



STUDENT RIGHTS HANDBOOK

YOUR SAY. YOUR WAY.

LEARN ABOUT YOUR STUDENT RIGHTS.

WHAT ARE STUDENT RIGHTS?

Student rights are the bare minimum rules governing your treatment in the academic environment, by instructors, TAs, administrators, and your fellow students. The University has policies that assign you rights – in the classroom, during exams, and even during breaks – and give you recourse in the event that your rights are violated. Your success on-campus should be driven by you, and not held back by unfair treatment – so it’s important to understand what your rights are, and what to do if they aren’t being respected!

THESE ARE YOUR RIGHTS

Course Outlines



Every course you take must have an outline, finalized by the last day of the first week of classes.



The outline will establish what is to be covered in your course, specific course policies, and how you will be graded. It must identify the date and time of all midterm exams.



Your instructor must follow the outline when teaching the course, and will be expected to ask the class before changing it, if they make any changes after the first week of classes.

Accessibility and Accommodation



AccessAbility Services exists to assist students who require special accommodation due to disabilities. Students can apply for accommodation online. Documentation from a licensed health practitioner is required.



This documentation must include a statement of disability, a clear diagnosis (including the severity level), the status of the disability (suspected, temporary, permanent/chronic), and a description of the functional limitations of the disability (and how it will affect your academic participation).

Breaks and Closures



Sometimes classes are cancelled. If the cancellation happens because the University is closed, the instructor can – but doesn't have to – reschedule the class. Saturday reschedulings are permitted. If the closure happens on the last day of lectures, the instructor can only reschedule to a day before the start of final exams.



Cancellations that occur for reasons other than a University closure (ex. the instructor being ill) can only be rescheduled to a date and time that everybody in class agrees with. Classes cannot be rescheduled to take place during midterm study breaks (ex. Reading Week), and no assignment deadlines can be scheduled during the break, either.

Fees

While textbooks can be listed as “required” for a course, you cannot be forced to purchase them. At the very least, alternate methods of access must be permitted (i.e. old versions, library reserves, etc.).

If the textbook comes with bundled software or an online access code for additional learning resources (including resources used for assessments), you must be given the option to purchase that software/access code separately from the textbook.

Third-party resources, if used for an assessment, must be no more than \$50, and the assessment(s) in question cannot be worth more than 20% of your grade (unless the Faculty Dean approves an exception). This excludes textbooks.

You cannot be charged a fee for a compulsory trip outside of Ontario, but you can be charged reasonable fees for the cost of travel and accommodation within the province of Ontario (or for electives outside of Ontario).

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your student union (see back of booklet for contact information).



Exams

With the exception of exams for Science Lab Courses, no test worth more than 25% of your final grade may be held in the last five days of lectures, unless the Department Chair and Associate Dean have approved it. Midterm exams are expected to take place Monday-Friday, 8:30a.m.-10p.m.

Large, multi-section Math and Science courses may have midterms on Saturdays in the Fall or Winter terms, if the midterm date is scheduled in Quest and published in the course outline following approval by the Associate Dean. Final exams are scheduled by the Registrar's Office in a Monday-Saturday time frame. If you are scheduled for two final exams back-to-back (including writing one exam in the last slot on one day and another in the first slot on the next), you have the right to have one exam rescheduled to a different time.

If you are accused by an instructor or proctor of violating the University's rules of conduct for exams, or of cheating on your exam, *you still have the right to finish writing the test*. You also have the right to review your exam within one year of writing it (unless your course outline indicates a smaller time period).

Release of Student Information

The University cannot disclose your personal information without prior written consent, with a few exceptions. Some information (grades, work histories, resumes, etc.) is shared with prospective co-op employers, and other information may be released to government agencies as required by law.

PROTECTING YOUR RIGHTS

In a perfect world, all your rights would be respected at all times. Unfortunately, this isn't always the case. However, the University provides you with recourse when a decision violates your student rights.

Grievances

When someone makes a decision that violates your student rights, the first step is to formally communicate with that person within 30 days of the decision being made, in person or in writing.

Explain why you are unsatisfied with the decision, how you believe it violates your student rights, and declare your intent to grieve if the situation is not addressed. They have 20 days to respond. At that time (or within 10 days of receiving their response), you must file a notice of challenge form with the Associate Dean of your Faculty.

The Associate Dean will consider your grievance, and inform you of their decision within five days.

Appeals

Grievances and student discipline decisions can be appealed if:

1. There was a procedural error in the original process;
2. There is evidence of bias in the original decision;
3. Significant new information is available;
4. The evidence provided wasn't considered properly; or
5. The penalty imposed exceeds the offence.





Within 10 days of receiving the original decision, submit an appeals form to the Chair of your Faculty's Committee on Student Appeals (if you aren't sure where to find this person, go to your Faculty's Undergraduate Office). Once the Chair decides that your appeal has been filled out properly, they must appoint a tribunal and inform you within five working days. If you are unhappy with the membership of the tribunal, you must challenge it within two days.

Within 10 days of the tribunal being selected, they will meet to determine:

1. That you have grounds for an appeal;
2. Whether or not any additional evidence or documentation is required.

A hearing will be scheduled to take place no more than 30 days following the appointment of the tribunal, and you will receive 10 days notice of your hearing. You have the right to bring a representative with you to the hearing. A Faculty representative can accompany you; you may also bring a lawyer or professor to represent you. You will receive the tribunal's decision within five days of the hearing.

If you are unsatisfied with the tribunal's decision and believe you have grounds for an appeal, you can appeal it again to the University Committee on Student Appeals.

You Have Human Rights, Too!

You have the right to an academic environment free of abuse, harassment, and discrimination. If you encounter any violations of this principle, you can report it to the Conflict Management and Human Rights Office.



QUESTIONS?

For assistance dealing with student rights-related issues or for advice, contact:

Academic Affairs Commissioner,
Federation of Students
academic@feds.ca

OR

Vice President Education,
Federation of Students
vped@feds.ca
519-888-4567 x32340