the appeal means the student accepts this condition.
- Instructors and TAs should ensure all communication with the student is in writing (e.g. follow-up email) and keep a copy for later reference.

##### Academic Unit Level

- If an instructor refuses to remark a piece of work, or if the student is not satisfied with the remarking that has been granted, he or she may appeal to the UG Coordinator (e.g. Associate Chair) of the course's sponsoring department or program.
- **An appeal of a mark beyond the instructor may only be made for an item worth at least 20% of the course mark.**
- **Such appeals must be made in writing in a timely manner, and no later than 2 weeks after the work was returned, explaining why the student believes the mark was inappropriate, and summarizing all previous communications in the matter.**
- Again, the student must accept that the mark resulting from the appeal may be higher or lower or the same as the original mark.
- In the appeal, the student must submit an explanation of the perceived problem, the original test answer sheet or the original copy of the essay and the assigned topic.
- If the UG Coordinator believes a remarking is justified, then he or she will select an independent reader who will be given a clean, anonymous copy of the work. Without knowing the original assigned mark, and taking into account the context of the course for which it was submitted, the independent reader shall determine a mark for the work.
- If the recommended mark differs substantially from the original mark, the UG coordinator shall determine a new mark, taking both marks into account.

#### Decanal Level

- As with any academic matter, the final level of appeal is to the Dean's Office. Appeals must already have been considered at the two previous levels, with the decision reviewed by the head of the academic unit, before they will be considered by the Dean's Office.
- **Appeals must be submitted in writing, and include all previous correspondence, as soon as possible after the student receives the final response from the academic unit, but no later than 2 weeks after.**
- Appeals to the Dean's Office about the marking of term work will be reviewed to ensure that appropriate procedures have been followed in earlier appeals, that the student has been treated fairly, and that the standards applied have been consistent with those applied to other students doing the assignment.
- Any mark resulting from such an appeal will become the new mark, whether it is higher or lower or the same as the previous one.

The Faculty assumes that you or your TAs put your best academic judgement into your initial marking of an assignment or exam. However, the process is a human one and errors or oversights are possible, so you should be willing to correct them if they are shown to be legitimate. The Office of the Faculty Registrar will process a correction of a mistake in grading even if the course is over, as the Faculty is committed to ensuring that the student receives the appropriate mark. However, you should feel no need to respond to "pleas for more marks" or to importuning because a student needs a higher mark for some extraneous reason. You may simply respond that the student may undertake an appeal if he or she thinks there are substantive matters that have been missed in the marking.

## **SECTION 6. TERM TESTS**

### **6.1 Administration of Tests**

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The administration of tests during term is the responsibility of the instructor, the Course Coordinator or the academic unit, depending on the unit and/or course. The administration of final examinations is the responsibility of the Office of the Faculty Registrar. (There is one exception: final exams given in June at the end of F courses in the Summer are handled by instructors and academic units; speak to your UG Administrator if this is your situation.)

## 6.2 Testing Space

Most term tests take place in your regular class space. If your regular classroom is inadequate for tests, e.g. it may have tiered seating or not allow sufficient spacing between students to prevent cheating, you may request additional or alternative space through your Undergraduate Administrator or Associate Chair, who can make the arrangements with the Office of the Faculty Registrar. Another option is to consider alternative ways of giving the test to achieve appropriate security and avoid the possible confusion for students assigned to a different venue than usual: if your test is multiple choice, you may wish to generate sets of tests that present the questions in a different order with a key to allow you to mark each version accordingly.

## 6.3 Scheduling Tests Outside Class Hours

To the extent possible, **you should schedule term tests your during normally-scheduled class hours** to prevent conflicts with students' other obligations and other colleagues' courses. The Dean's Office considers legitimate only two reasons for holding tests outside regular class hours (other than make-up tests): i) a multi-sectioned course requires a common testing time to administer a common test; ii) the regularly scheduled classroom is not an adequate testing space and no other suitable room is available at that time.

If necessity requires you to schedule your test outside the normal meeting hours of one or all of your course's sections, you may request classroom or testing space through your Undergraduate Administrator or Associate Chair, who can make the arrangements with the OFR.

The Faculty has a number of rules for scheduling term tests outside your normally-scheduled class hours:

- **You must announce such test dates and times at the beginning of the course** to allow a student to make arrangements to accommodate this extra obligation.
- **If a student has a conflict between a course holding a test outside its normal class hours and a test or required obligation for a class regularly scheduled into that hour, the regularly-scheduled academic obligation has precedence. The course with the irregularly-scheduled test must accommodate the student in some appropriate way.**

The student may be given access to a test make-up opportunity, as relevant. Or the instructor with the irregularly-scheduled test may allow the student to start early or finish late to accommodate the regularly-scheduled test, or the instructors in the two courses may work out a reasonable compromise by staggering the start and end times of both tests to allow the student to go directly

from one to the other and not lose the full time needed for both tests. In a multi-party arrangement, it is important that all parties be aware of any agreement between instructors and the student.

Note: The instructor with the irregularly-scheduled test should be responsible for negotiating any arrangement that includes the instructor of the regularly-scheduled course; this should not be left to the student.

## **6.4 Contingencies for Emergencies**

If you are conducting a formal test in your course, prudence suggests you prepare in advance for some possible emergencies, so at least you will know how to handle them and what to tell the class, especially if your class is large and TAs are invigilating. Some contingencies to consider are: a fire alarm, a disruptive or ill student, a temporary external disruption, a power failure. The aim is to handle the emergency in an orderly way by minimizing the opportunities for collusion or copying, so you don't have to discard the test.

## **6.5 Conduct During Tests**

How you conduct your term tests is left to your discretion. The protocols used by the Exams Office for final examinations may provide you with some useful guidance. They have been developed through long experience and your students may already be used to them:

- o No unauthorized aids in the exam room, including – or especially – cell phones.
- o Exception: electronic devices may be turned off and “quarantined” in a bag (ziplock or paper) under the desk.
- o All books, other bags and backpacks to be left to the side of the room or under desks, not in or on desks.
- o No unaccompanied washroom breaks.
- o Disruptions from invigilators moving about or chatting kept to a minimum.
- o No leaving the exam room during the interval before the end of the exam.
- o No writing beyond the signal to stop.
- o Clear instructions about bringing tests forward or waiting to have them picked up.

A calm, orderly, secure testing room is the best environment for all concerned. Clear, definite instructions, sensibly enforced, are one of the best ways to ensure that this occurs.

You should also warn students about securing their personal effects during tests, such as purses, wallets and laptops. Such things have been stolen from test and exam rooms in the past, and so some reasonable protocol is advised that allows the students to protect their property but ensures no access to unauthorized aids, for example placing personal effects face down under the seat.

## **SECTION 7: MISSED TERM WORK OR TESTS**

### **7.1 Accommodating Legitimate Absences**

Managing your courses will be much easier if you have a clear, well-thought-out policy on excusable absences and any relevant documentation required of students, policies that you communicate

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clearly to your students in your syllabus. You should apply these consistently and fairly; however, this does not mean you are not able to make exceptions in individual cases for legitimately exceptional circumstances. There are some limits to the range of your own course policies, as will be explained below.

It is the Faculty's policy that students who miss classes, for legitimate reasons or otherwise, are responsible for making up the missed material. They should not expect you or your TAs to re-teach them the material.

## 7.2 Timelines

**A student who misses a test, lab or assignment deadline should come forward to the appropriate person in the course as soon as possible, and no later than one week after returning to class.** Normally this means within one week of the test, lab or deadline; however, the student's reason for absence may extend beyond one week, and so the student is expected to come forward as soon as possible. Prudence suggests the student should notify the instructor by email if the absence is extended in this way.

If the student does not come forward with one week, the instructor or the academic unit may consider a request to extend the deadline, but is under no obligation to do so.

## 7.3 Documentation

You may require documentation of absences from class for medical, personal, family or other unavoidable reasons. You should publish your expectations in your syllabus. You should not expect to receive or give students the impression they must reveal personal medical information such as diagnoses, treatments, etc. If you require verification of illness, injury or other relevant personal issues, you should accept any of the 4 types of medical documentation deemed "official" by the Faculty:

- i) ***UofT Verification of Illness or Injury Form:*** This form, available to students online ([www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca](http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca)), is restricted to a select group of medical practitioners, and provides responses to the relevant questions about the absence.
- ii) ***Student Health or Disability Related Certificate:*** A streamlined variant of the U of T Verification of Illness or Injury Form provided by our own internal doctors who can vouch for health problems without so many details.
- iii) ***A College Registrar's Letter:*** This is a letter that only senior College Registrarial staff are authorized to write. It should identify itself as a "College Registrar's Letter." You should trust it as equivalent to the UofT Verification of Illness or Injury Form, reflecting the judgement and experience of the senior staff whom we designate for this purpose. Such a letter is likely when the student has extensive personal difficulties or when a situation or condition affects a number of courses. If you receive such a letter about a student, you should accept it as sufficient documentation and not expect to see further specific information.

- iv) ***Accessibility Services Letter:*** This sort of letter may address needed accommodations or document on-going disability issues that have made absence or lateness unavoidable. Instructors should assume students presenting such a letter are being advised by AccServ staff on managing their workload appropriately. (See Section 13)

The Faculty does not insist you require medical documentation for absences; that is left to you as part of your course management. Any policy you articulate should at least cover the range of problems and circumstances any group of decently conscientious students might be expected to encounter, and you are entitled to expect your students to behave responsibly, especially if you tell them what you expect. The standard of “reasonableness” for any rule or practice you institute will be that your UG Chair or Program Director, or perhaps eventually the Dean’s Office, thinks it reasonable and fair when a student appeals. But there is no one practice that is mandated for all.

Important Note: If you do require and collect documentation, remember that these contain sensitive personal information collected under FIPPA rules, and so must be treated as containing confidential information, stored securely for one year and then destroyed in a secure manner.

## **7.4 Make-up Tests**

Pedagogical best practice suggests that regular assessment and meaningful feedback are conducive to learning, and so a situation where too much of a student’s final mark is based on the final exam is to be avoided. Where possible, an opportunity to write a make-up test should be provided to students who miss a term test for legitimate reasons.

As the Faculty expects these best practices to inform most situations, it has formulated its make-up test rules in the form of general principles with specific exceptions:

### General Principles:

- **If a student misses a test for reasons acceptable to the instructor, where practicable a make-up opportunity should be offered to the student.**
- **Where either the student’s circumstances or the instructor’s difficulty in composing an effective test makes a make-up test unreasonable, the instructor may allocate the percentage weight of the test to any combination of the remaining term work and/or the final exam.**
- **If the student misses the remaining term work/tests for acceptable reasons, the full percentage weight of the missed work may be allocated to the final exam.**
- **No student is automatically entitled to a second make-up test opportunity.**

### Exceptions:

- **If a missed term test is the only marked work in the course aside from the final exam, an initial make-up opportunity normally must be given, regardless of the difficulties in creating a make-up test.**
- **As an initial accommodation for a legitimate absence, the weight of a final exam in a 100-series course may not be increased beyond 80%. However, if the student misses the make-up opportunity or subsequent test that was re-weighted to accommodate**

- the first missed test, then the weight of the final exam may be increased beyond 80%.
- **If the weight of a final exam in any course is increased beyond 80%, the instructor should ensure the student is advised about appropriate strategies for handling such a heavily-weighted exam, either by the instructor, a TA, or the student’s College Registrar.**

## 7.5 Religious Obligations

The University has a general policy on accommodating absences for reasons of religious obligation, strongly articulated on the Provost’s [webpage](#):

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“Please note that the obligation not to discriminate on the basis of religion (“creed”) is a statutory duty arising from the *Ontario Human Rights Code*. It carries with it the obligation to accommodate religious requirements where doing so does not cause undue hardship to the University. For example, accommodation normally requires that scheduled graded term work or tests conflicting with religious requirements be adjusted by providing similar evaluation on alternate dates.”

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The policy does not differentiate among religions or single out particular dates as the only ones to accommodate, although some commonly-observed dates are given as examples on the Provost’s site. As noted above, since it is based on the *Human Rights Code*, the standard for reasonable accommodation is higher in these cases than with other absences such as medical ones, for which one might shift the weight of the test to another assessment under the usual principle of “academic reasonableness.” (In fact the standard of “undue hardship” generally means that the University would go bankrupt if it complied – a difficult position to maintain.) A student may accept a lesser accommodation, but cannot be required to accept less than the *Code* obliges us to provide.

Students are expected and may be required to give reasonable advanced notice of their absence, since the dates for observances are usually predictable. Instructors may handle the accommodation by providing the same test or a different test at a time that does not conflict with the obligatory absence. The standard likely to be applied to the timing is what is “fair and reasonable.”

## SECTION 8: EXTENSIONS & LATE TERM WORK

### 8.1 Late Penalties

Of course, instructors are not obliged to accept late work, except where there are legitimate, documented reasons beyond a student’s control, such as medical issues. In such cases, a late penalty is normally not appropriate. However, many instructors are willing to accept late work provided a penalty is applied to the mark. **If this is your intention, you must publish your late penalty policy in your syllabus so students can guide themselves accordingly.**

A clear extension/late penalty policy appropriate to the course, communicated to students on the syllabus and consistently applied, is a best practice. You are allowed wide latitude in how you handle this, subject only to the usual academic appeal standard of “fair, equitable and reasonable.”

Students will be expecting to hear your rules and expectations on late work, penalties, absolute deadlines, etc. You will find it helpful later if you can connect these to your pedagogical objectives in the explanations you provide at the beginning of the course. This is particularly the case should you have an absolute deadline beyond which you will not accept work, even with a penalty.

## **8.2 Exceptions & Consistency**

You may certainly make exceptions to your own rules, i.e. you needn't be inflexible or rigidly consistent for lateness you think is justified or excusable, particularly for lateness beyond a student's control. However, fairness to students usually includes appropriate consideration for those other students who have exerted themselves to meet your deadline. Also, multiple extensions tend to create a pile-up of outstanding work for a student, and so may not be as helpful as the student thinks. A student encountering trouble completing assignments may benefit from some advising from a College Registrar or from the Academic Success Centre. Feel free to make a referral if the student appears not to be handling things well.

## **8.3 Extensions for Term Work after Classes End**

**Instructors have available to them an “informal extension period” they may use to grant individual students extensions beyond the last day of classes.** You should normally limit such informal extensions to a date that allows you to still mark the work and submit your final course marks on time. In extraordinary circumstances, you may grant an informal extension up to **five (5) business days after the end of the Final Exam Period.** (When a term ends in December, the five-day count begins starting the first day the University re-opens in January.) Extensions beyond this date must be requested by a formal petition (as below in 8.4).

When you are submitting all your other course marks in cases where you have granted an informal extension beyond that point but before the end of the Exam Period, you should submit the student's course mark with a 0% mark factored in for the missing piece. When you have later graded the work, you submit an amended mark reflecting the marked assignment using the Amended Marks function of the e-Marks system. Consult your UG Administrator about this procedure for this, if necessary.

Note that instructors are under no obligation to grant such informal extensions. They are simply authorized to do so if they think an informal extension is warranted. If an instructor refuses an informal extension, the student may appeal by filing a petition for a formal extension.

## **8.4 Extensions for Term Work after “Informal Extension Period”**

**If a student requires an extension beyond the five (5) business days after the end of the Final Examination Period, he or she MUST submit a formal petition through their College Registrar. Instructors do not have the authority to grant extensions beyond this deadline,** but you may make a recommendation to your UG Coordinator about the petition if you so choose. Keep in mind that there may be dimensions to a student's problems that are not known to an instructor but which may come out in a petition or appeal. The most stress-free approach to petitions for extensions, when you have denied an informal one, is to assume those deciding the request or appeal

may have received more or different information from the student than information you have seen, and just accept their decision in that light.

## **SECTION 9: FINAL EXAMINATIONS**

### **9.1 Faculty Final Exams & the Final Examination Period**

Final exams in courses, i.e. formal examinations held within the Final Examination Period after classes finish, are scheduled, conducted and invigilated by the Faculty through the OFR. (The exception is June exams, which are handled by the department and instructor.) **Instructors may not schedule their own tests or “exams” during this Final Exam Period, even take-home tests.** The only exams and the few exceptional term tests (see Section 2.12) that may be scheduled into the Final Exam Period are those scheduled by the OFR. The OFR must have at its disposal the schedules of all students’ and all classrooms to make the complicated exam scheduling process work. There are no exceptions to this prohibition.

### **9.2 Specifications for Final Exams**

See Section 2.7 above for the rules about which course levels are required to have final exams. The Faculty uses a standard covers sheet for final exams specifying the essential information, which is available through your UG Administrator. Note that final exams must be either 2 or 3 hours in length. You should specify what manner of “aids” are permitted in the final exam, if any (i.e. none, dictionaries, specific calculators, etc.). Consult your UG Administrator regarding any other issues or questions you may have about final exam specifications.

### **9.3 Final Exam Texts: Preparation & Deadlines**

**The OFR has a firm deadline for final exam question papers to be submitted to the UG Administrator in each unit.** This deadline is approximately 3 weeks before the beginning of the December Exam Period, 1 month before the large April Exam Period, and 2 weeks before August Exam Period. The Exams Office recognizes that such an early deadline often puts a heavy burden on instructors. However, preparing the exam papers for reproduction, collation and distribution is a large and complicated project, and the consequences of error or problems during an exam sitting are very difficult to remedy. Your cooperation is appreciated in respecting these deadlines. If the deadline causes unusual pedagogical problems in your course, consult your UG Administrator about what accommodation might be possible.

Perhaps needless to say, **you should proofread your exam question papers very carefully**, especially for content. Typos or miscues create great anxiety in an exam hall and diminish your reputation as an instructor. If you detect an error after your final exam text has been submitted, notify the Exams Office or your UG Administrator immediately so that appropriate notice of the correction can be conveyed to the various locations where the exam is being written. Note that some students may be writing your exam away from the rest of the class.

### **9.4 Publication of Exams & “Restricted Exams”**

As per the UofT *Grading Practices Policy*, normal Faculty practice is to post the final exam question papers to a UofT Library website after a suitable period, for the benefit of students in future offerings of the course. The site is available to UofT students only and not published more broadly on the web. Note that the exam question papers are not forwarded to the Library for posting until the subsequent Deferred Exam session has passed, i.e. after August deferred exams for missed April final exams, after April for December, etc.

If you do not want your exam question paper to be posted in this way – perhaps because good exam questions in this subject are especially difficult to create and you wish to re-use these in future offerings – you should contact your UG Administrator when you are asked to provide details about your exam (duration etc.), who will make the request to the OFR that your exam be “restricted.” Running a restricted exam is a complicated procedure; the texts are printed on different coloured paper, individually numbered, and then collected, accounted for and returned to you at the end of the exam. Therefore, we ask that such requests be made only when absolutely necessary.

## 9.5 Supervision of Faculty Final Exams

Faculty Final Examinations are supervised by Chief Presiding Officers (CPOs), officers hired by the Faculty and trained specifically for this purpose. **CPOs have final authority over logistics and process in the exam rooms, even if the course instructor is present.**

**Course instructors, or someone with designated authority over the content of the exam, must be in the exam hall or within contact to resolve any issues or questions for the CPO.** CPOs are explicitly instructed by the Exams Office not to answer students’ questions about the content of exams.

## 9.6 Required Minimum Exam Mark

Although it is unusual, it is permissible to require a minimum mark on a final examination for a student to pass your course, regardless of the other marks in various term tests, etc. The highest minimum mark you may require on such a final examination is 50%. This requirement should only be used when there are relevant pedagogical principles at play, e.g. the final exam is cumulative and earlier assessments were not, and the exam is worth a substantial percentage of the course mark. **If you do have such a minimum exam mark requirement, you must publish it in the syllabus and include it in your Marking Scheme.**

## 9.7 Final Exams: Writing Conditions

[Rules for the Conduct of Examinations](#), as they affect the students, are provided in full in the *Calendar* and enforced by the Chief Presiding Officers in the exam halls. Best practice suggests you run over these briefly in class prior to the exam or term test – particularly with first-year students – so they are clear about expectations.

## 9.8 Exam Booklets, Anomalies, etc.

Please be very careful when picking up and returning completed exam booklets to the Exams Office, and when distributing them among TAs for marking. There have been instances when exam

booklets have gone missing and such matters are extraordinarily difficult to resolve when procedures have not been scrupulous. Students are required to number their booklets (i.e. 1 of 3, 2 of 3, etc), but some do not. If you note any anomalies in the count of booklets, report them to the Exams Office immediately.

## **9.9 Marking**

Since students can request to review copies of their final examinations, and can query how examination marks were arrived at, please indicate what the mark is for each question, either on the front cover or next to each question. This can save you much time and annoyance if marks are later questioned.

## **9.10 Re-reading Failures**

**The Faculty requires that all failing exams be re-read at the time of marking, i.e., before the marks are reported.** If the examination, or part of it, was marked by a TA, best practice says that the course instructor should do the re-read. The Faculty must be able to prove that this has been done, and so **the examiner must write "re-read" on the cover of the answer book and sign it.**

## **9.11 Marking Deadlines**

Instructors are given 5 working days after the exam to complete their marking and submit recommended final course marks to their academic unit for approval. With our new e-Marks system for submitting marks to speed up the process, there may be more time available to instructors for marking, but it is important that instructors adhere to the marks deadlines. The OFR is working to tight timelines to collect, approve and post all the marks so we can assess students' academic status or approve them for graduation. If you will have a problem meeting your deadline, you should contact your UG Administrator. Note: as some students may be writing with accommodations at the Test & Exam Service, some exam booklets may be delivered to you later than the rest.

## **9.12 Absences or "Exemptions"**

**Instructors and departments cannot excuse a student from writing a Final Exam nor can they offer an alternative date or form of examination, e.g. oral examination.** Students requiring such things must petition through their College Registrar's Office, or work through Accessibility Services if it is a matter of accommodation. Best practice, especially in first-year courses, suggest that instructors remind students of the rules and procedures regarding missed examinations in class prior to the Exam Period, i.e. a petition is required through the College Registrar's Office before the deadline of one week after the end of the Final Examination Period.

# **SECTION 10: FINAL COURSE MARKS**

## **10.1 Official Grading Scale**

The Faculty uses a 4.0 grading scale with each letter grade range having a defined meaning, as follows:

August 2011; last amended July 2017; last updated January 2019

Percentage	Grade	GPA Value	Grade Definition
90-100	A+	4.0	Excellent
85-89	A	4.0	
80-84	A-	3.7	
77-79	B+	3.3	Good
73-76	B	3.0	
70-72	B-	2.7	
67-69	C+	2.3	Adequate
63-66	C	2.0	
60-62	C-	1.7	
57-59	D+	1.3	Marginal
53-56	D	1.0	
50-52	D-	0.7	
0-49	F	0.0	Inadequate

## 10.2 Percentages, Letters Grades & GPAs

**Instructors are to submit all final marks for undergraduate courses in percentage format.** If graduate students are enrolled in your course, the new E-Marks system will automatically convert their marks to letter grades.

It is worth knowing that, while instructors submit marks in percentages, the grade that is used in calculating GPA and determining the student's academic status is the letter grade corresponding to that percentage. "Percentage averages" form no real part of our marks scheme. From an instructor's perspective, this means that 80% and 84% are essentially the same mark, but 84% and 85% are very different marks. Truly exceptional performance, i.e. 90+%, is displayed as an A+ on the student's record but has the same GPA weight as an A. The fact that this grade has no additional GPA value should not discourage instructors from awarding it when the student's outstanding performance indicates it would be appropriate.

## 10.3 Marks Distribution Guidelines

The Faculty has replaced its previous marks distribution guidelines, which spelled out specific expected percentage distributions, with some broad guidance on what might normally be expected in courses of different sizes and at different levels. This is contained in a memo from the Dean best quoted directly:

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"For a larger first- or second-year course, the proportion of As in any given offering of the course might reasonably vary from 15% to 35%. Courses with marks consistently at the lower or upper end of this range should be reviewed to determine whether changes are needed to the course content,

August 2011; last amended July 2017; last updated January 2019

prerequisites, or assessment mechanisms. At the other end of the scale, the proportion of Fs in a first- or second-year course should generally not exceed 10%.

“These guidelines can help instructors gauge the fairness and consistency of their proposed marks in a course. Instructors proposing a percentage of As outside the range of 15-35% in first- and second-year courses should review the marks to ensure that the assessments used in the course were fair and consistent with disciplinary practice. Similarly, instructors proposing a percentage of Fs greater than 10% should consider those grades carefully. An individual instructor should reflect on whether the assessments have been scaled appropriately. A unit head seeing a consistently higher percentage of Fs in a course over time might conclude that the course has inappropriate prerequisites or requires some restructuring, or that additional student supports need to be put into place.

“Since courses with fewer than 40 students, as well as courses in upper years, show much greater variation due to individual factors, detailed expectations of distributions of grades are less useful. However, we can state some general guidelines on third- and fourth-year courses. Specifically, we expect student marks in upper year courses to shift towards the higher end of the scale (with more As and many fewer failures) as students adjust to university-level work and as they pursue courses in their chosen areas of interest. Distributions with 30-40% As (or even more) would not be unusual in 300- and 400-level courses , while even 5-10% Fs at these levels would be worthy of attention.”  
(Tri-Campus Deans’ memo August 2009)

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#### 10.4 Bell Curves, Quotas, etc.

Students and even instructors sometimes misconstrue the University’s policies as putting a restriction or limit on the number or percentage of students who can get any given course grade, or even enforcing a specified distribution of marks. Both University and Faculty policies explicitly prohibit such arbitrary limits. The Faculty policy is stated in the Calendar: **“Grades, as an expression of the instructor’s best judgement of each student’s overall performance, will not be determined by any system of quotas.”** Students often have a sense that their marks are being artificially depressed in some way. If you are calibrating or adjusting marks (see Section 5.11), it is not helpful to refer to “belling” or “curving” marks, even if students use these terms.

#### 10.5 Interpreting Marks: “What is an A?”

The Calendar gives official verbal equivalents for our letter grades, as in the table in Section 9.1: A = Excellent, B = Good, etc. These phrases offer helpful guidance when you are considering adjusting term assessments or recommended final marks. The University and the Faculty allow a great deal of latitude to our instructors in determining what level of performance in their particular courses corresponds to these rubrics, subject only to the official review process described in Section 10.9 below.

When reviewing your marks during and at the end of your course, you might keep in mind these considerations, among others:

- o Course level: Assessment of students' demonstrated mastery of material should be calibrated to the level of the course. The relevant question is "Does this student demonstrate a command of what one might reasonably expect from a student at the introductory stage, the advanced stage, etc.?"
- o Overall performance: Consider whether the letter grade corresponding to the calculated percentage mark appropriately reflects the student's performance in the course as a whole. For example, it may be that the calculated numerical percentage mark falls just below 80%, but the student has performed above that level on many of the assignments and below on only a few. Does the overall performance merit being designated "Excellent"? If so, you should feel justified in raising the final mark to indicate this. Needless to say, it is more problematic to move final marks down, especially when a strict calculation puts it at 50% or just above. If your overall assessment conflicts with the numerical calculation, you might look at the various individual elements or at the discretionary margin you have allowed in your marking scheme to see whether some adjustment is warranted.

In recent years, the Faculty has been concerned that our best students, who often demonstrate by their later performance in graduate or professional schools that they are indeed excellent, may not have received undergraduate marks that gave their performance the recognition it deserved and would have allowed them to compete more appropriately with excellent students from other institutions. When reviewing the performance and the final marks of your best students, particularly in a class of some size, you may wish to keep in mind both the A and A+ designations, so that excellence is clearly signaled with an A, and the outstanding students have an outstanding mark visible to all in an A+.

## **10.6 Marks Just under Grade Thresholds**

On our grading scale, there are a number of percentage marks where one more percent would shift the student up to the next range. Some of the more significant ones are 49%, 59%, 69%, 79% and 84%. Another threshold may be the line your department has established for entrance into its limited enrolment programs. You may want to give special attention to marks just below these thresholds; they are often contentious and you may expect to hear from a number of students who receive such marks.

That said, there is no Faculty policy or practice to automatically "round up" such marks, and you should not feel pressured to do so. However, you may wish to decide intentionally whether to leave a mark just under one of these thresholds or to move it up or down.

## **10.7 Failing Marks**

As mentioned in Section 9.10 regarding re-reading exams with failing marks, instructors should give some attention to those students who receive a failing course mark, especially those in the "marginal failure" range, in order to ensure the mark is a complete and fair reflection of overall performance.

## **10.8 Entering Final Course Marks**

When preparing your final marks, you may find that some elements of a student's body of work remain incomplete or undone. You should put in a mark of 0% for any missing element and then calculate and submit the final mark accordingly. **Do not leave the final mark blank for incomplete work or put in a final course grade of 0%** (unless nothing has been assessed) or try to signal "incomplete" or some other non-percentage element. Note in the appropriate place in your records what elements are missing and whether any informal extensions were given before the end of the course (and provide it to your UG Administrator if that is the practice in your unit). This information will be valuable should the student petition later. Also, should a petition for an extension beyond the course be granted and the student still does not complete the work, a correct default final mark will be available on the record without the need for further action on your part.

If a student has an outstanding allegation of academic misconduct that is being reviewed, the same protocol applies. Put in a 0% only for the assignment being reviewed, not for the entire course mark, and calculate and submit the final mark using the remaining completed portions.

## 10.9 Marks Review Process

While the University holds the academic judgement of its instructors in great respect, ultimately the Dean is responsible for all marks in the Faculty. And so the UofT *Grading Practices Policy* (GPP) and the Faculty's implementation policy outline a review and approval process for all final marks. **Under no circumstances may instructors release final marks to students before they have gone through this approval process and been posted on ROSI by the OFR.** This means that instructors should not add in the "overall assessment" portion, "participation mark," or the final exam mark to the Blackboard gradebook and then open it for viewing by students.

The Faculty has recently made some adjustments to its marks review process, reflected in what follows.

- i) Each Fall, a committee in each academic unit reviews all the marks from the previous few years to determine whether the marking practices of the unit's instructors are meeting the unit's and the Faculty's goals, and whether the marks distributions point to any problems in the design of the curriculum. Problems with curriculum or marking practices may then be addressed during the academic year.
- ii) At the end of each course, all instructors submit their recommended final marks to the head of the academic unit for review and approval. As a change from previous practice, instructors are no longer required to write a pre-emptive memo explaining why any given set of marks varies from any pre-established marks distribution thresholds.

The head of the unit (or an appropriate academic delegate such as the UG Chair) reviews these recommended marks in the context of the nature of the course and the unit's marking practices (as in I above). Should the head of the unit think the recommended marks appear anomalous in some way, he or she may contact the instructor for further information and discussion. Note that the GPP specifically states that the head of the unit has the authority to adjust the recommended marks before approving them, but Faculty policy and practice

mandates consultation and discussion with the instructor before any changed marks are put forward to the next stage.

- iii) Once the head of the unit approves a set of marks, it is sent on to the Office of the Faculty Registrar for divisional review and approval on behalf of the Dean. Again, consultation and discussion are the Faculty's practice in dealing with apparently anomalous course marks. However, again as per the policy, the Dean's Office does have the authority to adjust recommended marks before finally approving and posting them on ROSI as official final course grades.

As per the policy, where marks have been adjusted before approval, the students and the instructor shall be notified of the change and provided upon request with the reason for the adjustment, the methodology used, and a description of the divisional grades appeal process.

Given this review process and the fact that marks are not official until approved and posted on ROSI, **instructors may not release "recommended" or provisional final marks to students.** Again, this means instructors should not display all elements of the recommended final mark including the final exam mark for viewing by students on Blackboard. You may think releasing recommended marks inappropriately early is helpful to students, but you may simply be creating unnecessary problems for both the students and yourself by doing this. Students should be told to check ROSI for their official final marks.

## **10.10 Instructors' Course Records**

If you use an electronic marks record, e.g. the Blackboard grade centre, you should regularly back up this information off-line and also save it at the end of the course, since Blackboard does not archive this information automatically or indefinitely.

At the end of the course, **you should also retain a complete copy of your records for the course.** Later appeals, petitions or disciplinary proceedings may require specific information about a student's participation or performance in a course. Records should be as complete as possible and contain at least the number and type of required assignments, in addition to the weighting and the actual marks given for them. Class records must not be destroyed at the end of the year but kept by you or your UG Administrator for at least one year, and preferably two years.

## **SECTION 11: TYPES OF STUDENT APPEALS**

### **11.1 Formal Appeals: Definitions**

In addition to the various types of informal requests and pleas you may get from students in the normal course of teaching, the Faculty has two types of formal appeals (as noted above in Section 5.14):

- A **"Petition"**. A petition is a formal request from a student for an exception to a Faculty rule or regulation. The most common ones are about deferred exams, extensions beyond the end of a

course, withdrawal from a course after Drop Date, relief from Academic Suspensions, and exemptions from Degree Requirements. Students submit a petition through their College Registrar and the OFR administers the responses given by the OFR Petitions Section, the Committee on Standing, the Academic Appeals Board, etc.

- An “**Academic Appeal**”: These appeals pertain to matters of academic judgement, i.e. matters touching on academic conduct or assessment. These include but are not limited to marking, fair or reasonable treatment, admission to programs, an instructor’s conduct in the classroom, arbitrary application of rules, etc. Such matters are not petitionable; they are the subject of academic appeals and such appeals are to be reviewed by academics rather than administrative staff. They go up through the instructor, to the academic unit (UG Coordinator and Chair), to the Dean’s Office, with the Dean’s Office being the final level of appeal.

The normal protocol in dealing with a complaint or appeal is for the complainant to provide the person who made the initial decision with an opportunity to review it. If students is not satisfied, you should not tell them “to petition” about an academic matter. You should refer them to your UG Coordinator, as the next level of appeal, after you have considered the matter and given your final decision.

The full procedure as it relates to marking appeals is outlined above in Section 5.14. Best and prudent practice is for instructors to request that students put such appeals in writing, such as an email, and then retain the written copies for further reference. Appeals are most easily dealt with when there is a clear trail of written documentation.

## **11.2 UofT Appeals Culture**

The culture of this University allows students a wide range of appeals. This may be time-consuming but it is a firmly-held part of our culture. There are some limits placed on student appeals designed to prevent frivolous re-marking requests, outlined in the Section 5.14, but you should not be surprised if students think it appropriate to appeal something you have done. It is the responsibility of Chairs, Program Directors, etc. and the Dean’s Office to consider both sides of all formal appeals they receive and to respond.

The default assumption with such appeals is that the instructor knows the subject material of the course, (although heads of units are also responsible for addressing any problems in that regard). Those reviewing student appeals recognize that a wide range of pedagogical practice can fall into what might be called the “acceptable” or “normal” range. The test usually applied to appeals is “reasonableness”: whether the treatment or assessment was fair, whether it was applied equitably, whether a rule was clear and announced in advance, whether a penalty was appropriate, etc.

## **SECTION 12: ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

### **12.1 Rules**

The primary set of rules in this regard is the University's [Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](#). The most common offences are plagiarism, cheating on tests and exams, fraudulent medical documentation and improper collaboration on marked work. The primary criterion is that a student is seeking unfair academic advantage in the behaviour.

## **12.2 Information & Help**

Instructors have two wonderful resources to assist with these issues: OSAI, the Faculty's [Office of Student Academic Integrity](#) and CTSI, the [Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation](#). CTSI provides many helpful suggestions on how to use preventative strategies when designing your course materials, and OSAI is available for individual instructor or departmental workshops on methods of prevention. OSAI also has an extensive [Academic Integrity website](#) for instructors that addresses prevention, enforcement, and the process for resolving allegations. OSAI staff can be reached for information, help and advice at 416-946-0428.

## **12.3 Promulgation of the Rules**

Most students fall into difficulty through ignorance or bad choices made under pressure. The standard of enforcement for the rules is that "students ought reasonably to have known" what they were doing was against the rules. This is much easier if you have been explicit in your syllabus and lectures about the rules, including putting text and links on Blackboard. You should not rely on "the obvious" or a student's prior educational experiences to have taught them these principles. Many in the university work hard to introduce new students to the culture of integrity specific to universities, but initial cultural assumptions vary and so it is best to be explicit about your expectations and requirements in your class.

## **12.4 Prevention**

As mentioned, the preferred approach is prevention. Course and assignment design, careful handling of assignments, and perhaps use of 'turnitin.com' are all techniques one can use to lead students toward good outcomes. See the two resources cited above in Section 12.2 for specific suggestions.

## **12.5 Incidents**

If you suspect that a student has committed an offence, you should look into it and not let it slide. It is no kindness to students to let them proceed as though there was nothing wrong with something they may repeat later. Also, it is unfair to all those students who sacrifice marks or work diligently rather than taking improper short-cuts. And what may seem a minor misdemeanor may in fact be the latest in a string of repeated offences. No one likes to get bogged down in these kinds of proceedings, but following through is the best way to ensure consistency in applying our principles, and fairness to all the students who behave responsibly.

## **12.6 Process**

The process for dealing with allegations is meant to enforce responsibility, but it is also meant to be educative in its essence. It is designed to resolve matters at the lowest possible level, with allegations only moving up to the next level when they are not resolved or when offences are

sufficiently serious to deserve a penalty only available at the higher level, or when the assignment is valued at more than 10% of the course mark.

The whole process is described fully on the [Academic Integrity website](#), but the first step is for the instructor to interview the student. Your second step is to inform your academic unit of the matter so the UG Coordinator can record that it has taken place. This is crucial to identify repeat offenders.

**Matters may only be resolved at the academic unit level if the assignment in question is worth 10% or less. In such cases, sanctions may be applied only by the Chair or head of the unit. Under the Code, instructors are not permitted to apply sanctions for integrity offences.**

**Offences on assignments worth more than 10% must be dealt with at the divisional level, i.e. referred to OSAI, but the instructor-student interview must take place in all instances.** Before conducting an interview of this sort, all instructors are advised to refresh their understanding of the process by reading the section of the [Academic Integrity website](#) on “The Instructor/Student Interview.”

## **12.7 Outcomes**

As mentioned, the process is designed to enforce responsibility but also to educate. Under the *Code*, a sanction may be imposed below the level of the University Tribunal only if the student admits responsibility for the offence. Sanctions tend to be serious but not onerous for first offences. The sanctions escalate steeply if the offence is truly egregious or part of a pattern of repeated offences. At the departmental level, the maximum penalty is a '0%' for the assignment; at the divisional level, the maximum is a one-year suspension (rare) but more commonly '0%' for the assignment and a further reduction in course mark leading to a failed course; at the Tribunal level, longer suspensions or expulsions are applied to sufficiently serious offences.

## **SECTION 13. ACCESSIBILITY/DISABILITY ISSUES**

### **13.1 Essentials**

The University provides academic accommodations for students with disabilities in accordance with the terms of the [\*Ontario Human Rights Code\*](#) and the AODA legislation ([\*Access for Ontarians with Disabilities Act\*](#)). Under the legislation, responsibility for ensuring accessibility is shared among all the players in the University: Accessibility Services, instructors, academic units and staff. Beyond our legislative obligations, the UofT takes pride in its serious commitment to those with disabilities. Our objective is an accessible learning environment that both meets the needs of students and preserves the essential academic integrity of the University's courses and programs.

### **13.2 Resources Available & Required**

Accessibility Services staff are mandated to review medical documentation, and to authorize and determine the nature of accommodations for students with disabilities. The staff are happy to work with instructors to ensure that students with disabilities have an equal and a fair chance to learn and demonstrate their learning. If you have questions, you should feel free to contact them directly. If you don't know the student's advisor at Accessibility Services, you can call 978-8060.

### **13.3 Registration with Accessibility Services**

To receive accommodations, students must register with Accessibility Services. If students approach you regarding a disability, you should ask if they are registered with the Service and refer them there immediately if they are not.

Accessibility Services is permitted to disclose the impact of the disability on the student's learning and is happy to discuss with you how specific accommodations may relate to the requirements in your course. Faculty members and their academic units determine what students must demonstrate in a course; Accessibility Services acts as a resource on alternate ways by which students might demonstrate their knowledge. Note that most students registered with Accessibility Services have invisible disabilities. Confidentiality guidelines prevent Accessibility Services from disclosing the student's diagnosis or specifics of the disability without the student's permission.

In all your interactions, **please keep a student’s registration with Accessibility Services confidential**. This is especially important when interacting in class.

You may certainly be considerate in responding to students, but it is inadvisable “to just work something out on your own” with a student who discloses a disability. When the Final Examination Period arrives and the student is not registered with Accessibility Services, both of you may find your “kindness” was unhelpful and the student is disadvantaged.

### **13.4 Accommodated Tests & Exams**

Some students with disabilities require accommodations to write tests and exams. On the St. George campus, this is done by Test & Exam Services, located in the Exam Centre on McCaul Street. You will be notified by Test & Exam Services if a student in your course will be writing with them. Be assured that, regarding the storage of tests and the training of their invigilators, the staff at Test & Exam Services follow the same procedures and maintain the same strict standards as the Office of the Faculty Registrar, which handles all other final exams.

Such accommodations may require that your test questions be formatted in a special way through adaptive technology, and will certainly require your test questions to be delivered to a location different from where the rest of the class is writing. For these reasons, **it is important that you attend to the strict deadlines Test & Exam Services specifies for providing your test question papers**. Each academic unit has a designated Liaison Person to deal with Test & Exam Services – usually the UG Administrator – who is responsible for contacting you, receiving your test questions for pick-up, and later notifying you that the completed student answer paper has arrived back at the unit for you to mark. Meeting our legal obligations to accommodate requires that test papers be prepared and delivered in a timely way. This may sometimes differ from your pedagogical preferences or personal way of working, but it is necessary.

### **13.5 Standard for Accommodations**

Most accommodations can be managed through an adaptation to allow the student to undergo the same mode of assessment as other students in the class. It is worth noting, however, that while maintaining consistency of assessment method across all students is normally a pedagogical goal, achieving the necessary accommodation for a student may make it impossible to have perfect consistency of method in assessment, e.g. instructors may be asked to devise alternate means of assessment. The legal standard applied under the Act for accommodation is very high: as with Human Rights Code cases it is “undue hardship” to the organization, i.e. bankruptcy. The University is obliged to meet this standard, and instructors as employees of the University are likewise so obliged. Accessibility Services will communicate to you the recommended accommodation and cooperate with you to implement it. If you have specific questions or concerns, contact the student’s advisor at Accessibility Services (978-8060).

## **SECTION 14: STUDENTS IN DIFFICULTY**

### **14.1 Academic Advising**

August 2011; last amended July 2017; last updated January 2019

Departmental advisors are ready to answer specific academic questions about that program's or department's courses and programs. General academic advising and problem-solving for our undergraduates happens at the College Registrar's office in the student's college.

Every student in the Faculty of Arts & Science belongs to one of the 7 colleges affiliated with us. While the colleges provide a wonderful community environment that brings students and faculty together, one of their primary responsibilities is to provide holistic academic advising for their students through the College Registrars – advising that takes into account all the elements of a student's life: academic, personal, financial, and more.

The message we give repeatedly to all students in the Faculty is:

***“Consult your College Registrar – Your reliable first stop.”***

If students have problems or just need some direction, send them to their College Registrar's Office. Students sometimes face a real challenge finding the person with the authoritative answer to their questions, and often get bounced from office to office (affectionately known as “the UofT shuffle”), but we try hard to let them know they can always start at their college. There they will get a friendly welcome, and either the full answer or some useful information before being sent directly to the person with the full answer. (Contact information is listed in Section 16.2.)

#### **14.2 Students' Personal Problems etc.**

**When students approach you with difficulties – medical, personal, financial, familial – that may be interfering with their work in your course, your primary resource is the student's College Registrar.**

In these situations, College Registrars act as holistic student advisors, addressing the student's whole experience including academic issues and all the personal or circumstantial problems that may interfere with academic work. For students with significant problems, they act as “case managers” to assess the nature and magnitude of the problem, connect the student with relevant resources, inform all the student's instructors that a significant problem has arisen, and help the student come up with a plan to manage the situation responsibly. If you get a College Registrar's Letter (see Section 7.3), treat it as sufficient documentation of a problem; they either have the documentation on file or have used their professional experience to determine that the problem is legitimate and serious.

In your role as an educator, you may want to engage with a student who approaches you. However, your primary role is as their course instructor responsible for their academic work, and so you should look to their College Registrar to address students with the holistic attention they need. You should also feel free to refer a student directly to one of the specialized Student Services if that seems most appropriate, but you can always refer him or her to the College Registrar. The names and contact information for these staff members is provided below in Section 17, “Who's Who.”

#### **14.3 Students in Crisis**

You also have resources available to you if a student's problems are more extreme and immediate. You may never encounter such a student, but if you are dealing with a student who is overwhelmed or may possibly harm him- or herself, or is in an acute crisis situation that can't wait for a referral, or shouldn't depend on the student following through, you can call Student Crisis Response at 946-7111 (This line is for faculty to call directly, not to give to students.) If the situation is truly an urgent emergency, call 911 or the Campus Police at 978-2222. For situations with students who have persistent difficulties with academic expectations or engagement in university life, you may call the Academic Student Progress office at 416-946-0424 for advice and assistance.

## **SECTION 15: TEACHING SUPPORT**

The University values your effective teaching, as of course do your students. Your best day-to-day resource for teaching is your group of colleagues and the UG Coordinator in your academic unit. However, the University also provides you with a wonderfully supportive resource to help you maximize your teaching effectiveness, improve already effective teaching or overcome challenges or obstacles: [CTSI](#), or the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation.

CTSI's services are many, but include online materials and workshops addressing many teaching topics: course design, assessment, large class teaching, TA development and much more besides. They also offer individual consultations and confidential advising sessions on teaching problems or teaching dossiers. You should bookmark their site and consult it often, as they are always expanding the repertoire of materials, services and research available to you as a UofT instructor.

## **SECTION 16: RESOURCES & CONTACTS**

### **16.1 Teaching Resources**

The Arts & Science [faculty & staff website](#) has a long [list](#) of useful internal and external resources.

**AV:** Your audio visual needs are best taken care of through your UG Admin person in your unit. The Faculty has equipment as does the University more generally, but these are best arranged through your UG Admin because sometimes budget charges enter into it.

**CTSI** [Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation](#): This University resource provides valuable assistance to instructors as they develop or increase their teaching effectiveness, including teaching practice workshops, guidance and resources on the web, in-class observation and coaching, and advice on compiling a teaching dossier. The workshops are often faculty members sharing with their peers what has been successful in their own classrooms. The consultations are confidential and off-line from the departmental tenure and promotion process. Browse their site to see what may be of use to you now or later.

**Information & Instructional Technology (IIT):** Supports the Faculty's teaching, learning, research, and administrative operations through its service desk, computing lab management,

research computing system administration, data centre operations and application development.

Philip Wright, Director of Information & Instructional Technology (416-978-4304)  
philip.wright@utoronto.ca

**Library Services for Faculty:** The list of services the librarians provide for faculty in support of their teaching can be found on the Library's [Supporting Teaching](#) site. It includes subject-specific advice on research materials available for courses.

**Library Services for Students:** The Library can also assist you by providing your students with library orientations and training in student research methods. You can view the sorts of research services they offer directly to students on their [Student Services](#) site. Familiarizing yourself with these workshops allows you to make a specific referral. You can also contact your [library liaison](#) about a tailored session for your course.

**OSAI:** [The Office of Student Academic Integrity](#): This office represents the Dean in investigating allegations of academic misconduct, but the staff also provide advice and assistance to instructors on prevention, especially in the design of assignments.

## 16.2 College Contacts

**College Registrars' Offices:** Up-to-date contact information for each College Registrar's Office is available at <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/advising/colleges>.

**College Writing Centres:** Information about St. George campus and College Writing Centres is available at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/arts-and-science>.

## 16.3 University Student Services

**Academic Success Centre:** Workshops and individual support for learning skills including time management, memorization, exam preparation, note-taking, stress management.  
Koffler Center, 214 College St, 1<sup>st</sup> floor south. 416-978-7970

**Accessibility Services:** Advising for students on learning and other strategies, facilitating of assessment and accommodations for those with disabilities. Advice for instructors on adapting assessment and other course elements for those with disabilities.  
455 Spadina Avenue, 4th floor, Suite 400 416-978-8060

**Campus Police:** For security and safety concerns. Emergencies requiring immediate response from Metro Police should go through 911, but Campus Police can respond promptly to less extreme situations. The officers are experienced in dealing with students.  
21 Sussex Ave. (behind Robarts) Regular Line: 978-2323 **Urgent Line: 978-2222**

**Career Centre:** Research tools, workshops, & advice on choosing and preparing for careers; on-campus employment and work study listings.

Koffler Centre, 214 College 1<sup>st</sup> floor north 416-978-8000

**Centre for International Experience:** Logistical and social support for international students; information and support for international student exchange students, both inbound and outbound.

Cumberland House, 33 St. George St. 416-978-2564

**Community Safety Office:** Responds to students, staff and faculty members of the U of T community who have personal safety concerns.

21 Sussex Ave., 2<sup>nd</sup> Fl. 416-978-1485

**Family Care Office:** Help and support for those with dependants, either younger or older.

Koffler Centre, 214 College St. 1<sup>st</sup> floor 416-978-0951

**First Nations House:** Culturally-sensitive advising on many issues, cultural activities

Borden Bldg. 563 Spadina Ave., 3<sup>rd</sup> floor 416-978-8227

**Health & Wellness:** Supports students' mental and physical health, uses OHIP and UHIP

Koffler Centre, 214 College St., 2<sup>nd</sup> floor north 416-978-8030

**Ombudsperson:** Offers confidential advice to students, faculty and staff. Assists students to engage with administrative structures, usually after all normal channels have been exhausted.

McMurrich Bldg, 12 Queen's Park Cr. W., 1<sup>st</sup> floor Rm.102 416-946-3485

**Student Academic Progress:** For concerning student situations or advice on how to proceed in situations with a possibly distressed student, staff and faculty should call 416-946-0424 during business hours.

**Student Crisis Response:** For student crisis situations involving disturbing behaviour or references to suicide or violence, staff and faculty should call 416-946-7111 during business hours. For after hours emergencies, call Campus Police at 416-978-2222 or Metro Police 911.

**Student Housing Service:** Assistance for students in finding off-campus housing.

Koffler Centre, 214 College St., south mezzanine 416-978-8045

## **SECTION 17: WHO'S WHO**

**Chair:** Academic administrator responsible for the department's budget, hiring, promotions, and tenure, as well as for the management of the department.

**UG Coordinator/Associate Chair Undergraduate:** Usually the person who arranges the teaching assignments, approves your marks before sending them on to the Faculty, and handles appeals on academic matters in the department. An invaluable source of advice and

help should you need academic information or guidance handling thorny matters with your undergraduates.

**UG Administrator:** The admin staff person in each unit who handles much of the undergraduate administrative business for the unit: classroom locations, marking schemes, Blackboard access, class lists, marks, enrolment matters, petition questions, final exam texts, exams written by students registered with Accessibility Services, and all manner of other things. Good relations with this person will pay off handsomely in the long run.

**College Registrar:** The primary source of academic advising for students. There are 7 colleges associated with the Faculty and each has a College Registrar with a staff of academic advisors. These valuable people are the initial contact points for students needing information, assistance, advising and guidance. While the UG Admin may handle many program- or course-specific questions, the College Registrarial staff takes on the integrated holistic advising that addresses the student's whole experience while at university, including academic, financial, personal, and developmental. Those messy personal eruptions common among university-aged students can be referred to the College Registrar's offices for humane attention. The direct contact info for all 7 colleges is below under Resources.

**Faculty Registrar:** The Faculty Registrar looks after the traditional registrarial functions in the Faculty: admissions, the Calendar, timetabling, enrolment, petitions, final exams, assessment of academic status (probation, suspension, etc.), assessment of degrees, and convocation, as well as coordinating the advising. As Assistant Dean, the Faculty Registrar often provides advice and clarification on the application of the Faculty's rules and regulations (978-5389).

**Dean & Vice Deans:** The Dean, Vice and Associate Deans, and decanal advisors are responsible for academic matters in the Faculty, including appointments (hiring), tenure, promotions, the Faculty's overall budget, all academic matters including marks, and the academic management of the Faculty.

**Principals:** Each of the colleges has a Principal (although at Trinity College the title is Dean of Arts). The federated colleges (Trinity, St. Michael's and Victoria Colleges) also have their own Presidents.

**Provost:** The Vice-President and chief academic officer of the University.

## **SECTION 18: ACRONYMS**

A small sampling of the acronyms in play that a faculty member might need identified:

**AccServ** – Accessibility Services: UofT student service for students with disabilities as defined under the Access for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

- AP&P** – Academic Policy & Programs: a standing sub-committee of the Governing Council’s Academic Board, responsible for approval of all curriculum.
- APUS** – Association of Part-Time University Students: the UofT student organization representing part-time students.
- ASSU** – Arts & Science Student Union: the official student organization representing all full-time FAS students, and umbrella organization for the many course unions (i.e. departmental student societies).
- CAPS** – Counselling & Psychological Services: student service providing professional counselling and therapy for students.
- CPAD** – Council of Chairs, Principals & Academic Directors: Dean’s primary consultative body of academic leaders in the Faculty (not a policy-making body).
- CRIF** – Curriculum Renewal Initiatives Fund: competition each year for start-up resources to support curricular initiatives connected to the Faculty’s Curriculum Renewal priorities.
- CTSI** – Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation: UofT resource for faculty members in support of all aspects of teaching.
- DO** – Dean’s Office: Sidney Smith Bld., 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, NW corner.
- EDU** – Extra-Departmental Unit: a formal academic unit, with 4 different levels ranging from full departmental equivalency to research-only centres without appointing powers.
- ELL** – English Language Learning program: assists non-native English-speaking students with increasing their facility in the language of instruction.
- FAS** – Faculty of Arts & Science
- FLC** - First-Year Learning Communities: para-academic small groups of 25 students each, who are taking a common cluster of courses, to encourage community and impart academic skills.
- LMS** – Learning Management System (aka Blackboard)
- NGSIS** – Next Generation Student Information Services: name given to coming suite of student information systems, including a replacement for ROSI.
- OFR** - Office of the Faculty Registrar: Sidney Smith Bld., 1<sup>st</sup> floor, NW corner (includes the UofT Transcript Centre and the Exams Office).
- OISE** – Ontario Institute for Studies in Education: the faculty that does teacher training and graduate studies in education.

**OSAI** – Office of Student Academic Integrity: the branch of the Dean’s Office that looks into cheating, plagiarism, and other allegations of academic misconduct by undergrads..

**P&B** – Planning & Budget: Office in the Provost’s Office responsible for all academically-related resources.

**PDAD&C** – Principals, Deans, Academic Directors & Chairs: Provost’s consultative body of academic leaders in the University (not a policy-making body).

**Q** – Quercus, UofT Learning Management System, powered by Canvas.

**ROSI** – Repository of Student Information: the student information system.

**SGS** – School of Graduate Studies:

**SWS** – Student Web Service: the students’ user interface for ROSI

**TCard** – Students’ UofT photo ID student card (required ID for writing exams)

**TTS** - Teaching Technology Support Office: FAS resource to assist instructors with all aspects of teaching technology, including Blackboard.

**UTM** – Univ. of Toronto at Mississauga: separate arts & science division of UofT, with its campus 45 min. west in Mississauga.

**UTQAP** – Univ. of Toronto Quality Assurance Process: UofT’s implementation of the Provincial Quality Assurance Program

**UTSC** – Univ. of Toronto at Scarborough: separate arts & science division of UofT, with its campus 40 min. east in Scarborough.

**UTSU** – Univ. of Toronto Students’ Union: the official student organization representing all UofT full-time students.

**WIT** – Writing Instruction for TAs: a Curriculum Renewal project to leverage TA resources in order to increase the amount of student writing done especially in large courses.

## **SECTION 19: FURTHER REGULATIONS & POLICIES**

The University has many other policies, guidelines, codes or bodies of rules you may need to consult in unusual situations. A small sampling follows:

[Code of Student Conduct](#): This sets out the limits on student behaviour in non-academic matters. Offences bring non-academic sanctions, with offences involving safety generally being the only ones that would interfere with a student participating in courses.

[Appropriate Use of Information & Communication Technology](#): This may apply to some unwanted email or web activity by students in a course, but there is also a section in the *Code of Student Conduct* dealing with unauthorized access.

[Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection](#): [Access & Privacy Practices](#): As a government-supported body, the University adheres to FIPPA principles and practices. Instructors should be aware of the general limits on getting or giving access to personal information in their control, and should know how to handle such sensitive student information appropriately. Consult your unit or the FIPPA office on any challenging issues.

[Access to Faculty, Students, and Staff for Research Purposes](#): Most research, including that by students on students in relation to courses, is covered in the normal research protocols in your unit, but these guidelines address other research on students.

[Close Personal Relations](#): these sets out the guidelines on some tricky situations.

Further Governing Council policies are [here](#), and Provostial guidelines are [here](#).

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## **APPENDIX A Academic Integrity Elements for a Syllabus**

A useful AI statement should include:

- A comment on why academic integrity is important.
- A list, in clear language, of the behaviours that constitute academic misconduct.
- A reminder that not knowing the rules is not an excuse - students are expected to know and follow the rules of the University.

### Sample Syllabus Paragraphs

The University of Toronto treats cases of academic misconduct very seriously. Academic integrity is a fundamental value of learning and scholarship at the UofT. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community ensures that your UofT degree is valued and respected as a true signifier of your individual academic achievement.

The University of Toronto's [Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](#) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic misconduct, the processes for addressing academic offences, and the penalties that may be imposed. You are expected to be familiar with the contents of this document. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments:

- Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement.
- Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor.
- Making up sources or facts.

- Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment (this includes working in groups on assignments that are supposed to be individual work).

On tests and exams:

- Using or possessing any unauthorized aid, including a cell phone.
- Looking at someone else's answers.
- Letting someone else look at your answers.
- Misrepresenting your identity.
- Submitting an altered test for re-grading.

Misrepresentation:

- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including (but not limited to) doctor's notes.
- Falsifying institutional documents or grades.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following the procedures outlined in the *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters*. If you have any questions about what is or is not permitted in this course, please do not hesitate to contact me. If you have questions about appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information from me or other available campus resources like the [College Writing Centres](#), the [Academic Success Centre](#), or the [U of T Writing Website](#).

## APPENDIX B

### Further Discussion & Examples re: Adjusting Marks

#### Example 1

A simple example. After marking, the instructor discovers a test to have been unusually difficult, such that there are students spread throughout the marks range but the scores of even the best performers do not reach beyond 80%. Looking at the test, the instructor sees that there were difficult questions to test the finer points of the material but not enough questions to test more basic knowledge. The instructor adds X% to all students' scores on the rationale that every student would have done been able to achieve roughly this many more points if the questions had given them the opportunity to show more of the basic knowledge they had acquired.

Comment: This simple method assumes that the poorest students would have achieved the same number of additional points as the best students, since the material not tested well was the most basic. This may not be precisely true of those at the very bottom of the failure range, but the imprecision has no real significance since those were merely moved around in the lower failure range.

#### Example 2

August 2011; last amended July 2017; last updated January 2019

Another simple example. A test is discovered after marking to have been unusually easy, such that there are students spread through the marks range but the scores of even the poorest performers are beyond the 50% threshold, when quizzes and assignments have shown no unusually strong grasp of the material by all. The instructor subtracts X% from all students' scores on the rationale that every student would have achieved roughly this many fewer points if the questions had not been so heavily weighted toward truly basic material.

Comment: This method assumes that the poorest students have obtained the same number of points on the easier questions as the best students, since there were more of those simple questions on the test. This may not be precisely true of those at the very bottom of the class – those who did not study much at all, for example – but again the imprecision has no real significance.

### **Example 3**

The instructor finds the results look as they do in Example 1, but upon reviewing the test finds that she has simply made the questions in all ranges of difficulty more challenging than intended. The instructor adjusts by adding X% of each student's score to that score (i.e. multiplies each score by some percent greater than 100% to calibrate upwards, by less than 100% to calibrate downwards). By multiplying by some percent, you are not adding or subtracting a fixed amount; you are recalibrating the scale proportionately rather than absolutely. The assumption behind calibration upwards in this instance is that the more able students would have been able to score better on more of the questions than the weaker students would, and so the resulting additional points would be differentially greater rather than absolutely the same.

Comment: This method works well when scaling scores up, but some instructors are reluctant to use it to scale scores down since it takes away more from abler students than weaker ones.

### **Example 4**

A more complex model. The instructor decides on a “floor” mark, on the basis of relevant factors such as (but not necessarily limited to) the instructor's post-marking assessment of the difficulty of the assignment for the students. A student whose raw score is below the floor mark is assigned the floor mark for the test/exercise, other things being equal. (Other things might not be equal, as when the student did not answer any of the questions.)

Comment: The instructor will need a rationale for setting a floor mark. One possible rationale would be to try to minimize (or at least reduce) the likelihood of there being students in the class who get a mark so low that they become discouraged and drop the course. This rationale might be appropriate in a course that aims to teach certain skills – skills that, in the instructor's experience, most students develop over time and with repeated practice. On the other hand, the floor mark should not be so high that it gives a student who receives it little or no incentive to do better; other things being equal, it should be one that most students would not be content with.

The floor-mark method illustrated here benefits only students whose raw scores fall below the floor mark. Does this make the method unfair? A reason to think it does not is that it applies to *any* student in the class whose raw score is below the floor mark; it's a protection available to *all* the students in the class – even an 'A' student can have an off-day. (It is worth noting in this connection

that a curved grading system can have the effect of establishing a floor grade. Such a system might assign a grade of A to the top x% of the class (as determined by raw scores), a grade of B to the next y%, and a grade of C to the remaining percentage of the class. A grade of C would be the floor grade.)

### **Example 5**

The same procedure as in Example 4, plus the following steps. The instructor calculates the average score increase for those students whose raw scores are raised to the floor mark and then raises the raw scores of the other students (i.e., those students whose raw scores are equal to or higher than the floor mark) by a percentage of that average or by different percentages of that average for different ranges of raw scores. For example, suppose that the floor mark is 60% and that the average score increase for those students whose raw scores are raised to the floor mark is 4%. The instructor might raise raw scores in the 60-69% range by x% of 4%, raw scores in the 70-79% range by y% of 4%, and raw scores in the 80-100% range by z% of 4% provided that the increase does not raise the student's mark above 100%.

Comment: In contrast to Example 4, the method illustrated in Example 5 benefits (by awarding a score increase) students with raw scores at or above the floor mark, as well as those students with raw scores below the floor mark who are assigned the floor mark.