



Academic Handbook – Quick Reference

The Academic Handbook outlines regulations and best practices in teaching in the Faculty of Arts & Science. For those unfamiliar with the UofT environment, here are a few important things to keep in mind:

Course Syllabus:

Your syllabus is an essential document that clarifies details about course work and course policies. The Handbook contains **a list of items that must be included in your syllabus**, as well as additional suggested items (see Sections 1 & 2). In particular, because your syllabus functions as a “contract” with students about the course, 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. Your syllabus must be readily available to students and **must be distributed in the first week of classes**. The marking scheme is a particularly important aspect of your syllabus; see next section.

Assessment and Marking Schemes:

Your **marking scheme must be distributed to students within the first week of class** (usually as part of the syllabus), and a copy must be filed with the undergraduate administrator of your academic unit by the first day of classes (see Section 2.8). The marking scheme lists all marked work, its nature (essay, test, etc.) its due date or test date, and its weight in the course mark.

After the marking scheme has been distributed to the students, **the instructor may not change the method of assessments or the weight of assessments without the consent of a simple majority of the students** attending the class meeting at which the vote is taken, provided the vote is announced no later than in the previous class meeting (see Section 5.2).

At the end of a course, instructors submit a numerical mark between 0 and 100 for each student. On the transcript, these numerical marks appear alongside letter grades and GPA, which are automatically calculated. **“A” grades (A-/A/A+) are assigned for marks above 80%**. If this grading scale is unfamiliar to you, please review Section 10 of the Academic Handbook (Final Course Marks) and the document “80% is an A?” on the Faculty of Arts & Science Teaching & Learning website. Some discussion with your Associate Chair, Undergraduate about marking practices is advisable.

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** (see Section 5.5).

Both University and Faculty **policies explicitly prohibit 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**. For example, you cannot adjust your marks to fit a “normal” curve. 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.” If you are calibrating or adjusting marks (see Section 5.11 for a helpful discussion of scores/marks and calibration), avoid reference to “belling” or “curving” marks, even if students use these terms.

If you plan to use **turnitin.com**, you must include a standard statement on your syllabus and communicate to students that use of the software is optional. Please see Section 2.15 of the Academic Handbook for the syllabus statement and additional details.

Section 7 of the Academic Handbook contains information about **managing cases where students miss term work or tests**. You have considerable latitude but there are Faculty limits.

Important Dates:

Please review Section 7.5 of the Handbook for suggestions to **avoid scheduling conflicts between term work and tests and religious observances**. Because religious observances are protected by the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, instructors are held to high standards to ensure that students' course performance is not disadvantaged because of a religious observance.

In the Classroom:

The Faculty does not have a general policy requiring that students attend classes. Instructors may have an attendance requirement for their own particular courses but doing so brings with it responsibilities. Section 4.2 of the Handbook includes suggestions for administering an attendance requirement.

Lecture material is your intellectual property. **Students may not record a lecture without permission of the instructor**, and in no cases should students sell or publish an instructor's lecture material including posting it on websites. Please see Section 4.5 for details about communicating these regulations to students.

Final Examinations:

In the Faculty of Arts & Science, **final examinations are scheduled, conducted and invigilated by the Office of the Faculty Registrar**, and not by individual instructors. Instructors may not schedule their own tests or "exams" during the Final Exam Period, even take-home tests. Please see Section 9 (Final Examinations) for details about the final exam process. **Because the exams are centrally administered, you will be asked to submit your final exam to your undergraduate program administrator for copying approximately one month before the exam period begins (two weeks in Summer).** Please verify the deadline for the current term with your Associate Chair, as this date often seems to sneak up on instructors!

Appeals & Academic Integrity:

Please review the information on **student appeals and academic integrity** included in the Academic Handbook (Sections 11 & 12).

Support & Resources:

The Academic Handbook includes additional information about **teaching support services and important contacts** for teaching across the Faculty and University. (Sections 15-19).

Additionally, the Handbook includes information on ensuring **accessibility and supporting students in difficulty** (Sections 13 & 14).