

2 General Policies and Procedures

This portion of the Handbook explains general policies and procedures of the University and the Department regarding attendance, placement, student conduct, assessment and grading policies, plagiarism, appeals, deadlines and make-ups, and computer use.

2.1 Attendance and “FE” Policy

The University has guidelines relating to attendance in freshman courses. These guidelines reflect the University’s belief that class attendance is “an obligation as well as a privilege” (Xavier 38). The University Catalog states that the University expects students to attend classes “regularly and punctually.” The University has the following expectations of students regarding attendance:

- a) Students absent for any reason are responsible for what they have missed in the course.
- b) Students are expected to complete the full work of the course, regardless of the reason or cause for absence.
- c) Students are responsible for making arrangements with the instructor to make up missed work, if there are legitimate and extraordinary documented reasons for the absence.
- d) Students absent from class for five (5) consecutive days are to notify the Dean and present appropriate documentation.

The instructor of a course is expected to do the following:

- Keep accurate records of attendance.
- Report to the Registrar when a student has missed five (5) consecutive classes, or when a student has exceeded the number of excessive absences for a freshman course.

The “FE” or “Failure for Excessive Absences” policy pertains to freshman courses (1000 level). According to the Catalog, absences are considered excessive when “the number of absences exceeds the number of times the class meets per week.” In other words, in a course that meets three days a week, the number of excessive absences would be more than six (6). For a class that meets four days a week, the number of excessive absences would be more than four (4).

It is usually good policy for an instructor to keep students abreast of the number absences they have in a course, especially a freshman course. Some instructors will give warnings to students as they come near the limit of excessive absences, especially in freshman courses.

It is not recommended, however, to base grading on attendance. Students can be given an “FE” only for excessive absences, but a final grade cannot be lowered if a student has missed too much class but not met the number of excessive absences. Instructors can have “participation grades,” but these should be based on the student’s daily participation in the course—not on whether the student was in class or not. It has

been found, however, those students who do not attend a class regularly cannot participate effectively.

2.2 Assessment Standards

The University uses a standard 4.0 grade point average—letter grade system, as seen below.

Grading Scale

| Grade | Evaluation | Quality Points |
|-------|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| A | Excellent | 4 |
| B | Good | 3 |
| C | Average | 2 |
| D | Passing | 1 |
| F | Failure | 0 |
| FE | Failure because of excessive absence* | 0 |
| W | Withdrawal | 0 |
| I | Incomplete | 0 |
| W\$ | Failure | 0 |

*See section above.

The grade of “W” is given when a student withdraws from a course on or before the last day to withdraw (from the beginning of the semester up until one week after midterm). Students withdraw by filling out a withdrawal form, getting signatures from the instructor and advisor, paying a \$10.00 fee at the Cashier’s office, and submitting the form and receipt to the Registrar’s office. A student should withdraw no more than one week after he/she stops attending classes or he/she may fail the course for excessive absences.

The grade of “I” (incomplete) should only be given on **very rare occasions** when some moral or physical impossibility prevents a student from completing the course requirements promptly. Negligence is no excuse for an incomplete grade, and in such circumstances the student should receive a grade of “F.” The Dean’s approval is required for an “I” grade. An “I,” unless changed before the sixth week of the semester following the one in which it is incurred, becomes an “F.” An “I” incurred during the spring semester must be changed by the end of the summer semester.

The grade of W\$ is designated by the University when a student has not fulfilled his/her financial obligation to the University. This grade appears as the final grade of the student. The instructor may change this grade if the student has fulfilled the obligation before the final examination is given (or final papers/portfolios/grades submitted). A student with a grade of W\$ must show the instructor a **clearance card** in order to receive a final grade.

2.2.1 Criteria for Grading Papers

The Department of English has developed Criteria for Grading Papers that coincides with the grading scale used by the University. While instructors do have the right to develop their own criteria, it is recommended that their criteria follow the

Department and University criteria in some general fashion. The criteria below is for assessing the product of writing; the Department of English supports the process of writing which can also be assessed separate from the product. Notice that emphasis is primarily on theme development and support.

The “A” Paper

The “A” paper displays originality of thought in stating and developing a central idea. The material should, therefore, be presented in a clear, logical, and thought-provoking manner. Also, the “A” paper should contain all the positive qualities of “good” writing:

- a) Unified and well developed paragraphs.
- b) Effective word choice and phrases.
- c) Focus on a main purpose, with adequate development and firm support.
- d) Use of a variety of sentence patterns.
- e) No major grammatical or spelling errors.

The “B” Paper

The “B” paper has a clearly stated central purpose and should be logically and adequately developed. Its ideas should be clear since it must contain some of the qualities of “good” writing as listed above. It is comparatively free of errors in the use of Standard Written English. The “B” paper must indicate competence, but it will lack the originality of thought and style which characterizes the “A” paper.

The “C” Paper

The average paper usually receives a grade of “C.” It has a central idea that is organized clearly enough to convey its purpose to the reader. It may not contain serious grammatical or structural errors. It may, in fact, have few correction marks on it, but it may lack depth of thought and expression.

The “D” Paper

The grade of “D” indicates below-average achievement in expressing ideas clearly, correctly, and effectively. Most “D” papers will fail to express a central idea or to develop one adequately.

The “F” Paper

The “D” and “F” papers indicate unsatisfactory work. The “F” grade, however, usually indicates numerous serious grammatical and structural errors. In addition, the “F” paper will contain **none** of the requirements listed in the above types of papers.

2.3 Student Conduct

The University expects Xavier students to act as a community of mature people. In the classroom, the instructor has the responsibility of maintaining an atmosphere which is conducive to student learning and analytical thinking. The student has the responsibility of acting in a mature way that is also conducive to learning.

Students are also responsible for learning the norms of good conduct that are listed in the *Student Handbook*. A student who conducts undesirable behavior in a classroom cannot use the excuse of ignorance.

When a student disrupts the classroom environment, the instructor should take the following steps:

1. Ask the student to cease the disruptive behavior.
2. If the behavior continues, confront the student privately and indicate that if the behavior is continued, the student will be reported to the Director of Composition and/or Department Chair. Indicate that there are consequences for undesirable behavior in the classroom and refer the student to the *Student Handbook*.
3. If the behavior persists, bring the incidents to the attention of the Director of Composition and/or Department Chair. The appropriate party will then take action.

Please note that any form of harassment from a student should be reported immediately to the Director of Composition and/or Department Chair.

Students have the right to appeal disciplinary actions by going to the Director of Composition, Department Chair and/or the Dean of Arts and Sciences.

2.4 Placement

Student placement in English courses is determined primarily by scores on either the ACT or SAT college entrance exams, as shown below:

| Course | ACT Score | SAT Score |
|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| English 0990 | 18 and Below | 399 and Below |
| English 1010 | 19 - 26 | 400 - 559 |
| English 1023H | 27 and Above | 560 and Above |

Students placed in English 0990 (Preparatory English) have the additional opportunity to advance to English 1010 (English Composition and Rhetoric) by taking the *Test of Standard Written English* (TSWE) during orientation. Students who make a passing score on this exam as determined by the Admissions office are registered for English 1010 during freshman registration.

English 0990 students also have the opportunity for movement to English 1010 during the first week of classes when they are asked to write a diagnostic essay. The Director of Composition provides topics for this essay to all English 0990 instructors. Instructors then read the essays to determine if a student has the writing skills to successfully complete English 1010. Essays determined to be of such quality are then brought to the consideration of the Director of Freshman Composition. If the Director agrees with the instructor, the students are instructed to meet with the Department Chair to be enrolled into an existing English 1010 course.

Placement into English 1023H (Honors English) can be petitioned by a student with a high ACT or SAT score that is only one or two points below the cutoff. The petitioner should have a high school grade point average of at least 3.5.

2.5 Deadlines/Make-ups

The instructor of a course may set and enforce his/her own deadlines and requirements for makeups. It is advised that instructors state their policies on deadlines and make-ups in the syllabus for the course. Students are responsible for all work missed in a course because of absence. Arrangements for making up missed work, examinations, and deadlines are negotiated between the instructor and the student. **It is the student's responsibility, however, to make sure such arrangements are made—not the instructor's.**

2.6 Plagiarism

University policy states that students who commit plagiarism are subject to “disciplinary sanctions resulting in suspension, dismissal, or expulsion from the University.” The definition of plagiarism used by the Department is as follows:

A student who submits as his/her own work a paper which is in any part taken from another person's writing without proper acknowledgement, use of quotation marks, credits, etc., is guilty of plagiarism. Students who submit plagiarized work will be dismissed from the course, given an “F” as a final grade, and reported to the appropriate dean.

However, students do not always commit plagiarism intentionally. Students who are writing research papers for the first time and are unfamiliar with the practices of summary, paraphrase, and direct quotation often commit unintentional plagiarism. Students will also piece together papers using phrases and sentences from different sources without acknowledging or properly paraphrasing those sources. The instructor should do his/her best to alleviate such plagiarism through instruction and proofreading/revision exercises.

Also, in the case of penalty for plagiarism, it is not recommended that a student fail the course for a first instance of plagiarism. Failing the assignment (unless it is a major research project) is usually warning enough.

2.7 Grievances & Appeals

Students have the right to appeal grades and express grievances concerning instructors. The process for either begins with the student expressing his/her concern to the instructor. If the student is not satisfied with the result of this meeting, he/she can then appeal to the Department Chair. It is recommended that the student and instructor have evidence to support their claims. If once again the student receives what he/she perceives to be unsatisfactory results, he/she can then appeal to the Dean of Arts and Sciences. The student can continue to appeal, if he/she wishes, to the Vice President of Academic Affairs. Decisions made by the VPAA concerning grades/grievances are final.

2.8 Computer Use Policy

The University has a number of computer laboratories on campus available for students to have access to technology. This includes access to word-processing, email, and the Internet, as well as library and research databases. The general guidelines for using these services are listed below. More information can be found at <http://www.xula.edu/itc/use.htm>.

Each individual is issued an account on the university computer system and is responsible for the use of those resources and for reading and understanding the policies. Users should understand that information technology resources are limited and proper respect for others' work is required. Users must abide by any laboratory or resource-specific policies. Consult the Information Technology Center or Laboratory Coordinator(s) for details on the policies relevant to a specific resource.

Some sample misuses of information technology resources include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Sharing a computer account. Passwords may not be shared with anyone.
- Unauthorized use of computing resources and files, including the release of viruses or worms.
- Use of another user's account.
- Use of information technology resources for personal consulting or profit making.
- Altering software or hardware configurations.
- Using information technology resources to harass others.
- Violation of software licensing agreements.
- Misrepresenting your identity when communicating.
- Deliberate waste and/or unfair monopolization of information technology resources.

Although system administrators are co-owners of all user files, the University recognizes that faculty, staff, and students have a substantial interest in privacy with regard to their computing activities, even when those activities involve University business.

The University will not monitor user transactions or the contents of user files as a routine matter. It will respond to legal process. It may inspect without notice the contents of files in the course of an investigation triggered by indications of impropriety or as necessary to resolve system problems or to locate substantive University-related information that is not available by some less intrusive means.

It is a violation of University policy for any employee, including system administrators and supervisors, to use the computing systems to satisfy idle curiosity about the affairs of others, with no substantial purpose for obtaining access to the files or communications of others.

If an individual misuses information technology resources, then the appropriate procedures that exist in current University policy handbooks, e.g., Student Handbook, Faculty Handbook, or Staff Handbook, will apply. Penalties may include the loss of all information technology privileges.