

Strategies for Reducing Course-Related Complaints

Syllabi

The intent of the course syllabus is to provide an opportunity for faculty to openly and clearly communicate course requirements to students. The syllabus should announce course assignments, materials, and a tentative course calendar, as well as the course grading scale, extra credit options, and percentage weight allocated to class assignments.

The [Course Syllabi policy \(S16-9\)](#) provides additional information on the required elements of the course syllabus and the [Accessible Syllabus Template](#) is revised periodically to maintain compliance with University policy.

Attendance

Attendance is not to be used as a criterion for grading ([F15-12](#)). If participation is a consideration in grading, some indication of how participation will be assessed (pop quizzes, in-class writing assignments, conversation and discussion groups, etc.) should be included in the syllabus ([S16-9](#)).

Instructor Drop

An instructor is permitted to drop students who fail to attend the first class meeting and who fail to inform the instructor *prior to the second class meeting* of the reason for any absence and the intention to continue in the class.

Timely Feedback

Providing full information to students increases student success. Instructors are, therefore, encouraged to provide students with their academic scores, opportunities to review their grade-dependent work, and explanations for the determination of their course grades within a reasonable time ([F13-1](#)).

Incomplete Grading Symbol ("I")

An Incomplete is appropriate when an instructor concludes that a clearly identifiable portion of course requirements cannot be met within the academic term for unforeseen reasons. The conditions for removal of the Incomplete shall be specified in writing by the instructor and given to the student. A faculty member may submit a letter grade to be assigned in the event the Incomplete is not made up within one year.

Clearing an incomplete grade does not permit retaking previously completed portions of the course, nor does it permit assignment of additional graded work (e.g., extra credit) that was not available to other students in the class ([S09-7](#)).

Group Projects or Assignments

If students working in groups will be assessing each other's performance and that assessment will be used to calculate the assignment or course grade, the method of assessment and its weight/percentage toward the assignment/final grade should be made clear in advance.

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Extra credit

The [grading policy \(S09-7\)](#) states that all students should be treated fairly and be given equal opportunities to demonstrate their academic learning and earn course grades representing that learning. It precludes the assignment of extra credit unless such assignments were made known and available to all students in the class.

If there is a cost associated with the extra credit offered, instructors are encouraged to provide a low-cost or no-cost alternative to students who inquire.

Final Examination, Evaluation, or Culminating Activity

Final examinations may be rescheduled if there are verifiable emergency circumstances or if a student has more than 2 exams scheduled within a 24-hour period. In the case of more than 2 exams, the student may request an alternative exam date from any one of the instructors at least three weeks prior to the last class meeting [\(S06-4\)](#).

Instructors who do not return final examination papers to the students should keep them on file for at least one year before destroying them [\(S06-4\)](#).

Explanation of Course Grade

Students are entitled to a timely explanation of how the posted course grades for a term were determined. "Timely" is defined as the later of 2 weeks after the request is made or one week before the add deadline for the following semester [\(S14-3\)](#).

Grade Disputes

Informal discussion between persons directly involved in the dispute is essential in the early stages of the resolution process and shall be encouraged at all stages. Students should first contact their instructor and arrange a meeting to discuss the grade. Instructors will then meet with the student in order to seek resolution of the issue or dispute through an informal discussion.

If an acceptable resolution is not reached, the student should contact the department chair or school director for assistance. The chair or director shall then meet with the student and attempt to mediate the situation [\(S14-3\)](#).

Academic Integrity

When a faculty member suspects a violation of the [Academic Integrity Policy \(F15-7\)](#) and is in possession of evidence to substantiate that violation it is the faculty member's responsibility to report the alleged infraction and the action taken to the Office of Student Conduct & Ethical Development using the [Academic Integrity Reporting Form](#).

Student Responsibilities & Rights

As members of the academic community, students accept both the rights and responsibilities incumbent upon all members of the institution (S16-5). Students are encouraged to consult the [Student Responsibilities and Rights](#) section of the SJSU Catalog to ensure an understanding of the resources, requirements, and programs designed to support students' academic and personal growth, as well as important university [policies and procedures](#) every student at SJSU is responsible for knowing and upholding.