

Undergraduate Study

Class Size

Nearly three-fourths of Washington University's undergraduate classes range from one to 24 students. We believe smaller classes help students learn more through stimulating group discussion. Many classes may be larger at first, but they generally become smaller as students progress in their chosen fields.

Depending on the department, classes may be smaller or larger.

Average Class Sizes by Level

Class Size	L-100	L-200	L-300	L-400
1-10	83	91	146	165
11-24	204	114	204	137
25-39	28	27	48	35
40-64	28	38	58	31
65-100	10	9	20	10
101-200	20	10	7	7
Over 200	9	4	1	0
Total	382	293	484	385

Teaching and Learning at Washington University: A Statement of Best Practices and Expectations

*Undergraduate Council November 10, 1999,
Teaching Subcommittee of the Undergraduate Council,
Walter Chan and Robert E. Hegel, Co-Chairs.*

*Amended by the Teaching Learning Subcommittee of the
Undergraduate Council on January 27, 2010, and October 30,
2015.*

*Amended statements endorsed by the Undergraduate Council
on February 2, 2010, and November 2, 2015.*

All members of the Washington University community share responsibility for creating an atmosphere conducive to learning. A collaborative learning environment involves the active participation of both instructors and students in the classroom and in activities outside the classroom. This environment requires:

- best efforts on the part of both faculty and students to enhance the learning experience for the benefit of all persons involved;
- recognizing that everyone present plays an important role; all participants in the learning experience deserve respect

for what they contribute; and both faculty and students be sensitive to the importance of the others in this process;

- an atmosphere that embraces multiple identities in the classroom by demonstrating mutual respect for all persons regardless of political, racial, ethnic, religious, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, socioeconomic or veteran status.

In response to changing classroom dynamics, we, the Undergraduate Council, make the following recommendations:

Expectations and responsibilities of the faculty

The faculty member is involved in several major roles, including those of teacher, scholar-researcher, and citizen in the university. For the unimpeded performance of these functions, the faculty member is guaranteed academic freedom. At the same time, the faculty member has clear responsibilities to the students and to the institution, particularly in the faculty member's role as teacher. Instructors should provide the basic outlines for the learning experience and provide guidance as appropriate, generally in the form of a handout or easily accessible electronic document. Such guidance should normally involve:

- presenting a syllabus that:
 - identifies the goals of the course and its prerequisites, a schedule of major assignments and examinations, explicit criteria for how student work will be evaluated;
 - articulates ground rules for classroom interaction and consequences for infringement (How much active participation is expected of the student? Is attendance required? Is it acceptable to eat during class? What are the guidelines for collaboration inside and outside of the classroom?);
 - establishes behavior expectations for the class, including respecting every member, listening and engaging;
 - makes clear expectations for technology use during class;
 - includes links to information about inclusion and diversity, bias reporting, accommodations based upon sexual assault and mental health;
- reminding students of, and upholding, the university's standards for academic integrity;
- bringing new perspectives and insights to assigned readings and other text materials;
- conducting classroom and one-on-one interactions in keeping with the university's guidelines on diversity and inclusion;
- regularly meeting and punctuality in starting and dismissing class;
- prompt and responsible grading (including midterms), with evaluative comments and opportunities for students to discuss their grades with the faculty member;

- adherence to the announced office hour schedule and offering as many avenues as possible for contact, including by online venue, telephone or email;
- using appropriate, relevant technology both inside and outside of the classroom to enhance communication between faculty and students;
- uploading course materials and sending emails or other notifications in a timely manner;
- overseeing assistants in instruction (AIs), including the training of AIs, providing definitions of grading expectations as per the University Code of Conduct, providing detailed rubrics for grading evaluations, case studies and projects, and ensuring a faculty review in the event students contest their grade and petition for regrading, especially to ensure grading uniformity;
- regular communication between two professors or more when they share in the teaching process of a one-semester course, including agreement about responsibilities, assignments given to students, and due dates expected;
- facilitation of and reflection on student evaluations of the faculty member's teaching methods and materials, including midsemester evaluations, as a means of creating an atmosphere of shared responsibility within the classroom;
- regular communication with students regarding progress in the course, ways to improve, grading structure;
- avoiding prohibitive costs when ordering textbooks and other course materials; making electronic text available;
- adhering to the published final examination schedule to avoid interfering with students' preparation for other classes;
- showing up to all the classes and giving students the full number of contact hours they deserve each semester.

Expectations and responsibilities of the students

Students must take responsibility for their own learning. Students also share with the instructor the responsibility for providing an environment conducive to learning. Students should personally:

- actively engage in learning the material and with the process of education, including meeting with the instructor and/or AI when requested to or when necessary;
 - use the course materials, faculty expertise, and expectations for learning to build their own knowledge and skills;
 - attend all classes, both lecture and discussion sessions, and participate in class discussions; leave class only for emergencies; use online resources for augmentation and review, not as a substitute for class;
 - be punctual in completing assignments;
 - behave in the classroom in a manner that demonstrates respect for all students and faculty and follows university guidelines for diversity and inclusion;

- adhere to instructor's expectation for the use of technology during class, including laptops, tablets and phones;
- share responsibility for the flow of information concerning a course by regularly checking the course webpage, online discussion groups and university email;
- be familiar with, and adhere to, matters of academic integrity as identified by their instructors and their school within the university;
- participate in objective and constructive evaluations of the instructor, course content according to the syllabus, and required textbooks/materials to clarify opportunities and strengths that will help the instructor to improve the course in subsequent semesters;
- conform to the ground rules of the course as defined in the syllabus.

Learning outside the classroom

Students and instructors should consult at the beginning of the semester about the content and expectations regarding independent study, supervised internships, supervised research, fieldwork, and international learning.

Students and instructors should familiarize themselves with division/department/program policies regarding independent studies and internship opportunities.

Special student concerns

Students should take the initiative to inform the faculty of anticipated absences prior to the scheduled event and discuss special arrangements to compensate for missed instruction. Should the absence be emergent or unanticipated, it is the student's responsibility to inform the faculty in a timely manner to minimize disruption of class progression as a whole. Students should recognize that the collective needs of the faculty and other students in a course may outweigh individual priorities. Faculty should be sensitive to individual student needs for special arrangements:

- to accommodate disabilities, illnesses, family emergencies or academic or professional opportunities that interfere with usual class attendance or performance;
- to provide accommodations when students miss class because of religious holidays.

Responsibilities of the university administration

For its part, the university administration must:

- continue to provide facilities and ensure adequate classroom and laboratory space that is stocked with sufficient, appropriate equipment;
- give priority to supporting both faculty and students in teaching and learning;
- provide opportunities for professional, student, and leadership development in both teaching and learning;

- be responsive when normal communications between faculty and students break down by providing for a process for discussion and negotiations;
- facilitate communication among various constituents of the university;
- facilitate the flow of visitors to the classroom by providing faculty ample notice.

Where to get help

For instructors: The departmental chair or associate chair, the Teaching Center, colleagues, and the relevant dean's office offer very useful advice on teaching techniques, materials and methods.

For students: The instructor, the assistants in instruction (AIs), and Cornerstone: The Learning Center (<http://cornerstone.wustl.edu>) can be counted on for guidance on best learning techniques and practices. The Writing Center (<http://writingcenter.wustl.edu>) can be a very helpful resource for all levels of written assignments from concept identification and document structuring through final paper editing.

Should a student concern occur, the general process of communication and request for assistance, guidance, and problem resolution is to:

1. Raise the concern with the faculty member;
2. if the resolution has not been achieved, raise the concern with the associate chair or department chair;
3. if resolution has not been achieved, raise the concern with the student's adviser(s).

Concerns and/or disagreements that have not been resolved by this process can be addressed to the faculty-student mediator.

If the student has a concern related to discrimination or harassment, the University Policy on Discrimination and Harassment (<http://hr.wustl.edu/policies/Pages/DiscriminationAndHarassment.aspx>) provides additional information about resources and options.

10/30/2015*

**This document shall be reviewed every five years.*