



# School of Social Sciences, Humanities & Arts

## New Instructor Handbook 2013-2014

# ACADEMIC DIFFICULTIES

## **I have a student who can't write a paragraph—where can I send him/her for help?**

Refer students to the Bright Success Center (<http://learning.ucmerced.edu>). The Bright Success Center offers workshops and tutoring for students who need assistance with writing and many other subjects.

## **I have a student who doesn't have the necessary mathematical preparation for my course. What should I do?**

Alert the student to your concerns and refer him/her to the Bright Success Center for more assistance (<http://learning.ucmerced.edu>). The student may need to drop your course if it is before the drop deadline.

See <http://registrar.ucmerced.edu/schedules/deadlines> for a list of deadlines. If you believe the student could succeed in your course with some additional support, the Bright Success Center offers study groups, tutoring, workshops, and adjunct courses for students enrolled in a variety of math courses.

## **What is academic probation? Academic dismissal?**

An undergraduate student is placed on academic probation if one of the following occurs:

- (1) The student's semester grade point average is less than 2.0, or
- (2) The student's cumulative University of California grade point average is less than 2.0.

An undergraduate student is subject to academic dismissal from the university if one of the following occurs:

- (1) The student has been on academic probation for two or more semesters and the student's cumulative grade point average is less than 2.0, or
- (2) The student's semester grade point average is less than 1.5 and the student's cumulative grade point average is less than 2.0.

# CONFIDENTIALITY

**I'd like to inform my students of their grades on an exam, or for the course. Am I violating any laws posting a list of student ID numbers and grades outside my office door?**

Student ID numbers and grades are confidential information, and posting such information (without prior written consent from every student on the list) is a violation of Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations. See <http://registrar.ucmerced.edu/policies/family-educational-rights-and-privacy-act-ferpa> for more information on FERPA. Particular care should be taken with student ID numbers, because it is now one of two keys used for accessing student records electronically. Students can easily look up their course grades on UCMCROPS—and you'll be doing them a favor when you encourage them to use that system.

**Is it ok to leave my students' graded midterms in a bin outside my office door for them to pick up?**

No. Exams are considered student records. This is a FERPA violation.

**A parent of one of my students wants to know what history courses her daughter has taken, what scores she has received, her overall GPA, and her current academic status. How should I respond to her request?**

Under no circumstances may you release to any third party, including a student's own parents, information of this nature, unless you have written authorization from the student to release the information.

**A parent has telephoned my office in desperation. He said, "I need to contact my son because his sister has been seriously injured in an accident. Can you please give me his class schedule so I can locate him?" How should I respond?**

In emergency situations, refer the caller to the UC Merced Police Department at (209) 228-2677. At the discretion of the Police and the Office of the Registrar, disclosure of a limited amount of information may be made to appropriate

parties in connection with an emergency when the information is necessary to protect the health and safety of the student or other persons.

### **Under what circumstances am I allowed access to a student's file?**

Instructors may have access to public information that the student has not restricted, and to confidential information for which the student has provided an appropriate written authorization, or under Legitimate Educational Interest/need to know basis. Faculty members may view their own class lists and email addresses of students enrolled in their courses via UCMCROPS.

### **Can I get a list of the email addresses for the students in my class?**

Yes, UCMCROPS has a built-in messaging system that allows you to email enrolled students. The student email addresses are pulled automatically from the campus directory. To comply with FERPA regulations, the student email addresses are suppressed in the outgoing message. You can also send email to individual students by clicking the linked email address in the student roster available on UCMCROPS.

You have access via UCMCROPS to the email addresses of students enrolled in your class. Since you have what's termed a "Legitimate Educational Interest" in this information, you may email your students messages related to the course even if some of them have asked that their email addresses not be released. **Please put the students' email addresses in the "Bcc" line (not the "To" line) of your message, so you will not inadvertently reveal their addresses.**

### **Is it ok if I send my students their grades via email?**

If a student, whom you can positively identify, has submitted a written request (signed and dated) to you in person, authorizing you to send his/her grades electronically, you may do so to his/her UC Merced email account ONLY. Please inform the student that you will use only the official email address on record with the university, which you can get from UCMCROPS. If the student submits the request by email, the Office of the Registrar recommends that you not provide the grade electronically; it can be difficult to know for sure whether the email really came from the student. However, the best and easiest response to such a request is to refer students to UCMCROPS.

# DEADLINES

## What are the deadlines is the last day students can change their class schedules?

### **Adding a course:**

During the first week of instruction, students may add a course or courses if space is available. During the second and third weeks of instruction, a student may add courses only with the permission of the instructor. After the third week of instruction, students may add a course only with the permission of both the instructor and the dean of the School with which the student is affiliated. A fee will be assessed for adding a course after the third week. <http://registrar.ucmerced.edu/policies/adddropwithdraw>

### **Dropping a course:**

During the first three weeks of instruction, students may drop a course or courses without paying a fee and without further approval.

### **Withdrawing from a Course:**

After the third week of instruction and until the end of the tenth week of instruction, a student may withdraw from a course for emergency reasons or for good cause with the signed approval of the instructor of record and confirmed by the dean of the school with which the student is affiliated, provided:

- (1) The student is not on special probation,
- (2) Dropping the course would be to the educational benefit of the student and
- (3) The student is not being investigated for academic dishonesty in that course.

Withdrawing between the 4th and 10th weeks will be approved only provided the student submits a withdrawal form including a written description of the special circumstances warranting this action; therefore, students should continue to attend the course until their withdraw request is approved.

For students withdrawing after the third week of instruction, a fee will be assessed and a "W" notation will be assigned by the Office of the Registrar and appear on the student's permanent transcript. Courses in which a "W" has been entered on a student's record carry no grade points, are not calculated in the grade point average, and will not be considered as courses attempted in assessing the student's progress to degree. Nevertheless, it is a marker used to

indicate that the student was enrolled in the class beyond the third week of instruction. It does not indicate whether the student was passing or failing.

**Changing grading options:**

First week of courses: Students may change grading options online if allowed.

Second week of courses: Students may change grading options on *Add/Drop Form* with instructor signature.

Third week of courses and beyond: Students may change grading options only with the approval of the School Dean using the *Add/Drop Form* and *Petition of Academic Policy Form*.

Please help us by reminding students to check and update their schedules early in the term. Lack of attendance or lack of knowledge about course enrollment does not constitute sufficient grounds for an exception to the deadline.

Summer deadlines vary. Refer to the Office of the Registrar website for specific dates (<http://registrar.ucmerced.edu/schedules/deadlines>).

**What are the dates of this semester's holidays?**

All holidays are noted on the online campus Academic Calendar at: <http://registrar.ucmerced.edu/schedules/calendars>.

**When do classes start next semester?**

All information about semester start/end dates, holidays, and exams is noted on the campus Academic Calendar at: <http://registrar.ucmerced.edu/schedules/calendars>).

# ENRICHMENT

## **How do I set up a basic course website?**

UCMCROPS automatically generates a basic site for every lecture course. You may enhance your basic site with links to your photograph, personal web page, syllabus, office hours, etc. Login to <https://ucmcrops.ucmerced.edu/> to review your course site(s) and email [ucmcrops@ucmerced.edu](mailto:ucmcrops@ucmerced.edu) for more information.

## **How can I learn more about using web-based instructional technology in my courses?**

Information Technology's Classroom AV Support Unit offers orientation sessions to introduce faculty to the course website options available, training sessions to teach instructors the basic skills necessary to use course management tools, and consultations to work with instructors on individual solutions. For more information contact IT at <http://it.ucmerced.edu>. The Center for Research on Teaching Excellence also offers a *Teaching and Technology Series* which introduces instructors to current and emerging technologies that can enhance teaching and learning for more information visit <http://crte.ucmerced.edu/ttworkshops>.

## **I'd like to videotape my class and put it up on the web. How do I do that?**

In certain instances, Information Technology can work to produce live webcasts of selected courses. For more information contact IT at <http://it.ucmerced.edu>.

## **How do I get a classroom with media equipment?**

All classrooms are equipped with an AV package designed to allow the instructor to project audio and video (DVD or computer images). If you do not have a laptop that can play DVDs or you need access to a VHS player, email IT at [helpdesk@ucmerced.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ucmerced.edu).

## **How do I get the library to make special arrangements for a class text?**

Contact the Kolligian Library for special arrangements at [library@ucmerced.edu](mailto:library@ucmerced.edu). For more information visit their website at: <http://library.ucmerced.edu/faculty-staff/instructional-services>.

## **How do I get the library to digitize supplemental course materials for my course?**

The Kolligian Library has a special page dedicated to digitizing course materials: <http://ucmercedlibrary.info/faculty-staff/supplemental-course-resources-scr.html>.

## **How can I be sure that my undergraduates know how to use the library for research?**

Make your undergraduates confident researchers by sending them to a library workshop. Better yet, ask a librarian to tailor a presentation to the exact needs of your class. Contact the library for more information at [library@ucmerced.edu](mailto:library@ucmerced.edu).

## **What do I do if I want to team teach with someone in another School?**

You and your teaching partner need to talk to your Deans about teaching load and possible compensation issues. Will you cross-list your course, that is, offer it for credit in two or more disciplines or Schools? If so, you may need special scheduling arrangements. If it is a new or cross-listed course it will need to be approved by the School Faculty as well as UGC before the schedule of classes goes live.

## **Students tell me they need a sponsor for an internship, that the agency offering the position requires them to receive units as a condition of the internship. Should I sponsor them for units? Is it appropriate to enroll them in a 199 course?**

Check with the SSHA Advising Office. There are some courses specifically designated for internships or experiential learning, and have special requirements for enrollment. These internship courses are numbered 092 & 192. A 199 course is usually reserved for independent study or research.



**Students ask me, "What can I do with this degree?" I know about academia, but I'm not really familiar with the market experience of recent graduates. How can I help these students?**

The UCM Career Services Center offers services, including workshops, which give students an opportunity to hear from graduates in their field who have gone onto various sectors. For more information contact the UCM Career Services Center at <http://careerservices.ucmerced.edu/>

**How can I get undergraduates to assist me with my research?**

In many instances, students may enroll in a section of 199 as they pursue research with Faculty. Remember that "Supervised Independent Study" courses (199) are intended for student-initiated research, so while the student project may be closely allied to your research, the student goals should take precedence in the contract for 199 units. Students normally enroll in 195 courses when assisting Faculty with research. The *Independent Study Form* can be found online at <http://registrar.ucmerced.edu/resources/forms>.

If you have funds to pay a student, you should see your Director of Operations about steps necessary to advertise and hire a student assistant.

**A student approaches me with an interesting research project. How does he/she get units for the research?**

Most disciplines offer a 199 course, usually called "Supervised Independent Study". This is appropriate for many projects but is available only on a P/NP basis. For more involved projects, where a letter grade would be appropriate, there are special research and/or senior thesis courses. Check with your Manager of Instructional Services for restrictions on enrollment in these courses.

**What is a Freshman Seminar? How do I offer one? (And why should I?)**

A Freshman Seminar is a one-unit course, usually meeting 50 minutes per week and enrolling no more than 30 first-year students. The program enables meaningful contact between Faculty and freshmen and allows both to participate in the thoughtful exploration of a research topic.

### **How do I submit my course textbook/materials request?**

Your Instructional Services Staff will send you notification via email of deadlines for course materials requests. Please note that it is important to submit your requests before or by the deadline. Online forms for submitting course materials requests can be found here: [sha.ucmerced.edu/node/222](http://sha.ucmerced.edu/node/222). Email [sha.curriculum@ucmerced.edu](mailto:sha.curriculum@ucmerced.edu) if you have any questions.

### **How do I connect to a network printer?**

Please follow the directions located on the UC Merced IT website <http://it.ucmerced.edu/support/guides-faqs/printing/departamental-printers>.

### **How do I use the copy machines?**

SSHA Instructional Services staff will email you your copy code before the beginning of the term. If you have questions about it or have forgotten your code, please email [sha.curriculum@ucmerced.edu](mailto:sha.curriculum@ucmerced.edu). Directions for use of the copy machines are located in the Classroom and Office Building 3<sup>rd</sup> floor copy room (310), as well SSM 256B and SSM 350A.

# ENROLLMENT

## **What do I do if a student attended class all semester and then I find out he/she is not enrolled?**

Please check your class lists regularly, particularly the first through fourth weeks of instruction, and ask students to make necessary adjustments of their class schedules before the deadline. If you discover before the last day of instruction that a student is not properly enrolled, inform the student that he/she needs to talk to his/her Academic Advisor.

## **What do I do if a student's name doesn't appear on my UCMCROPS course roster?**

If the student's name is not on the UCMCROPS roster, the student is not enrolled in the course. Through week three, the student can enroll by filing the appropriate paperwork (see **DEADLINES**). After week three, inform the student that he/she needs to go through the Petition of Academic Policy process. Please keep in mind that requests to add courses after the fourth-week deadline are rarely approved. <http://registrar.ucmerced.edu/policies/adddropwithdraw>.

## **What if a student wants to enroll in my class but it is closed? Can he/she be placed on a waitlist?**

UC Merced does not have any type of waitlist system for closed courses at this time. Students are encouraged to regularly check for available space on the Office of the Registrar's website. A course may be at maximum enrollment without reaching the maximum fire and safety capacity of the classroom in which the course is being taught. Under these circumstances, and with the permission of the instructor, a student may place a request to be overenrolled in a course by completing an add/drop form (<http://registrar.ucmerced.edu/resources/forms>) and submitting it to SSHA Reception (COB 259) or SSHA Advising Reception (COB 208).

# GRADES

## **What kind of Scantron forms can I use for exams?**

SSHA has two different Scantron machines available for scoring. These machines accept Scantron Form No. 882-E or F-288-PAR-L and F-289-PAR-L (these two must be used together; the former for the first assignment, and the latter for all following assignments). For help scoring these forms or for questions about Scantrons, email [ssha.curriculum@ucmerced.edu](mailto:ssha.curriculum@ucmerced.edu). The Scantron room is located in SSM (200), and can be accessed by SSHA instructors and TAs using their CatCards.

## **When should I give an Incomplete? How do I determine whether or not an Incomplete grade is justified?**

You may assign an Incomplete grade if the student's work in your course has been of passing quality but is incomplete for reasons beyond the student's control (e.g., sudden illness). A student should make prior arrangements with you concerning the Incomplete grade, as you may be required to specify the reason for the Incomplete grade. An Incomplete grade is given at your discretion. Please note that the appropriate paperwork must be submitted before the first day of the following semester or the student's Incomplete will turn into a failing grade. You can find the *Incomplete Grade Form* online at <http://registrar.ucmerced.edu/resources/forms>. Please refer to the general catalog for further information on Incomplete grades <http://catalog.ucmerced.edu>

## **What happens when an Incomplete lapses?**

Any Incomplete grade that has not been replaced before the deadline will, at that time, lapse to a grade of F (or NP if taken passed/not passed). After that time, but not retroactively, the grade is counted into the student's grade point average. Once the grade has lapsed a student is allowed to repeat the course under the repeat guidelines of the University (listed in the general catalog).

### **How do I submit a grade when a student has finished an Incomplete?**

You would need to fill out a *Grade Change Form*. In SSHA you would contact the Manager of Instructional Services who would provide you with the confidential form and envelope. Grade changes can also be submitted online at <http://registrar.ucmerced.edu/policies/grades#Change>.

### **How much time are undergraduates given to make up an Incomplete?**

For an Incomplete given in the fall semester, students have until the first day of classes the following fall to complete the work. For an Incomplete given in the spring or summer, students have until the first day of classes the following spring to complete the work.

### **Can a student remove an Incomplete by repeating the course?**

No, a student cannot remove an Incomplete by repeating the course. If the student repeats the course the incomplete will lapse to an F or NP. A student should NOT enroll in a course in order to make up an Incomplete. He/she should arrange to audit the course informally if that is required in order to make-up missing work for the course.

### **What if a student wants to grieve a grade? What rights do students have? If it happens at the end of the semester, what grade do I assign? What are the procedures?**

A student has a right to bring a grade grievance if he or she believes that "improper academic criteria" were used to evaluate his or her work.

If a grade grievance comes at the end of the term, please assign the grade you believe is appropriate based on your grading policy and your evaluation of the work submitted by the student. However, more commonly students will contest a grade based on academic grounds, i.e., they disagree with the grade assigned. If a student has a grade grievance based on academic criteria it is suggested that you either meet informally with the student to try and resolve the dispute or ask the student to address his/her concerns in writing. If you disagree with the student's challenge, you might offer to write a letter for the student's file describing in detail the reasons for the grade and any extenuating circumstances that may have influenced your grading.

If a challenge arises, you can expedite its resolution by preparing a written description of course content, measures used to evaluate student performance, and a complete record of the individual student's work.

Grade changes can occur only as the result of clerical or procedural errors. Grade changes should not occur as result of a re-examination or the submission of additional work after the close of the term. We would encourage you to help students understand that academic integrity and fairness to other students in the course prevents you from re-evaluating their individual work with an eye towards a grade change. You are under no obligation to re-evaluate papers or exams except for clerical or procedural errors.

Clearly written grading policies on your syllabus will help to avoid grade disputes. Also, if you make changes to the written grading policy during the semester it is recommended that you put the changes in writing and distribute them to your students. Finally, careful record keeping throughout the semester will help in any grade challenge.

For more information regarding grade appeals, visit <http://registrar.ucmerced.edu/policies/grades#Appeals>

### **What is the deadline for students who want to change their grading option?**

Students may change their grading option from P/NP to letter grade through Thursday of the third week of instruction. Summer Session deadlines vary. The deadline dates are available on the Office of the Registrar website - <http://registrar.ucmerced.edu/schedules/deadlines>.

### **Under what circumstances should or may I change a grade that I already submitted? How do I do it? Is there a form to change a student's grade?**

You may change a grade due to a clerical or procedural error. Grade changes may not be made on the basis of a reassessment of the quality of the student's work. A grade change can be made by filling out and submitting a *Grade Change Form*. In SSHA you would contact the Manager of Instructional Services, who would provide you with the confidential form and envelope. Grade changes can also be submitted online at <http://registrar.ucmerced.edu/policies/grades#Change>

## **What do I do if a student comes to me with a complaint about the grade a TA assigned?**

If you are the instructor of record for this course, you must be involved in the grade appeal. Grade grievances can be brought by a student if he/she feels that issues such as race, politics, religion, sex or sexual harassment affected the grade or if his/her work was evaluated by other criteria that did not directly reflect the student's performance of the course requirements. More commonly students will challenge a grade based on academic grounds. Please refer to the question "**What if a student wants to grieve a grade?**" for further information on grade grievance procedures.

## **Can I let the TA decide on a contested grade?**

As the instructor of record you should be involved in any grade disputes. Remember that grades are to be adjusted only to correct errors in procedures or clerical mishaps, not due to a re-evaluation of the student's work. Whether you determined the final grade or not, any grade dispute in a course for which you are the instructor of record does involve you.

## **Do I have to give all students, even the ones taking the course P/NP or S/NS a letter grade?**

Yes. If a student chooses to take a course P/NP or S/NS he/she will still need to be assigned a letter grade and the grading system will convert the grade. However, if the course is a P/NP option or S/NS option only, the grading system will only allow you to enter P/NP or S/NS grades.

## **What is the lowest passing grade for a student taking my course P/NP?**

A student must complete work of C-quality (or better) to qualify for a Pass grade.

## **When should or may I assign a No Report (NR)?**

Please do not assign a No Report grade under any circumstances. This designation is reserved for the Registrar only; it's used to note that the instructor for this course did not submit a grade. It should not be used in lieu of assigning a grade. Please assign an F or NP grade if the student has not attended your class nor turned in assignments. An F or NP grade will not penalize students who have

dropped the course by the fourth-week deadline of the semester or have withdrawn from the University.

### **This student was never in my class. What grade should I assign?**

It is likely that the student intended to drop the course and did not do so in the appropriate timeframe. Please assign the student a failing grade. An F or NP grade will not penalize a student who has dropped the course by the fourth week deadline or withdrawn from the University.

### **What constitutes failing a course? If a student fails a course, when can he/she repeat the course?**

A grade of F is a failing grade. Grades of D, D+ or D- are given unit credit towards graduation. A student may repeat the course whether he/she received a D or F, following the repeat guidelines of the University listed in the General Catalog. The General Catalog describes the grading policy- [http://catalog.ucmerced.edu/content.php?catoid=2&navoid=60#Grades Progress To Degree And Dismissal](http://catalog.ucmerced.edu/content.php?catoid=2&navoid=60#Grades_Progress_To_Degree_And_Dismissal).

### **Am I doing a student a favor by giving him/her an F instead of a D?**

You are not necessarily doing the student a favor by assigning an F rather than a D grade. A grade of D is considered a passing grade and the student will receive unit credit towards his or her degree while a grade of F is a failing grade and carries no unit credit. A student may repeat the course whether he/she received a D or F, following the repeat guidelines of the University listed in the General Catalog.

When the student repeats a course, the grade received in the course the second time will replace the original grade in the calculation of the student's grade point average. In effect, the GPA will reflect the most recent grade. Whether the student received a D or F, if he/she repeats the course and does better the second time, he/she will improve their GPA. A student can repeat up to 16 units to improve his or her GPA in this manner. For additional courses repeated after the 16 units the two grades will be averaged together.



## **The student hasn't turned in their final paper yet. How can I give him/her a final grade?**

If the student has not contacted you regarding the final paper, you should award him/her the grade he/she would earn in the course without submitting the final paper. If, after grades are submitted to the Registrar, you determine that the student's failure to submit the paper was due to circumstances beyond the student's control you can submit an *Incomplete Grade Request Form* to the Office of the Registrar. (<http://registrar.ucmerced.edu/resources/forms>).

## **Are there guidelines for assigning grades?**

There are no campus-wide standards. In large lecture courses, however, instructors are expected to help section or lab leaders reach a consensus about grading as well as policies on such things as late assignments and student requests to submit revised work or earn extra credit. Within reasonable limits, the way of assessing the quality of students' performance in a course and the guidelines for assigning grades in a course are determined by the instructor in accordance with School practices.

## **What do I need to know about UCMCROPS?**

At a minimum, you should be familiar with the grading feature in UCMCROPS. This feature allows instructors to submit their final grades electronically. This system replaced the use of pre-printed course reports and eliminated the need to pencil in students' final grades on paper. UCMCROPS is the only mechanism for reporting final (and mid-semester) grades.

## **What happens if I turn in my grades after the deadline?**

If grades are turned in after the grade processing is complete, the delay may affect the student's academic status. If you know you will not be able to make the deadline, you **MUST** contact the SSHA Manager of Instructional Services ASAP. The Registrar's Office no longer accepts class lists with grades or memos for an entire course from an instructor who did not submit grades via UCMCROPS. Instructors are required to submit a Grade Change Form for each student whose grade is not processed electronically. In SSHA you would contact the Manager of Instructional Services who would provide you with the confidential form and envelope, or you could submit the grade change online at <http://registrar.ucmerced.edu/policies/grades#Change>.

## **What do I report on UCMCROPS if a student stopped attending class or did not take the final exam?**

If the student stopped attending the course at some point during the semester it is possible that he/she has dropped the course. Unfortunately, students are not required to inform you that they are dropping your course. If the student's name appears on your final electronic or paper course report you should assign whatever grade is appropriate for the student based on work completed (if any) and on all assignments, tests, etc. that were missed. Please remember that an F grade will not penalize a student who has dropped the course by the fourth week of the term or withdrawn from the University.

If the student did not take the final exam, but has completed other work for the class, again please assign the student a grade based on the work completed, averaged in with the F for the missed final exam. If there are extenuating circumstances for this student, it is the student's responsibility to contact you regarding the missed final. You are under no obligation to assign an Incomplete grade and are encouraged not to do so unless you have spoken with the student and determined that this is the appropriate course of action.

## **When are grades due?**

Grades are normally due 3 business days after the last final exam in the final exam schedule. Please consult the published final exam schedule on the Registrar's website at: <http://registrar.ucmerced.edu/schedules/exams>. Mid-semester and final grade deadlines can be found here: <http://registrar.ucmerced.edu/grade-deadlines>

## **What is the purpose of the mid-semester grades? Do I have to turn them in? What if I haven't given a midterm or graded any assignments yet?**

Mid-semester grades provide students in lower division courses (000-099) with early feedback (both positive and negative) about their academic performance. Mid-semester grades provide an opportunity for students to receive positive reinforcement and motivation if they are doing well, and to identify those who are struggling. Mid-semester grades, for all lower division courses only, are reported at the end of the eighth week of the semester. All grades are submitted as letter grades for letter-graded courses (regardless of whether the student has elected to take the course as P/NP). If a course is P/NP only, all grades will be

submitted as P/NP. Mid-semester grades are notational grades which are used to help ensure the academic success of UC Merced students in lower division courses. These grades are not recorded in any permanent record or on a student's academic transcript. Mid-semester and final grade deadlines can be found here: <http://registrar.ucmerced.edu/grade-deadlines>.

### **Why should I bother with mid-semester grades?**

Mid-semester grades are mandated for all lower-division courses (000-099). Mid-semester grades are used to alert a student to academic difficulty. The Bright Success Center, as well as the individual Schools, are informed when a student receives a notification. Your participation in this process allows the advising office to reach out to students who are having difficulties.

### **How do I submit my students' mid-semester grades electronically?**

You can use the e-grading system of UCMCROPS to assign midterm grades for fall and spring during the eighth week of the semester. The Registrar's Office will notify SSHA when the system is open. SSHA should then send notification that you can submit midterm grades. The actual process for assigning midterm grades is the same as assigning final grades.

### **What do I do if I don't like the date set for my final exam?**

The date and time of final exams are based on the day and time your course is offered. Talk to your Manager of Instructional Services about your needs before the Schedule of Classes is finalized. If you would like to change your exam date, after the schedule is set, you are required to get written approval from all students in the class before your request is reviewed by the Dean's Office.

### **What do I tell students who want to take my final at a time different from the one listed?**

Except for students who are registered with the Disability Services Center (DSC) and who have been approved by DSC for such accommodations, you are under no obligation to offer an alternate final exam except at the stated time in the Schedule of Classes. If you wish to offer an exam at an alternate time you will be responsible for finding a location and appropriate supervision for the exam.

Check with your Instructional Services Staff to see if it offers such options. If the student has a DSC recommendation for either extended time or a different location, the DSC Program Specialist for that student can provide necessary location and proctoring services. The student must make prior arrangements with both you and his or her DSC specialist for test accommodations. Please see information on the DSC website regarding accommodations for testing at <http://disability.ucmerced.edu>.

**A student says that the final exam day is a religious holiday. For which religious holidays should I make accommodations?**

UC Merced seeks to accommodate any student who, in observance of a religious creed, encounters an unavoidable conflict with an examination schedule. In order to request accommodation, the student is responsible for providing, in writing and at the beginning of the semester, notification of a potential conflict to the individual responsible for administering the examination. Instructors will consider such requests on a case-by-case basis and determine whether such conflicts can be resolved without imposing on the instructor or the other students in the class an undue hardship that cannot be reasonably avoided. If so, the instructor will determine, in consultation with the student, a time during which the student can take the examination without incurring a penalty or violation of the student's religious creed.

**Are instructors required to keep final exams and grading records? For how long?**

Instructors may opt either to return final exams (or copies of them) or to retain them. If final exams are not returned, then instructors should retain final exams for thirteen months after the final exam date. Grading records play a very important role in a dispute or challenge, should one arise. Since students have two semesters after the completion of a course to file a grade grievance, it would be wise to save records for the same 13 month period as required for final exams.

**Can I assign a final exam or course assignment to be due after my scheduled final exam date?**

All due dates for course assignments and or exams must be scheduled no later than the course's scheduled final exam date.

# SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS

## **A student with a disability is enrolled in my class. What adjustments or other accommodations should I make?**

There are many kinds of disabilities, and they affect students in many different ways. Specific answers about what an instructor must do will depend on an individualized analysis of each student's need. You have the resources of the Disability Services Center (DSC) for help with this, and it is in your best interest (logistically, legally, etc.) to use that help.

DSC will make sure that a student is indeed entitled to accommodations in your class, and perform the professional assessment of what those accommodations should be. All you have to do is refer the student to DSC and request that he/she acquire a "letter of accommodation" from a DSC professional. Once you have a "letter of accommodation" from DSC, you need only follow the recommendations in that letter.

## **What if I am concerned about, or object to, a recommendation in DSC's letter of accommodation?**

If you are concerned that the recommendation is not appropriate for your particular class, then you should contact the DSC Advisor. The Disability Services Center advisors know that their recommendations can occasionally inadvertently compromise the purposes or standards of a class, and are ready to discuss such concerns with you.

The goal is to find a way to accommodate the student in a manner that does not fundamentally alter the essential performance standards of your class. If there is an unresolved disagreement after a good-faith effort, there is a process for pursuing the matter. Note, however, that the DSC Advisor's recommendations must be followed until they are overturned or modified.

## **How do I obtain exam room and proctoring assistance for a student registered with DSC?**

If you are provided with a TA, they should be your primary resource for proctoring assistance. If you do not have a TA, please contact the Disability Services Center at [disabilityservices@ucmerced.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@ucmerced.edu).

## **How far in advance must students with disabilities inform an instructor about needed accommodations?**

Students who work with the Disability Services Center are strongly urged to communicate with instructors as soon as possible. However, the University must make every feasible effort to accommodate students regardless of the notice. A specific answer to this question would need to be given in the context of the necessary accommodation. For example, a student who has a vision impairment may need to use a dark pen and write in large print. Perhaps he/she will need to write the short answers on a separate sheet of paper instead of in the blank spaces on the test document itself. This accommodation really doesn't require any advance preparation, so not much advance notice may be needed. On the other hand, if a student's accommodation requires the arrangement of a separate, quiet room, a proctor, or both, then more time is obviously needed. For such matters, especially when a proctor must be arranged, it is reasonable to expect advance notice of three to five working days.

## **What can I do to help prevent problems related to students with disabilities in my classes?**

Students have the responsibility for making their disability-related accommodation needs known to you in a timely fashion. You can facilitate this process by including a statement on your syllabus that invites students with disabilities to meet with you to discuss their needs. Here is an example of a syllabus statement:

*“Any student who feels he or she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss his or her specific needs. Also contact the Disability Services Office at (209) 228-6996 as soon as possible to better ensure accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.”*

# STUDENT CONDUCT

## **What are a faculty member's best resources in cases of academic dishonesty?**

Academic dishonesty strikes at the heart of a university's function and self-definition. When you suspect academic dishonesty, it is your obligation to investigate and, if suspicions are confirmed, confront the student with the fact and determine an appropriate penalty. Of assistance at such times is the Office of Student Judicial Affairs (SJA). At the request of the instructor, SJA will investigate and help resolve suspected violations of the Code of Student Conduct, including both academic and non-academic issues (<http://studentlife.ucmerced.edu/what-we-do/student-judicial-affairs/resources>). Even if you don't engage SJA to help you resolve a violation, you are encouraged to report cases of academic dishonesty to SJA so that its files will be as complete as possible.

## **What steps can I take to prevent academic dishonesty?**

1. Inform students of academic standards for scholarship and conduct;
2. Explain how cheating harms students and describe campus sanctions;
3. Minimize the opportunities for cheating and plagiarism;
4. Take visible actions to detect dishonesty so that students know you will not tolerate cheating;
5. If cheating occurs, respond swiftly with disciplinary measures.

## **What is plagiarism?**

All written work submitted for a course, except for acknowledged quotations, must be expressed in the student's own words. It must also be constructed upon a plan of the student's own devising. Work copied without acknowledgement from a book, from another student's paper, from the internet, or from any other source is plagiarized. Plagiarism can range from wholesale copying of passages from another's work to using the views, opinions, and insights of another without acknowledgement, to paraphrasing another person's original phrases without acknowledgement.

### **What is the penalty for plagiarism?**

The submission of such work will, under University rules, render the offending student subject to an F grade for the work in question or for the entire course, at the discretion of the instructor, and will also make the student liable for referral to SJA.

### **What steps can I take to help prevent plagiarism?**

1. Clarify the distinctions between plagiarism, paraphrasing and direct citation;
2. Ask students to seek permission before resubmitting previous academic work to you;
3. Change your paper topics and exam questions as often as is practical;
4. Request that students submit rough drafts before or along with final versions of papers;
5. Assign a variety of short in-class papers during the term.
6. Utilize an online anti-plagiarism program such as <http://turnitin.com> for checking student work. For questions about access and this process contact the Instructional Services Assistant or the Manager of Instructional Services.

### **Should I confront a student whom I suspect of plagiarism?**

If possible, yes. Students who have plagiarized often confess when the evidence is clear, or after judicious questioning about their topic, style, etc. If you feel threatened or for some other reason uncomfortable, refer the matter to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs (SJA).

### **What if I strongly suspect but have not proved plagiarism?**

You may not lower a grade or fail a student on a suspicion of plagiarism.

### **What if the instructor is a TA?**

The TA is no different from any other instructor and may follow the course of action outlined above, including referral of an uncertain case.



### **What can I do to stop a student from disrupting class?**

If the disruption is non-threatening, try to meet privately with the student to review what is and is not acceptable behavior. Document all contacts with the student, including dates, times, and locations when incidents occurred, and your response. It is your right to expel a disruptive student from your classroom—but only for that day's session. He/she has the right to return to class the following day, and may remain so long as the disruptive behavior is not repeated. If it is, the instructor should contact Office of Student Judicial Affairs, which can coordinate campus-wide resources to assist the instructor and the student.

If the student exhibits threatening behavior towards you or other members of the class, call the UC Merced Police Department at (209) 228-2677. Such cases are among the most distressing of an instructor's experiences in the classroom, not to mention the effect on the class as a whole.