

Instructional Guidelines for the Faculty in the College of Liberal Arts

Rationale

To provide a baseline document for departments to develop guidelines and policies specific to the disciplines and needs of faculty and students. Faculty should consult Tenure and Promotion policies (<http://www.mtsu.edu/provost/tenpro/index.php>) and workload guidelines (<http://mtsu.edu/provost/forms/wkguide.pdf>) for information about the full scope of responsibilities as the guidelines below address instruction only and serve only as a minimum expectation.

1. **Meeting Classes.** Faculty members are expected to meet classes as scheduled. When unforeseen circumstances, such as illness, prevent this, faculty members are responsible for arranging equivalent alternative instruction for the class period he/she cannot meet. Such cancellations must not be routine. Students and the Chair of the department must be informed of any faculty absence in writing.
Furthermore, Classes should start and end on time and follow the Academic Freedom and Responsibility Policy ([MTSU Policy 201](#)) and the Student Rights and Freedoms policy ([MTSU Policy 302](#)) with respect to relevant content.
2. **Course Syllabus.** The course syllabus is an essential guide for students. Faculty members are responsible for providing a course syllabus (electronically or in hard copy) to students on the first day the class meets and to the department for each class taught. The syllabus should include the instructor's contact information, goals and student objectives, a schedule of assignments and tests, course contents, specific grading criteria, the instructor's attendance policy, and suggested University policy language regarding students with disabilities, tutoring assistance, lottery scholarships, etc.
3. **Availability to Students (Office Hours).** Full-time faculty members are expected to be regularly available for consultations with students. This availability includes:
 - a. Conventional office hours: Five hours of scheduled presence in the office per week spread across at least two days (preferably more) and during routine teaching hours. Additional hours by appointment to accommodate students due to legitimate conflict with regular office hours must be offered as well. Chairs may approve an exception to the on-campus requirement for faculty who teach entirely online.
 - b. Access through email, D2L, and phone: Faculty are expected to respond to inquiries received from students via phone, e-mail or D2L within 48 hours during the work week in any semester in which the faculty members has instructional assignment or advising responsibilities. Per [MTSU Policy 930](#), all email communication to students must be directed to the student's MTSU email account.
 - c. Supplemental office hours, both conventional and electronic, should be provided during midterms and final exams and during priority registration by faculty who have advising responsibilities.

- d. Office and teaching hours are to be posted and included on all syllabi for student reference.
4. **The Scope of Instructional Assignment.** Maintaining currency in the discipline, preparing for class meetings, creating and responding to student assignments, and meeting with students outside of class are all considered part of a faculty member's instructional assignment.
 5. **Reporting Mid-term and Final Grades and Attendance.** To inform students of their progress and facilitate advising, faculty members are expected to post mid-term grades or comments and post final grades by the deadline announced by Records and Scheduling each semester. They must also submit attendance information at the beginning of the semester, in accordance with federal requirements. In addition, faculty members are encouraged to communicate with College Advisors when a student appears to be in need of non-academic assistance.
 6. **Summer teaching** is not guaranteed for any faculty members and is determined by each department's policy and enrollment demand.
 7. **Annual Evaluations** of faculty by department chairs will address the extent to which faculty members follow faculty guidelines established herein or relevant department policy in addition to the evaluation of teaching, research/creative activity, and service.