

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Faculty and All Instructors

From: Jeanette Taylor 
Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement

Date: 2026-2027 Academic Year

Subject: Important Policies

As the new academic year begins, I want to direct your attention to several important academic and general policies and procedures that govern your teaching, research, and service activities.

The following websites contain additional important information:

- [Office of Faculty Development and Advancement](#)
- [FSU Faculty Handbook](#)
- [Florida State University General Bulletin](#)
- [FSU Regulations and Policies](#)
- [FSU Office of Research](#)
- [The FSU Board of Trustees and The United Faculty of Florida Collective Bargaining Agreement](#)
- [FSU Academic Calendars](#)
- [Faculty Portal](#) (single point of access for online applications)
- [How to Navigate myFSU Portal](#)
- [Classroom Technology Support](#)
- [FSU International Travel Policies for Faculty/Staff and Students](#)
- [FSU Visiting Scholar/Researcher Policy](#)

Special Notes:

Simple Syllabus

Simple Syllabus is a centralized, online syllabus management platform that allows faculty to personalize and publish course syllabi. Syllabi are published in web, print, and mobile friendly formats that comply with federal accessibility requirements. Published syllabi appear in Canvas course sites, the FSU Syllabus Library, and the personalized Simple Syllabus Student portal. Faculty can access Simple Syllabus through their course Canvas site or directly by logging into <https://fsu.simplesyllabus.com>.

Per Florida Board of Governors Regulation 8.003 and FSU Regulation 5.098, syllabi must be created and published 45 days prior to beginning of the upcoming semester for course components of Lecture,

Discussion, Lab, or Medicine. Further guidance, resources, and deadlines can be found at <https://fda.fsu.edu/simple-syllabus-fsu>. The university template within Simple Syllabus must be used for all course syllabi and can be found at the prior mentioned website.

Over the past year, the role that AI plays in our lives has significantly increased. Students across campus use AI in meaningful ways when encouraged by faculty in appropriate settings. However, AI may not be allowed for some assignments for understandable reasons. To avoid confusion, we strongly recommend that faculty, adjunct instructors, and teaching assistants make it very clear in course syllabi when the use of AI is appropriate or not allowed to complete course assignments.

Accessibility of Course Materials

Instructors must ensure their digital course content meets federal web accessibility standards. The university will be held accountable by the federal government for the accessibility of digital course materials such as Canvas pages, slides, images, audio and video recordings, documents, readings, textbooks, assignments, handouts, and syllabi by April 26, 2027. The Office of Digital Learning and Academic Technology provides resources, tools, and training to assist instructors with course content accessibility. Visit <https://digitalaccessibility.fsu.edu> to learn more.

General University Policies

1. Outside Employment/Conflict of Interest

Florida State University encourages faculty and staff members to undertake outside activities that will increase the employee's professional reputation and service to the community, subject to certain conditions. If an outside activity is undertaken, the faculty/staff member must take reasonable precautions to ensure that the outside employer or other recipient of services understands that they are engaging in such outside activity as a private citizen and not as an employee, agent, or spokesperson of the University. A faculty member must not engage in any outside activity that creates a conflict of interest or interferes with the full performance of their academic responsibilities in the classroom or in other assigned responsibilities.

Faculty members who plan to engage in outside activity must report that activity at the beginning of each academic year, faculty members shall review Article 19.4, FSU [BOT-UFF Collective Bargaining Agreement](#), and report any outside activity through the [Conflict Administration and Management System](#) (CAMS).

2. Dual Compensation

Dual compensation is defined as compensation from the University for any duties (including work activities previously designated as overload) in excess of a full appointment (1.0 FTE). Dual compensation appointments within the University shall be offered equitably and as appropriate to qualified faculty members in sufficient time to allow voluntary acceptance or rejection. Such employment must meet all of the following conditions:

- a. Duties and responsibilities of an overload appointment shall be compensated through OPS, not Salary.
- b. No faculty member shall be required to accept a dual compensation appointment. Dual compensation appointments shall be offered to qualified faculty members before anyone who is not a faculty member.
- c. Approval by the Dean or Director of both the primary and secondary employing unit is required. Approval must be requested and granted prior to the dual compensation appointment and/or the performance of any work with the secondary employer;
- d. Does not interfere with the regular work of the faculty member for the primary department;
- e. Does not result in any conflict of interest between the two activities.

The following circumstances do not qualify as dual compensation:

- f. When there is no other active appointment during the period of the dual compensation appointment.
- g. Additional duties assigned in the same department. These may be handled through a temporary salary increase. (See Additional/One-Time Pay Form.)
- h. A one-time pay when no other new appointment is needed.

This procedure shall not be used to avoid the payment of over-time as required by the Fair Labor Standards Act. Also note that requests for dual compensation that bring a faculty member's total FTE above 1.25 require additional justification. Requests for overloads that require excessive time commitments will not be approved.

3. [Anti-Sexual Misconduct Policy](#)

The University's comprehensive Anti- Sexual Misconduct Policy (FSU Policy 2-2) is based on the idea that all forms of gender-based discrimination and sexual misconduct violate the University's standards, which recognize the dignity and worth of each person. The Policy defines sexual harassment and misconduct; informs members of the community regarding expected standards of conduct; differentiates between "Responsible Employees" (including faculty members), who must report alleged violations, and "Confidential University Representatives," who can discuss related concerns with students on a confidential basis; describes reporting and investigatory mechanisms to resolve alleged violations of the Policy; provides information about rights for complainants and respondents; and outlines resources for those affected by sexual harassment and misconduct.

The University's [KnowMore website](#) serves as a reference to important information and resources related to Title IX.

4. Alcohol and Illicit Drug Policy

[FSU Alcohol Policy, Regulation 6.012](#) delineates where and under what circumstances alcohol is permitted on campus. Please note that specific approval from the appropriate administrative designee is required to serve alcohol in areas that are not designated for special events by the University.

For faculty events, the designee is the Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement; for student groups, the designee is the Vice President for Student Affairs; and for all other groups, the designee is the University Relations Office.

The policy also includes a clear statement of the standards of conduct that prohibit unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol on Florida State University's property as part of its activities; a description of the health risks associated with the use of illicit drugs and the abuse of alcohol; a description of the legal sanctions under local, state, and federal law; a description of applicable counseling, treatment, and rehabilitation/re-entry programs; and a clear statement of the disciplinary sanctions the institution will impose on students and employees.

5. Faculty Member Seeking Advanced Degree at Florida State University

No tenure-track faculty member is permitted to work toward an advanced degree at the University. This policy applies to the ranks of assistant professor, associate professor, and professor. Exceptions are made when the faculty member already holds a terminal degree in their field and wants to pursue another Ph.D. in a different field or pursue a less advanced degree than the degree the faculty member holds (e.g., a faculty member holding a Ph.D. may pursue a Master's).

6. Faculty Absences

A faculty member who is absent because of illness or for other legitimate reasons must notify their department chair/director or academic dean as soon as possible in order to make arrangements for the meeting of classes and the performance of other scheduled activities. Sick leave should be taken for any illness-related absences.

7. International Policies

The [FSU Global website](#) provides information on the various internationalization efforts at FSU, both on-campus and abroad. The sections with the FSU policies and procedures relating to [visiting scholars/researchers](#), [international travel by faculty/staff](#), and [international travel by students](#), and other international activities are particularly important to review since many updates have occurred.

8. [FEAS Update Policy](#)

Florida State University requires all faculty to maintain an updated curriculum vitae in the [Faculty Enhancement and Advancement System \(FEAS\)](#). CVs should be updated annually. Maintaining a CV in another CV management system, even a system used by your department, college, or professional organization, may not substitute for maintaining an updated CV in FEAS. Article 10.10 (f), FSU [BOT-UFF Collective Bargaining Agreement](#) requires the use of FEAS when compiling a portion of the materials faculty must submit for Post Tenure Review.

Teaching Policies

In this section, the term instructor of record will be used to refer to individuals who are primarily responsible for instruction of a course including faculty, adjunct instructors, and graduate teaching assistants.

1. Required Minimal Canvas Usage

All instructors teaching through any means (face-to-face, online, remotely, hybrid) are required to use a university approved Learning Management System (LMS) for the following purposes: (1) distributing and storing the student course syllabus along with any syllabus updates, and (2) posting all course grades. All grades must be maintained in a way that ensures FERPA compliance. The Canvas gradebook meets this requirement. Final grades may be submitted via the Canvas grade upload tool or directly entered via Grade Roster in my.fsu.edu. Please note that individual departments, schools, and colleges may require use of other features of any university-approved, FERPA-compliant reporting tool for which the university has a contract. The following types of courses are an exception to the Required Minimal Canvas Usage: individual academic experiences such as internships, directed independent study (DIS), supervised research, supervised teaching, preliminary examinations, and thesis or dissertation credits.

Instructors of record are also strongly encouraged to use Canvas for posting announcements, using the calendar for informing students of deadlines for submitting work, providing access to course materials, and scheduling meetings. Doing so will also allow for uniformity across students' course loads and facilitate the process of making up course work missed because of illness and other excused absences. Using the [FSU Emergency Module](#) in Canvas can make course delivery more resilient in emergencies of all kinds.

Contact the [Office of Digital Learning Canvas Support Center](#) for technical assistance or training on the use of Canvas.

2. First Class Meeting Attendance Policy

The University "Required First Class Meeting Attendance Policy" requires all students to attend the first class meeting of all courses for which they are registered. Students who do not attend the

first class meeting of a course for which they are registered will be dropped from the course by the academic department offering the course. In order to enforce this policy, instructors of record are required to take attendance during the first class meeting and either record attendance using the first day attendance tool or report absences to the appropriate person in their department/school or college. For information on how to use the Attendance Roster Tool in Student Central, please go to [Use of Attendance Roster Tool help page](#).

For further information about the Required First Class Meeting Attendance Policy, consult the [FSU General Bulletin](#). Please note that some colleges and special programs have more stringent requirements for class attendance.

3. Class Attendance

Enrollment and Attendance

Until a student is officially enrolled in a course, they are not permitted to attend class, submit assignments, or take tests. Exceptions are limited to students making up work for a prior grade of Incomplete in the course. Individuals who plan to audit a class must submit appropriate audit requests through the Office of the Registrar.

Students must attend the section of the course for which they are registered. Instructors do not have the authority to permit a student to shift from one course section to another without following official drop/add procedures. No student may drop a course after the seventh week of classes without the permission of the academic dean.

Absences

Each instructor of record decides what effect unexcused absences will have on grades and will explain class attendance and grading policies in the course syllabus. In accordance with the Faculty Senate University Attendance Policy, "Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid written excuse. Considerations will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness." This means that students with valid excused absences must be given the opportunity to make up all graded work missed and earn the corresponding grade.

Official University activities include official events at which the student is representing the University, such as athletic competitions and academic activities sponsored by a student's academic department or college. Registered Student Organization (RSO) and Greek Life activities are not considered official university activities. The current list of Registered Student Organizations can be found at: <https://soi.fsu.edu/registered-student-organizations>.

All students are expected to abide by each instructor's class attendance policy. When possible, students must also provide advance notice of absences as well as relevant documentation regarding absences to the instructor as soon as possible following the illness or event that led to an absence. Any arrangement to make up graded work because of an excused absence is the responsibility of the student.

Communicable Diseases Note: Instructors of record are encouraged to be flexible in accepting documentation from students who have tested positive for illness, such as the flu, to encourage students who are infectious to stay home.

University Health Services (UHS) Note: Instructors of record may accept visit verification documentation from UHS or another medical provider if the student was treated there. UHS will not issue visit verification documentation for students who were not treated at the UHS. Instructors should not require students to obtain documentation from UHS if they were not treated there. Please encourage students to notify the instructor if they are ill prior to missing class or assignment deadlines.

4. Instructor-Authored Textbooks

When a textbook (written by the instructor of the course, by a relative of the instructor, or by a team of authors that includes the instructor) is required for a course and the author/instructor anticipates receiving textbook royalties of more than \$500 in one year from students enrolled in their course, it is considered a conflict of interest (Section 112.313, Florida Statutes). The author/instructor must request permission to use their textbook under these circumstances from the President in writing, through the Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement, prior to the use of the textbook.

The request must include:

- A statement that royalties from required textbook purchased by students in the course at FSU are anticipated to exceed \$500 in one year;
- An estimate of how many students per year will enroll in the course where the textbook is required; and
- Justification of the unique suitability of the textbook for use in the course.

If the expected annual royalty income is \$500 or less, no request is required.

5. Textbook and Instructional Material Adoption

The Florida Legislature requires state universities to:

- Post on their websites a list of textbooks and instructional materials required or recommended for each course section; and

- Include as part of the list the titles, all authors listed, publishers, edition numbers, copyright dates, published dates, and other information necessary to identify the specific textbook/instructional materials required or recommended for the course; and
- Post on their websites syllabi for courses designated as a general education core course option per section 1007.25(3), Florida Statutes, 45 days prior to the first day of class for each term.
- Compliance with the state law is reported to both the FSU Board of Trustees and the Florida Board of Governors.

Florida State University is committed to improving education access and affordability through innovative approaches intended to reduce textbook and instructive material costs for students. For more information, see [Regulation FSU 5.098, Textbook Adoption and Affordability](#).

6. Americans with Disabilities Act and the FSU Office of Accessibility Services

Each instructor of record has the responsibility to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The FSU Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) provides letters authorizing specific accommodations for individual students; secure, reduced distraction testing sites; and other services to students as well as consultation to instructors. Information regarding ADA requirements may be found on the [Office of Accessibility Services website](#).

7. Academic Honor Policy

The University has an [Academic Honor Policy](#) that calls for the coordinated efforts of instructors and students to uphold academic integrity and combat academic dishonesty. A copy of the policy and all necessary forms can be found at <https://academicintegrity.fsu.edu/>.

Instructors of records should remind students at the beginning of the term that they are bound by the Academic Honor Policy in all their academic work. The FSU Syllabus Template includes an Academic Honor Policy statement and link. Instructors should clearly state their expectations in the course syllabus about three specific areas of the policy:

- Defining course assessments/assignments as individual or collaborative/group work,
- Defining whether multiple submissions of the same materials from other classes are permitted, and
- Clearly stating if and when AI can be used for the completion of course assessments/assignments.

8. Incomplete Grade Policy

The University has a very specific [Incomplete Grade Policy](#). The grade of Incomplete ("I") should be recorded only in exceptional cases when a student, who has completed a substantial portion of

the course and who is otherwise passing, is unable to complete a well-defined portion of a course for reasons beyond their control. The grade of Incomplete should not be granted in order to allow students to do extra coursework in an effort to increase their grades.

Even when a student can document exceptional circumstances, the authority for determining whether to grant a grade of Incomplete rests solely with the instructor, or a Graduate Teaching Assistant's faculty supervisor. One exception to this guideline occurs when an "Incomplete" is applied as a result of allegations of academic dishonesty that have not been resolved by the end of a semester.

Instructors are strongly encouraged to utilize the [Incomplete Grade Agreement](#) form when assigning a grade of "I." Instructors must assign both a timeframe for resolution and a default grade when granting an "Incomplete." For more information, please consult the [FSU General Bulletin](#).

9. Grade Appeals System

The purpose of the [FSU Grade Appeals System](#) is to afford an opportunity for an undergraduate or graduate student to appeal a final course grade under certain circumstances. Faculty judgment of students' academic performance is inherent in the grading process and hence should not be overturned except when the student can show that the grade awarded represents a gross violation of the instructor's own specified evaluation (grading) statement and therefore was awarded in an arbitrary, capricious, or discriminatory manner. The evaluation (grading) statement utilized during the grade appeals process is the one contained in the instructor's syllabus at the beginning of the semester. This system does not apply to preliminary or comprehensive exams or to thesis or dissertation defenses; when necessary, these issues are reviewed via the General Academic Appeals process.

10. University Final Examination Policy

Each semester's final exam schedule can be found in the [University Registrar's website](#). The University Final Examination Policy is explained under each semester's exam schedule, such as on the [Fall 2026 Exam Schedule](#).

11. Course Evaluations

The [Student Perception of Courses and Instructors](#) (SPCI) survey is one among several components of the teaching evaluation. Faculty Senate policy requires that all instructors administer official course evaluations in all graduate courses with enrollments of five or more students, and in all undergraduate courses with ten or more students during the academic year (fall and spring semesters). In courses with lower enrollments than those designated, administration of official course evaluations is not recommended due to concerns over the

anonymity and representativeness of responses. All student course evaluations are administered online by the Office of Digital Learning and Academic Technologies.

12. Religious Holy Days Policy

The policy is intended to delineate what rights must be granted to students who wish to observe a religious holy day. Because instructors have the authority to set overall attendance policy, they may choose to grant additional flexibility to students. **Instructors should avoid scheduling important academic assessments during holy days typically observed by students.**

- Please refer to the [Religious Holy Days Calendar](#) for a comprehensive list of religions and faiths.
- Each student shall, upon notifying their instructor as soon as possible upon receipt of the course syllabus, but no later than two weeks before the religious holy day observance, be excused from class to observe a religious holy day of their faith.
- While the student will be held responsible for the material covered in his or her absence, each student shall be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make up the work missed.
- Instructors and University administrators shall in no way arbitrarily penalize students who are absent from academic or social activities because of religious holy day observance.

A Florida State University faculty member who wishes to observe a religious holy day shall notify the department chair, school director, or dean as soon as possible so that arrangements may be made for the meeting of classes and the performance of other scheduled activities.

13. Office Hours

Every member of the faculty must post and honor specific office hours (day and time) each semester in which they teach classes. Instructors should notify students of scheduled office hours on the course syllabus. While University policy does not set a minimum number of hours per week, standard practice has established that there be at least one hour per week for a minimum classroom teaching load.

14. Copyright/Fair Use

There is an educational “fair use” exemption to the copyright law for classroom use of excerpts of copyrighted materials. These excerpts must be brief and are limited to one chapter, an article from a periodical or newspaper, a short story or essay, or a chart, cartoon, diagram, picture or the like. Moreover, the material may only be used for a single class and may not be developed into a permanent classroom document. An exception would be when a copyright release is obtained from the copyright holder. Further information concerning copyright and fair use may be found in the [FSU Faculty Handbook](#) and at the FSU Libraries [Copyright Resources](#).

Research Policies

[The Office of Research](#) provides information on [research compliance policies and procedures](#) as well as current research funding, training, and workshop opportunities that will assist you with your scholarly research and creative activities. Please pay special attention to the policy on [Misconduct in Research, Creative Activity and Scholarship](#) ([FSU Policy 7A-2](#)).

Conclusion

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the [Office of Faculty Development and Advancement](#) for information about a wide range of issues relevant to faculty members and other instructors.