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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Size</th>
<th>L-100</th>
<th>L-200</th>
<th>L-300</th>
<th>L-400</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-10</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-24</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-39</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-64</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-100</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101-200</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 200</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>551</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>380</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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


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

• 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; that all participants in the learning experience deserve respect for what they contribute; and that 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, and 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, and 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;

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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:
environment conducive to learning. Students should personally:

- share responsibility for providing an 
- take responsibility for their own learning. Students
- be punctual in completing assignments;
- be familiar with and adhere to matters of academic 
- participate in objective and constructive evaluations of 
- be aware of the expectations for learning to build their own knowledge 
- attend all classes, both lecture and discussion sessions, 
- be punctual in completing assignments;

• regularly meeting and punctuality in starting and dismissing 
• prompt and responsible grading (including midterms), with 
• adherence to the announced office-hour schedule and 
• using appropriate, relevant technology both inside and 
• uploading course materials and sending emails or other 
• overseeing assistants in instruction (AIs), including the 
• showing up to all of the classes and giving students the full 

Learning outside the classroom

Students and instructors should consult at the beginning of the semester about the content and expectations regarding independent study, 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 unexpected 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 the 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:

- accommodate disabilities, illnesses, family emergencies, 
- provide accommodations when students miss class 

Responsibilities of the university administration

For its part, the university administration must:

- be aware of the expectations for learning to build their own knowledge 
- attend all classes, both lecture and discussion sessions, 

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 
- use the course materials, faculty expertise, and 
- attend all classes, both lecture and discussion sessions, 
- be punctual in completing assignments;
• 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 a process for discussion and negotiation;
• facilitate communication among various constituents of the university;
• facilitate the flow of visitors to the classroom by providing faculty with 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 AIs, and the Learning Center (https://learningcenter.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 as follows:

1. Raise the concern with the faculty member.
2. If 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.