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