

Teaching Advice and Support for New and Adjunct Faculty: Experiences, Policies, and Strategies — SIGCSE 2000

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What new faculty need to know about teaching: Prototype FAQ

1. Subject matter [outside this panel's scope]
2. Classroom technique [outside this panel's scope]
3. Grading practices
 - 3.1. Honor code, cheating policy and procedures for prevention, detection, correction
 - 3.2. Assignment submission
 - 3.3. Exam regulations
 - 3.4. Partial credit
 - 3.5. Regrades
 - 3.6. Assigning final course grades
 - 3.6.1. Expectations about norming and grade distribution
 - 3.6.2. Differing distribution expectations for certain classes
 - 3.6.3. Distribution statistics for the course, department, school
 - 3.6.4. Handling complaints and changes
4. Classroom conduct
 - 4.1. Taking attendance
 - 4.2. Enforcing timeliness
 - 4.3. Sensitivity to various populations
5. Social issues
 - 5.1. Privacy policy (e.g., on posting grades)
 - 5.2. Sexual harrassment rules
 - 5.3. Acceptable computer use
6. Course evaluation
 - 6.1. Student opinion and evaluations
 - 6.2. Evaluating outcomes, student competencies
7. Employee issues
 - 7.1. Payroll, keys, parking, office, phone, mail, ID/library card
 - 7.2. Computer support for faculty
 - 7.3. Clerical support for faculty
 - 7.4. How to purchase books, software, equipment
 - 7.5. Photocopying

8. Preparing a particular course

8.1. Content

- 8.1.1. What topics does the course cover, to what depth?
- 8.1.2. What skills should students have at the end?
- 8.1.3. How similar should the course be to previous offerings?

8.2. Course context

- 8.2.1. What are the prerequisites?
- 8.2.2. Are prerequisites enforced? If so, how?
- 8.2.3. Is the course required?
- 8.2.4. What is the likely enrollment size?
- 8.2.5. What later courses must it prepare students for?

8.3. Student expectations and demographics

- 8.3.1. Are students motivated to take this course?
- 8.3.2. How well prepared are they?
- 8.3.3. What is their typical commitment level? (For adjuncts, contrast with employees)
- 8.3.4. How much outside reading and lab work can be expected?
- 8.3.5. Characteristics of the student population: age, ethnicity, employment status, disability, native language

8.4. Scheduling class meetings

- 8.4.1. When is the class scheduled; can it be changed?
- 8.4.2. Particularly for adjuncts, what if a class meeting must be missed and rescheduled?

8.5. Assignments, exams, other materials

- 8.5.1. Are there norms as to number, scheduling, weighting?
- 8.5.2. Are there standard assignments or tests?
- 8.5.3. Where are materials from previous offerings available?

8.6. Textbooks

- 8.6.1. Who selects the text? Has one been selected?
- 8.6.2. How and when are texts ordered? What about "course packs"?
- 8.6.3. How do instructors and TAs get review or desk copies?

8.7. Lab support

- 8.7.1. What lab facilities are available? Must they be reserved?
- 8.7.2. Where are labs located and how do students and faculty get access?
- 8.7.3. What hardware and software is typically used?
- 8.7.4. Are technical support staff available? What assistance will they provide?

8.8. Course support

- 8.8.1. Document production and distribution
- 8.8.2. Lab access and computer accounts
- 8.8.3. Teaching assistants and graders: Selection and duties
- 8.8.4. Library reserve and acquisitions policy
- 8.8.5. Accommodations for disabled students
- 8.8.6. Tutoring availability for students having difficulty

8.9. Are previous instructors or TAs available to consult?

Strategies for providing support information to new faculty

1. Administrative

- 1.1. Hire carefully
- 1.2. Require a sample teaching-oriented presentation for teaching-oriented positions
- 1.3. Set expectations in interview
- 1.4. Check references
- 1.5. Include all instructors wherever appropriate on paper and electronic distribution lists

2. Course information

- 2.1. Repositories of previous course materials
- 2.2. Mentoring
 - 2.2.1. Balance between active and passive
 - 2.2.2. Paired instructors, team teaching
 - 2.2.3. Rewards, recognition for mentor's time

3. Technology

- 3.1. Faculty-oriented web sites and mailing lists
- 3.2. Web-based orientation and procedure manuals (or FAQs) for rapid, focused access
- 3.3. Computer-mediated repositories of previous course materials (including archives of sample student work)

4. Evaluation

- 4.1. Classroom observations
- 4.2. Student interviews
- 4.3. Post-tests for students, consistent across offerings
- 4.4. Course evaluation surveys
- 4.5. Debriefings

5. Community-building

- 5.1. Full-department meetings once a term
- 5.2. Faculty coffee hours or other social gatherings
- 5.3. Giving back to the course material repository
- 5.4. Research collaborations create opportunities for exchanges about teaching