

# 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. Class size also depends on the department and pedagogy, with class sizes generally being larger in the earlier stages of the curriculum and becoming smaller as students progress in their chosen fields.

## Average Class Sizes by Level

Class Size	L-100	L-200	L-300	L-400
1-10	167	85	126	129
11-24	268	142	250	156
25-39	38	41	52	46
40-64	45	26	48	30
65-100	16	14	23	10
101-200	19	11	5	3
Over 200	7	3	1	1
Total	560	322	505	375

## 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; 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;
- 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 or more professors 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, and grading structure;
- avoiding prohibitive costs when ordering textbooks and other course materials; making electronic texts available;
- adhering to the published final examination schedule to avoid interfering with students' preparation for other classes;
- showing up to all of 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 the instructor's expectations 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 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:

- 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 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 advisor(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

## Academic Standing

The faculty of the school in which a student is enrolled determines the academic standing of that student. Each school, as appropriate to their respective degree requirements, considers the following key performance indicators to determine whether a student remains in good academic standing:

- Minimum semester and cumulative GPA of 2.0 (i.e., minimum required to graduate);
- Satisfactory progress in units completed, typically 12 per semester;
- Progress in the focused area of study, as defined by school (e.g., major requirements).

Failure to maintain the above indicators may cause a student to be placed into one of the academic standing categories described below, which is a signal that minimum standards for graduating are not being met. Unless a student demonstrates improvement, thereby indicating their ability to fulfill degree requirements within a reasonable period of time, the student may be dismissed from the university. Each school will determine the appropriate standards and actions for students to take, respective to each status:

## Academic Concern

Any of the following performance indicators at the end of a semester will cause the student's standing to be reviewed and may cause the student to be placed on Academic Concern:

- Receiving an incomplete (first occurrence and all subsequent occurrences)
- Earning a semester GPA of less than 2.0 (first occurrence)
- Earning fewer than a total of 12 units in a regular semester (first occurrence)

While a student placed on Academic Concern remains in good academic standing, this status is a signal to the student that academic performance is below minimum standards and, if continued, will likely cause the student to fall out of good standing. This status is not noted on the official transcript; since it does not cause the student to fall out of good standing, it will not be incorporated into enrollment verifications requesting confirmation of academic standing.

## Academic Notice

Any of the following performance indicators at the end of a semester will cause the student's standing to be reviewed and may cause the student to be placed on Academic Notice:

- Cumulative GPA of less than 2.0 (first occurrence and all subsequent occurrences)
- Semester GPA of less than 2.0 (second occurrence and all subsequent occurrences)
- Earning fewer than a total of 12 units in a regular semester (second occurrence and all subsequent occurrences)
- School-specific requirements:
  - Olin students earning a professional GPA of less than 2.0 (all business courses)
  - Arts & Sciences students earning below a C- in any major-related course

If the performance indicators contributing to the status of Academic Notice are raised above the threshold (e.g., by the resolution of an incomplete grade or the change of a final grade), the status may be reconsidered.

Academic Notice status indicates that a student is not in good academic standing. Although this status is not noted on the official transcript, it will be incorporated into enrollment verifications requesting confirmation of a student's standing.

## Academic Time Away

Any of the following performance indicators at the end of a semester will cause the student's standing to be reviewed and may cause the student to be placed on Academic Time Away, which is a pause in enrollment at Washington University:

- Any third time a student becomes eligible for Academic Notice
- Any second sequential semester a student becomes eligible for Academic Notice (These are typically the fall and spring semesters, since most students do not enroll in summer classes. However, if a student does enroll in summer classes after a spring semester after which they were placed on Academic Notice, their performance will be reviewed.)
- Any semester in which student earns no degree credit

Academic Time Away status indicates that a student is not in good academic standing. Because this status is marked by a break in enrollment, this status is noted on the official transcript. The terms of the Time Away are determined by the student's school.

## Transfer Credit Policy

In order to be eligible for transfer articulation, courses taken from another institution — whether taken before matriculation or after matriculation as preapproved domestic or study abroad enrollment — must meet the following criteria:

- Be offered and transcribed by a fully accredited institution of higher education (either according to U.S. Department of Education standards or by the appropriate national ministry of education for non-U.S. institutions);
- Have a quality final grade of C or better;
- Be offered in a subject matter/discipline taught at Washington University and at a level by which college/university credit would normally be awarded;
- Not be applied to high school graduation requirements;
- Be taught on the campus of a college or university and enrolled in primarily by duly matriculated college students (i.e., high school graduates); and
- Not be taken while a student is on suspension for violation of Academic Integrity or Student Code of Conduct policies.

Schools may have additional specific criteria about requirement areas that cannot be fulfilled with transfer credit (i.e., that can only be fulfilled by the completion of Washington University courses) as well as limits on the number of transferred credits that may apply to degree requirements or be taken during a summer term. Please review the school academic policy sections for details.