Graduate Student Graders – SAFES

Guidelines

Thank you for agreeing to serve as the grader for a SAFES course. The assignment was made on the basis of class size and number of sections. The individual faculty member you’re assigned to assist will give you specific instructions about how he/she wants grading to be done. The following are some general guidelines in addition to more specifics from the faculty member:

* The first thing you need to do is meet with the faculty member and get a copy of the syllabus; look at the goals, objectives, grading procedures and schedule of events.
* You will likely be expected to attend all class meetings and to help proctor exams.
* If you have a conflict on any particular day, let the instructor know as soon as possible; unavoidable personal (illness, family emergency) or professional (presentation at a meeting) are acceptable excuses but other personal events are not.
* Make sure that you know early in the semester what will be expected of you with regard to timeliness of grading, etc.
* Ask to be included in the instructor section of the Blackboard course setup so that you receive all correspondence to the students about the course and can also access the grade book and email distribution list.

**Conflict Resolution** – In teaching situations, there is always potential for disagreements.

* In the case of conflict with a student, it should be immediately brought to the attention of the faculty member in charge of the course.
* Conflicts with the course instructor should first be addressed with that instructor and, failing resolution, taken to the Graduate Program Coordinator; unresolved issues will involve the School Director.
* Don’t let situations fester. You also have access to the college dean’s office and student ombudsperson if the issue cannot be resolved locally; however, these are secondary avenues in the event that others fail.

**Privacy, Friends and Amorous Relationships** –

* The Family Education Rights and Privacy (FERPA, 20 U.S.C. section 1232g) (<http://www.clemson.edu/privacypolicy.html> ) applies to public and private institutions. It provides students with certain rights with respect to their educational records. This affects how we post/distribute grades and corrected quizzes and exams.
  + As an instructor in the course, you and the faculty member may discuss grades and other student issues. It is essential for you to maintain confidentiality and professionalism toward everyone in the class.
* Personal relationships with students in your class:
  + <http://www.clemson.edu/administration/student-affairs/student-handbook/universitypolicies/amorous-relationships.html>
  + When relationships go beyond friendship, especially in the classroom or workplace, they have the potential to morph into something damaging to all concerned.
  + A teacher, instructor, or GTA, is perceived as having power or authority over students. Clemson University’s brochure, “Sexual Harassment What You Need to Know,” specifically includes graduate students (GTA, GRA, etc) in the policy.
  + Even if both parties agree (now) to a relationship, it may become problematic later if the relationship doesn’t work out. In addition, others observing the relationship may be uncomfortable and have the right to file a complaint. It’s best by far to avoid this situation.

**Students with Disabilities** – Some of our students will present the instructor with a confidential letter from Clemson’s Student Disabilities Services Center (Redfern Health Center). This letter may list specific criteria that we should incorporate into our teaching or assessment for this student. These accommodations are required under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. We will try to work with each of these students to provide an environment conducive to teaching and assessment. If these accommodations become problematic, discuss them with the faculty member in charge of the course.

**Academic Integrity (Dishonesty, cheating)**

* <http://www.clemson.edu/academics/academic-integrity/index.html>
* If you believe that a student has violated Clemson’s Academic Integrity Policy (cheating, plagiarism, giving unauthorized aid to another) you should immediately bring the allegation to the attention of the faculty in charge of the course.
* The faculty member will discuss with you the evidence and situation to determine whether a formal written charge of academic dishonesty should be filed.
* It is the responsibility of the faculty member to decide the course of action and follow-through (resolution) to any alleged incident of academic dishonesty.

**Safety and Emergences** – In SAFES, some work with animals, equipment, and situations that can be hazardous. We need to make sure that we look out for the welfare and safety of ourselves and our students.

* All GTAs should have completed any training required by Clemson’s compliance committees with respect to animals, hazardous material, or recombinant DNA use (ask the faculty member in charge of the course what training is required or appropriate).
* In the event of a medical or other emergency – Immediately call 9-1-1. In a medical emergency clear the area and keep the patient calm and quiet. Send someone to help direct the EMTs to the lab.
* Do not administer first aid unless you have been certified to perform these functions. In the event of a fire: activate the fire alarm system, clear the lab / building and call 9-1-1.

**Final words** – The concepts of professionalism, respect, patience, common sense and knowledge are intimately intertwined and integral in the teaching process. You will need a healthy dose of all of these attributes this semester. We hope that you have an enjoyable and rewarding teaching experience.