Policies and Issues

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GTA Training 2006
As an instructor... you are in a position of authority

- With power...
- comes responsibility.
University, College and Department policies affect many of your decisions as a TA.

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Documentation

• Many of these policies emphasize the importance of a “paper trail”.
• Full and clear documentation protects both you and your students.
Syllabus

Must supply to students within the first ten days, in writing:

• Details of examination procedure
• Grading policy
• Academic integrity statement, see http://www.science.psu.edu/academic/Integrity/Syllabi.htm
More syllabus information

• Instructor contact information
• Office hours
• Course description and outline
• Note to students with disabilities, see http://www.equity.psu.edu/ods/faculty/overview.asp
• Copy of syllabus to UG Office
• Example: http://www.math.psu.edu/roe/411/syllabus.pdf
Academic Integrity

• You are responsible for setting high expectations for academic honesty in your class.

• Possible forms of cheating include: unauthorized collaboration; copying assignments from the web; written material introduced into exams; electronic devices; sharing information during exams; ‘ringers’; altering graded materials after their return and then claiming extra points.
• Possible remedies: compare assignments; proctor exams vigilantly; seat students far apart, or to your own plan; check photo IDs; photocopy graded materials before returning them; use Turnitin.com

• If you suspect cheating, follow ECoS policy at http://www.science.psu.edu/academic/Integrity/Policy.htm

• Contact the Undergraduate Director. Don’t ‘shoot from the hip’.
Examination Procedure

• Final examinations are scheduled by the Registrar’s office. You may not change the schedule – even with the consent of all the students in your section.
• Adequate proctoring must be ensured.
• Be sure to keep exam materials secure and to grade promptly according to agreed procedures.
Students with Disabilities

http://www.equity.psu.edu/ods/

• Refer students requesting disability accommodation to ODS, 116 Boucke Building, 863-1807

• Accommodations must be provided *if and only if* supported by an ODS letter.

• Accommodations are confidential between yourself and the student; *do not discuss them in the classroom.*
Students in Distress

• Distressed students may turn to you as a friend or adviser. Professional help is available. Do not hesitate to call for assistance.
• Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), 863-0395, www.sa.psu.edu/caps
• You may require a student who becomes abusive or threatening to leave your class (or office). Report the situation immediately to the Undergraduate Office.
Missed Classes

• Students are encouraged to attend class.
• Instructors are encouraged to offer make-up opportunities in the case of: regularly scheduled, University-approved curricular and extracurricular activities; religious holidays; unavoidable reasons such as illness or emergency.

http://www.psu.edu/ufs/policies/42-00.html#42-27
http://www.events.psu.edu/cgi-bin/cal/webevent.cgi?cmd=listmonth&ncmd=startup&cal=cal42
Sexual (and other) harassment

• University policies:
  http://guru.psu.edu/POLICIES/AD42.html
  http://guru.psu.edu/POLICIES/AD41.html

• `Zero tolerance’ policy. Think carefully.
• Policy protects both students and instructors.
• Report incidents to Affirmative Action via the Undergraduate Office.
Grades and privacy

• Grades must be entered at the end of the course. Don’t leave town without doing this! Some of your students are waiting to graduate!

• It is helpful to students to let them have cumulative grades throughout the course. But this information may not be posted publicly – even with names omitted. One can use a program that sends email to individual students, e.g. Carl Mummert’s grader suite.

• If possible, return graded homework to students individually.
Graders

• You may be allocated an undergraduate assistant to help with grading.
• You are the ‘line manager’ for the grader!
• [Link](http://www.math.psu.edu/UG/graderguidelines.htm)