



Academic Ombud

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- *informal* • *independent*

Fall 2018 Semester Academic Reminders

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Welcome back from summer break. At the University of Kentucky, our highest priority is an education that prepares students for personal success as leaders to improve the well-being of the Commonwealth, the Nation, and to effectively address global issues. Effective communication and transparency of processes are key ingredients in our ongoing efforts to improve student success, retention, and progress towards graduation.

Academic Ombud Services (AOS) is a confidential and impartial resource to assist students and faculty in resolving academic issues. This notice contains a few reminders as well as guidelines for issues that have come to the Ombud's attention. As well, links to various resources and relevant University Senate Rules (SR) that may be helpful to faculty are included. Should you have questions or concerns involving academic policies, please contact AOS at ombud@uky.edu or 859-257-3737. You may also visit our [website](http://www.uky.edu/ombud/) or our office at 109 Bradley Hall. Best wishes for a stimulating and successful semester.

- Topics:
1. New Title IV Compliance Requirements
 2. UHS Excused Absence Update
 3. DRC Accommodations
 4. Dead week issues
 5. Final exam reminders
 6. Excused absence during finals week for commencement ceremonies
 7. Retention of graded work

1. New Title IV Compliance Requirements

Last spring the University was made aware of federal regulations requiring that student attendance/engagement in classes must be confirmed early in the semester. The Provost's Office has provided the following summary regarding the new Title IV Regulations:

"Federal regulation mandates that federal financial aid funds (Title IV) may only be disbursed to students who are actually enrolled and engaged in coursework. This regulation mandates that institutions provide evidence of engagement early in each semester. Failure to provide evidence includes sizeable fees and fines for the university. To comply with this mandate, all instructors of undergraduate and graduate courses (including lab courses), independent studies, online courses, and research credit) will be required to confirm

student attendance or engagement in classes during the two-week period following the last day to add a class. For fall semester, 2018, the last day to add a course is August 28."

To comply with the new Title IV regulation, faculty will be required to report students for non-attendance/non-participation/non-engagement through the class roster in MyUK. Faculty only need to mark students that are not attending versus marking each student on the roster. If all students are attending, faculty can indicate this in one place on the roster. Once a student is marked for non-attendance/non-participation/non-engagement in the class roster, the student will be dropped from the class and from CANVAS with a grade symbol "NA". The student, faculty member, and advisor will be notified of the drop action via the ACT platform. If an undergraduate student drops below full-time, financial aid disbursement will be reduced. The drop will result in a 50% refund to the student. Courses dropped for non-attendance/non-participation/non-engagement will not appear on the student's transcript. If a student is adversely or unfairly impacted by the new requirements and forced to withdraw from a class, the student may seek relief through the tuition appeals process.

To summarize,

- The monitoring period will be from August 29 to September 5
- The reporting period will be from September 6 to September 12
- Instructors should report non-compliant students on the class roll accessed through MyUK

Specific questions regarding this policy should be directed to your college's Associate Dean or to the Registrar.

2. UHS Excused Absence Update

Tier 2 and Tier 3 University Health Service (UHS) forms for excused absences will now include both the date the student was seen in the clinic as well as the date the student made an appointment. Previously, UHS forms showed only the date when the student was seen in the clinic. Due to increased demand, UHS is not always able to see a student on the day the student requests an appointment. In response to this issue, UHS has revised the Tier 2 and 3 forms to include the date on which the UHS was contacted for an appointment as well as the date that the student was seen in the clinic. This should indicate that the student made a good faith attempt to be seen in UHS when there was a need for an excused absence due to illness. In the case where a student cannot be seen on the day they contact UHS due to an illness, the Academic Ombud Office recommends that instructors also accept the

date an appointment was made for a medically excused absence.

3. DRC Accommodations

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) serves students with a wide array of disabilities and provides students with a number of resources to aid in their academic success. The DRC seeks to facilitate an environment of inclusion and accessibility for students with disabilities to insure they receive equal opportunity and access to education and campus activities at the University of Kentucky. More information can be found on the DRC website at <https://www.uky.edu/DisabilityResourceCenter/>. DRC staff work with students to design accommodations that will aid students in their academic endeavors. In many cases students are provided with specific accommodations that frequently include:

- Classroom accommodations
- Accommodated exams (can be provided in the DRC Center Located on the fourth floor of the MDS building at 725 Rose Street)
- Flexibility with attendance policies and due dates for assignments

To develop a program of accommodations, students must meet with DRC staff to determine their needs. In all cases students will be provided with an accommodation letter that defines the specific accommodations that must be provided. Students must provide the accommodation letter to faculty in order to receive accommodations. We recommend that instructors remind their students during the first week of classes that any students requiring accommodations should meet with the instructor and provide them with a copy of their DRC accommodation letter. Students may download a pdf copy which can be provided to the instructor by email or they can print out a hard copy based on the instructor's preference.

We would like to remind faculty to be sure that all authorized accommodations are fully understood. The accommodations should be provided to the student in a discrete manner to avoid embarrassment to the student. If an instructor has questions regarding how to implement the accommodations, please contact the student's disability accommodations coordinator listed on the letter.

For students with accommodation requests related to flexibility with attendance and/or due dates, the DRC has developed an agreement form to assist in the determination of how this accommodation will be determined. The form, with guidance for the instructor included, is located on the faculty resources page of the DRC website. A copy is also provided to the student. Utilizing the guidelines, faculty can work with the student to develop an acceptable number of absences, how the absences will be communicated to the faculty and a plan for completing any missed/late assignments or tests. Please note this accommodation is not intended as a blanket excuse that allows the student to be absent an unlimited amount of time nor to allow open ended testing/assignment due date windows. If you believe a student is abusing this accommodation, please contact the student's DRC consultant.

We continue to see students with concerns regarding their DRC accommodations not being met. One common concern is that instructors discuss or mention the student's accommodations in front of the class. This breaches confidentiality as many student's accommodations are related to medical issues. Instructors are reminded to respect the student's privacy and only discuss DRC issues one-on-one, preferably during office hours.

As a reminder, students bear the responsibility to inform their instructors of their required accommodations. The DRC website has a document on its website outlining student responsibilities at https://www.uky.edu/DisabilityResourceCenter/sites/www.uky.edu/DisabilityResourceCenter/files/STUDENT%20RESPONSIBILITIES%20FALL%202016_0.pdf. Faculty who have students with DRC accommodations are encouraged to review this document.

Faculty with questions are encouraged to visit the DRC website at <https://www.uky.edu/DisabilityResourceCenter/> or directly contact the DRC at 859 257 2754 with any questions or concerns.

4. Dead Week Issues

There continue to be complaints from students that faculty are not conforming to the limits on Dead Week activities defined by [SR 5.2.4.6](#). As a reminder:

- No written exams or quizzes or final examinations may be scheduled during Dead Week
- Make-up exams or quizzes may be scheduled.
- No projects, lab practicals, papers, presentation deadlines or oral/listening examinations may be scheduled during Dead Week unless they were scheduled in the syllabus AND the course has no final examination (or assignment that acts as a final examination) scheduled during finals week.
- A course with a lab component may schedule the lab practical of the course during Dead Week if the lab portion does not also require a final examination during finals week.
- Graded homework that is a routine part of the course and is announced in the course syllabus may be assigned for submission during Dead Week.

Feel free to contact [AOS](#) if you have any questions regarding Dead Week.

5. Final Exam Reminders

During the past semester, students have raised concerns regarding final examination timing and duration. Final exams are governed by SR 5.2.4.7, 5.4.2.8, 5.4.2.8.1 and 5.2.4.9. First, SR 5.2.4.7 states that "*if an instructor is administering a final examination, and he or she is requiring students to take the exam in a particular place at a particular time, then he or she must administer the exam during the examination period scheduled by the Registrar.*" If faculty have a conflict with the Registrar's scheduled time period, SR 5.2.4.7 states that "*in the case of conflicts or undue*

hardship for an individual instructor, a final examination may be rescheduled at another time during the final examination period upon the recommendation of the chair of the department and with the concurrence of the dean of the college". Be aware that changing the scheduled time for a final exam requires the approval of the Department Chair and the Dean of the College. Moreover, for exams scheduled by the registrar, students may not be given extra time to take the exam. Students may not be given more than two hours to take a final exam.

Instructors may elect to give an exam for less than the two hours scheduled by the registrar. As specified in SR 5.2.4.7.C, "an instructor may allow students less than the full period scheduled by the Registrar to complete the final examination, but he or she must inform the students at least two weeks before the start of the examination how much time they will have to complete the examination". In this case it is critical that instructor inform the students as specified, preferably in writing. If the instructor knows at the beginning of the course, it would be best to include in the syllabus the length of time allowed for the final exam if it is to be less than two hours.

Regular exams given throughout the semester must be given during regularly schedule class periods unless the course has a common-hour exam scheduled.

6. Excused absence during finals week for commencement ceremonies

Faculty are reminded that graduating students who have a final exam scheduled during commencement have the right to have the exam rescheduled according to SR 5.2.4.7. For Fall Semester 2018, commencement is scheduled for Friday, December 14. Students are required to notify the "instructor no later than two weeks prior to the scheduled examination". The exam may be rescheduled "for another time agreed to by the Instructor of Record during the final examination period". Faculty teaching courses with upper level students are encouraged to remind students early in the course that they must file a request to reschedule an exam that conflicts with commencement by the two-week deadline, which this Fall will be by Friday, November 30.

7. Retention of graded work

The Ombud Office has received inquiries regarding how long graded work should be retained if it is not returned to the student. Senate Rule 7.2.2 requires that faculty retain papers, exams, etc. not returned to students for 180 days. However, Senate Rule 5.1.7 states that professors may change a student's grade for one year if the grade is in error. Additionally, though students have 180 days to appeal a grade, there are circumstances which would allow the Ombud to waive the 180-day limit for a grade appeal (e.g., military service, serious illness, family hardship, etc.). Therefore, we strongly recommend that instructors hold all graded work not returned to students for at least one year.

Additionally, the Ombud Office has encountered situations where instructors, including graduating TAs, have left the University creating a problem for access to graded and

course materials. Please be aware that SR 7.2.2 requires that all "student records and grading policy procedures including roll books, syllabi and attendance records (if applicable)-or copies of this information-shall be on file with the instructor or the department office whenever the instructor will no longer be available".

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LINKS:

[The Course Syllabus](#)
[Academic Offense Policy](#)
[Accommodation of Religious Observances](#)
[Accommodations for Students with Disabilities](#)
[Dead Week](#)
[Final Examinations](#)
[Cheating During Examinations](#)
[Class Records & Papers](#)
[Course Evaluations](#)
[Cancellation of Classes](#)