Processes and Procedures

Procedures

This section of the handbook outlines various procedures related to teaching and learning required by VIU.

Communication and Availability

As an instructor committed to student success, it is imperative that you inform students about how they can contact you for help, and what they can expect from you for email and phone response times. We suggest that you use VIU’s learning management system VIULearn (D2L) messaging for all email communication and assignment submission responses with students.

If students do not receive timely communication they may appeal grades or may complain to the Program Chair or the Dean. Please check the course site regularly and ensure responses are timely. For example, you may set a specific day that you will check so students know to email before that day, or you could guarantee a 48 hour or 72 hours response time. Please communicate to students what they can expect on your course outline.

University course management policies require a “timely” turn-around of assignments to students. A timely turnaround on assignments is approximately 2 weeks. Please advise students if you will be taking longer. Two legitimate grounds for student appeals are: ineffective course management, and procedural error.

- Course management issues relate to students who have concerns about how a course is taught or managed. Ideally, the student would first consult the instructor as soon as concern arises and only then contact the chair. If you have any concerns that students are unhappy enough in your course to complain to your chair, it makes sense to have a conversation with the chair first, before complaints arrive at his or her door. Open
communication and gathering of feedback from students early enough to make changes in the course are key to avoiding these kinds of situations.

- Procedural error applies when it is believed that there has been an error in the procedure followed in the application of course management or any other applicable policy of the University that has unfairly affected a student’s grade or standing.

**Class Lists**

You can view your class list and waitlist online. See information about class lists and waitlists at [https://www2.viu.ca/facultyhelp/Classes.asp](https://www2.viu.ca/facultyhelp/Classes.asp) To see your classlist, you will need to enter the Course and Section ID of your class. **Note that you must leave a space between the course code and section ID** - for example: ENGL 115, **not** ENGL115. Also ensure that when entering the section ID that you use numbers, not letters - for example: F11N01, **not** FIINO1*.

If you have entered the course or section code incorrectly, you will get an "ERROR: Course / Section not found" message. If this happens, use the back button and try again by fixing the spacing, course name or section ID.

If instead you get a message that says you do not have permission to view the class list, please contact your Program Assistant, Chair or Admin support.

CLASS LISTS - Students currently registered in your class.

WAIT LISTS** - Students waiting to get into your class.

The information provided on these lists is in "real time". As soon as a student registers or the waitlist changes, it will appear on this list.

You can print your own class lists and submit grades using the same system. You can also securely access email for your entire class list or wait list simply by clicking on the icon at the bottom of the page after you have called up the list.

**Office Hours**

VIU expects each instructor to set office hours. We recommend that you be available for the hour prior to class, either in the classroom or in your office. You might want to set a ‘cyber’ office hour, but more important is prompt return of email messages from students (48 hours is a good guideline). You must specify your availability for office hours and what students can expect from you relative to answering voice mail, email and VIULearn inquiries. This will be clearly outlined in the course outline and announced in class. In addition, office hours need to be visible and posted outside your office.
Textbooks

VIU Instructors are responsible for ordering textbooks. Orders are required about 3 months (e.g., order by May 15 for Fall semester) before the course starts so if you are recommending changes, please discuss them with the Chair or at a departmental meeting in plenty of time. Instructors are required to complete a textbook order form and submit it to the bookstore for ordering. Deadlines are important to ensure your course textbook (or packages) arrive 2 weeks in advance of the semester start-up. You will receive reminders of deadlines via email, but it is a good idea to know the deadlines in advance so you do not have to scramble to get information about resources together. Information on timelines and packages may be accessed here: http://www.viubookstore.ca/faculty_services.asp Just click on the Faculty tab at the top.

Cancelling Class

There are a few conditions that may impact changes in classes from proceeding as usual. These may include:

Instructor Unable to Teach (due to illness, emergency, etc.)

In the event you are unable to teach one of your classes, please discuss with your departmental colleagues (or Chair) for standard processes. If possible arrange an alternate faculty to teach as early as possible. You should also post information on the VIULearn (D2L) site under the announcements.

Severe Weather Conditions

There are times when classes on campus will be closed due to severe weather conditions. In general VIU’s policy is:

a) Before a decision is made to cancel classes and or activities due to snow or severe weather conditions, the Executive Director of Infrastructure & Ancillary Services, or designate, will have monitored local weather stations, RCMP advisories and other weather and road information sources for reports.

b) The decision to close the campus or cancel classes and activities is that of the President, or designate, in consultation with the Executive Director of Infrastructure & Ancillary Services. The Executive Director of University Relations or designate will then implement VIU’s communication protocols to the broader internal and external communities. The notice will be posted on the main page of the VIU website.

c) In situations where the Nanaimo campus is closed for snow or other severe weather conditions, campus closure will be considered in the following blocks:
Daytime Classes and Activities - decision will be made by 6:00 am – employees working on the Nanaimo Campus will not be required to report to work (“Daytime” refers to any class or activity ending by 6:00 pm)

Evening Classes and Activities- decision will be made by 2:00 pm (“Evening” refers to any class or activity starting at or after 6:00 pm)

d) If evening classes and activities are taking place on a day that daytime classes have been cancelled, these evening classes and activities will operate without support services. These service areas include the Library, Cafeteria, Student Services and other service and support units. Security will be on campus during snow or other severe weather closures.

e) The Library Commons and Cafeteria seating will remain open during snow or severe weather closures.

Once a decision has been made to close the Nanaimo Campus the Deans responsible for offsite Nanaimo programs and the Campus Principals, will be responsible for the closure of those facilities and communicating the closure to their employees and to the Executive Director of University Relations or designate.

See https://www2.viu.ca/severe-weather/ for up to date information. For further information email University.Relations@viu.ca

Procedures When Teaching Online

The basic expectations of instructors regarding teaching are outlined in your Union agreement. You are free to change content in an online course (within the limitations imposed by the course description and learning outcomes) and load your own pages into the course content module. Be sure that you are comfortable with VIULearn procedures for doing this.

Learning face-to-face should be equitable with the learning online so that neither “group” or cohort receives less information than the other. Please try to keep this in mind.

The following strategies are suggested, choose ones that work for your style of teaching and for the course content:
• Put on your course outline an expectation that everyone will access the course at least once per week and that assignments will be received by email or using the submit assignment feature which allows them to upload files without using email or messaging.

• Attach your lecture notes to a discussion board posting the day after class, summarizing the class discussion and presenting the questions that came up in class/or conversely present questions from the discussion forum in class.

• Develop a course “FAQ” list and post it where students can easily find it.

• If you haven’t worked with bulletin boards or email previously, consider the “hidden” / covert / non-verbals in your messages and try to maintain a friendly and respectful tone. Experience suggests that students misinterpret the written message easily because of the absence of non-verbal indicators.

• Post a Discussion Board message just before an assignment is due reminding students of the best way to name their file (e.g., their name_assign#) and stating that you will NOT confirm receipt but that if you do not have the assignment at the end of marking, you will contact them.

• Ask the Centre for Innovation and Excellence in Learning for the handout entitled, “A Process for Building an Online or Blended Course at VIU” for some additional supports.

**Assigning Grades**

You are asked to:

• Confirm that assignments, tests, and exams follow the grade breakdown specified in the course outline.

• Ensure that all assignments and tests are properly evaluated and final grade calculations are accurate.

• Reread marginal or failed examinations.

• Verify that accurate grades have been submitted to Registration and Records.

• Notify the Associate Dean and your Chair if you become aware that a student is planning to file a grade appeal.

**Incomplete Grades (INC)**

• An incomplete (INC) grade is assigned to students with at least passing performance but with some work to be completed by a specified date, no more than four months after the submission of the incomplete grade. It is generally used in exceptional medical or personal
circumstances.

- You must fill out an Incomplete Grade Form available from your Department Program Assistant or online at: http://www2.viu.ca/facultyhelp/Grades.asp Once the student has successfully completed the pending work by the date specified:
  - You must submit the Incomplete Grade Form by the end of the following semester or it will become an F grade.
  - You will need to login with your VIU login and go to Registration/Student Records under the Faculty Resources tab: https://records.viu.ca/compserv/htbin/weblogin_staff

- INP (in progress) category may apply to practicum courses. It is not available for other types of courses. The instructor cannot input this category into the system but must fill in an “In Progress” Grade form. You will need to login with your VIU login and go to Registration/Student Records under the Faculty Resources tab: https://records.viu.ca/compserv/htbin/weblogin_staff
  The completed form is sent to student records and they input the information manually. The student will receive a letter (cc to faculty) explaining the INP status and the terms. The INP status remains on the student’s record for a year. At this time it converts to an “F” UNLESS the student has re-enrolled and paid for the course. Assigning an INC would follow discussing the completion requirements with the student.

Final Grade Reporting

Semester grades must be entered into Vancouver Island University’s Student Record System (SRS) within 5 days of the last day of exams, using the Grade Entry screen on the web and standard Grade values (e.g., A+, B-, INC, etc.).

If a grade has not been submitted by an instructor within this time frame, a grade of NGS (No Grade Submitted) will be entered by Registration. Further instructions on grade entry procedures can be found here: http://www2.viu.ca/facultyhelp/GradeEntryInstructions.asp

VIU’s Gradebook program is an excellent tool to help you keep track of course assignments, students’ marks and posting final grades. VIULearn also has gradebook managing capabilities.

Note that if you assign an Incomplete (INC), In Progress (INP) grade, or want to change a grade, you must fill out the appropriate form and submit it to the Records Office for processing.
Contact information for learning more about grade management and these forms may be accessed here: [http://www2.viu.ca/facultyhelp/Grades.asp](http://www2.viu.ca/facultyhelp/Grades.asp)

Students may view their final grades online at: [https://records.viu.ca/reg/htbin/weblogin](https://records.viu.ca/reg/htbin/weblogin). The issuance of final grades is the responsibility of Registration and Records; you may not post or otherwise disclose final grades to students in formats other than those mentioned above.

**Student Attendance**

The current policies and procedures (Policy 96.05: Student Attendance, Procedure: 96.05.001 Student Attendance: Absences) related to student attendance may be found here:

[http://www2.viu.ca/policies/policies-index.asp](http://www2.viu.ca/policies/policies-index.asp)  (In Keyword Search tab = “attendance”).

*Students are expected to attend scheduled lectures, laboratories, field trips, seminars, examinations, practica and work experience. The University reserves the right to cancel registration in any course or program because of lack of attendance (where attendance is deemed by the University to be important).*

Policy 96.01, Student Academic Code of Conduct ([http://www2.viu.ca/policies/policies-index.asp](http://www2.viu.ca/policies/policies-index.asp))

*Non-attendance” may be considered a violation of the student academic code of conduct.*

*Non-attendance, where attendance is deemed to be mandatory, is not acceptable. Absences due to personal illness, family illness, death of an immediate family member, religious ceremonies, or sports events in which the student represents Vancouver Island University are allowed and must be approved by the appropriate instructor or coordinator. Non-attendance must be for valid reasons and not falsified. Some departments have specific attendance requirements, and details may be obtained from the instructor, department chair, or program coordinator.*

It follows that, within these guiding parameters, Programs may determine the appropriate attendance requirements for their specific courses. Please consult with your Chair and/or the Faculty policies on student conduct and attendance to ensure that you are within the parameters of the program expectations for student attendance.

**Freedom of Information and Privacy of Protection (FIPPA)**

The current policy (Policy 22.04), states that VIU will comply with the requirements of the Freedom of Information / Protection of Privacy Act. The policy can be found here: [http://www2.viu.ca/policies/policies-index.asp](http://www2.viu.ca/policies/policies-index.asp) - keyword search “Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection Act”. 
Related Policies and Procedures: Policy 32.10 Confidentiality of Student Records (keyword search “confidentiality”). A student’s record comprises any information collected and held by the University, including program files. A student’s record is classified as confidential. Vancouver Island University complies with the FIPPA Laws in British Columbia in the handling of all student records. Faculty members who require information from student records should consult with their Chair and/or Program Assistant about appropriate procedures and safeguards.

Vancouver Island University may gather personal information from students under the authority of the University Act, Section 27(4) to (7). These records are used for the purposes of admission, registration and other activities of the University. Information on student records may only relate to academic performance.

**Academic Integrity/Misconduct**

Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following acts: Cheating, Fabrication, Plagiarism, Facilitation of Academic Misconduct, Non-attendance -- where attendance is deemed to be mandatory. It is a faculty member’s obligation to investigate and address the issue with the student if you suspect academic misconduct. There is a form available to guide your investigation of academic misconduct at [http://www2.viu.ca/studentservices/StudentAppealforms.asp](http://www2.viu.ca/studentservices/StudentAppealforms.asp)

The Dean must be informed and is ultimately responsible for determining the penalty to the student. The Associate Dean can assist faculty members with the investigation of misconduct and ensure proper procedures are followed, please consult with the Associate Dean as soon as possible, if you suspect academic misconduct. The prevalence of and access to digital information along with the financial and career pressures facing students today makes the risk of academic misconduct higher than in previous generations.

The student code of conduct governs non-academic conduct -- [Student Conduct Code Policy (Policy 32.06)](https://www2.viu.ca/studentconduct/policy3206). Should a faculty member, student, or community member be concerned about the non-academic behavior of a VIU student while engaged with other members of the VIU community a complaint may be registered with Student Services and will be investigated by the Executive Director of Student Services.

**Student appeals**

Students may appeal decisions on admission, final grades, transfer credit, probation, suspension, or the interpretation of any of the policies listed above. The first step is an informal appeal to the individual who made the decision or interpretation. Typically this is the instructor. If satisfactory resolution is not possible at this level, the Dean must be consulted. If again no resolution is possible, a formal appeal may be initiated. Please ensure you are familiar with the policies and procedures of the following main appeals.
**Academic Appeals**

This policy (96.02) is provided to deal with any grievances or disputes concerning any University policy, procedure or disciplinary action related to admission, final grades, transfer credit, probation, or suspension for academic reasons from a course, program or the institution the interruption or suspension from a program based on student suitability to the profession, or the interpretation of any policies related to these issues. While this policy does not constitute a judicial process, all stages of the academic appeal process will be carried out in accordance with the principles of due process (e.g. the right to be heard, the right to a hearing from an unbiased tribunal). Students should contact the Dean’s office or the office of the Executive Director, Student Services for information regarding the academic appeal process. The procedure related to this policy is 96.02.001. The policy and procedure may be found at:


There are forms available to address this policy:

[http://www.viu.ca/studentservices/StudentAppealforms.asp](http://www.viu.ca/studentservices/StudentAppealforms.asp)

A specific appeal within this category is Final Grade appeals.

**Final Grade Appeals**

Students have the right to file a grade appeal if they feel that an error has been made in arriving at their final grade. Before doing so a student may request that the instructor re-consider their work. Please check with the Chair if you are unclear about instructor responsibilities in relation to timely review of student work when a student requests a re-consideration during the term. Typically students have five (5) working days to request a re-consideration of their work. If re-consideration is requested, five (5) working days is a timely response by the instructor.

A formal appeal of grades must begin within 15 days of assignment of final grades. All students have a right to appeal a final grade within fifteen (15) working days of the grade being assigned. There are two types of grade appeal: informal and formal. Most appeals are resolved at the informal stage which involves the student meeting with the instructor and/or Program Chair. If the informal grade appeal is not resolved, the student will request a meeting with the Associate Dean/Dean within five (5) working days of meeting with the Instructor and Program Chair. If the informal grade appeal is still not resolved at this level, the student begins the formal grade appeal. Forms to request a grade appeal are available online, at the Registration Centre, and/or Dean’s offices. [http://www.viu.ca/studentservices/StudentAppealforms.asp](http://www.viu.ca/studentservices/StudentAppealforms.asp)

After a one-year period, student work which has not been returned to the student may be destroyed or disposed of in a confidential manner. Student assignments and exams should be returned with feedback whenever possible.
Conduct Appeals
Vancouver Island University recognizes the right of students to appeal any disciplinary action imposed by the institution under the Student Conduct Code Policy (Policy 32.06). It can be found at: [http://www.viu.ca/policies/policies-index.asp](http://www.viu.ca/policies/policies-index.asp) - keyword search “student conduct”. Students should contact the Office of the Executive Director, Student Services for information regarding the student conduct appeal process.

Detecting and Preventing Plagiarism
*Credit: Carnegie Mellon University, Eberly Centre ([http://www.cmu.edu/teaching/designteach/design/instructionalstrategies/writing/preventplagiarism.html](http://www.cmu.edu/teaching/designteach/design/instructionalstrategies/writing/preventplagiarism.html))*

Because writing tasks often feel daunting to students, there is the temptation of plagiarizing written work. Written resources have become more easily available on the Internet, and students may not have a clear understanding of what constitutes plagiarism in each of their courses (either because of lack of knowledge or because of mismatches relative to their previous experience).

Clearly Define Plagiarism
At the beginning of the semester – in the syllabus and verbally – give students a clear definition of what constitutes plagiarism and what is considered appropriate collaboration. Note that these definitions may differ from one faculty member to another and from one course to another, so it is especially important to make our expectations clear to students in each course we teach. Reference VIU’s Policy on Academic Misconduct (see section at end of handbook) on VIU processes.

You might communicate to your students a message something like the following (in class, on your course outline/syllabus)

“Your good ideas become better when you test them against others’ ideas. For this course, feel free to discuss your ideas about the assignments with other students. However, using someone else’s words, ideas, or concepts without citing your source is plagiarism. So is presenting part or all of another student’s work as your own. In the world of writing – especially academic writing – this is a serious crime and is treated as such. Anyone who commits plagiarism may receive a failing grade for the entire course and be referred to the appropriate dean’s office for further disciplinary action.”  [From H. Franklin’s Interpretation and Argument Syllabus, 2008]

Provide Examples of Proper Citation
Give students examples of how and when they should credit the work of others in their writing. This way, they will have concrete cases to which they can refer when questions arise.
Create Original Assignments
The more unusual an assignment is (e.g., taking a different perspective on a problem, question, or reading), the less likely students will be able to find something (from the Internet or their peers) to submit as their own work. In addition, an assignment that has multiple parts may reduce the likelihood of plagiarism.

Require Rough Drafts
Adding milestones to a written assignment where students must submit preliminary drafts of their work discourages them from the prospects of plagiarizing. It also helps them spread a larger writing task over a longer period of time, so students are not as likely to be in the situation where they are sorely tempted to take the easy way out of the assignment.

Inform Students about Support Services
VIU’s Writing Centre (4th floor Library) helps students be more effective in their academic written work, but not all students know about this resource. Giving a quick endorsement of this kind of help can really encourage students to take advantage of the support that is available. Also for International Students there is support too.

Detecting Plagiarism
There are several warning signs that may be clues to plagiarized material in students’ writing. These include the use of inconsistent writing styles within one piece, the use of phrasing or concepts that are more sophisticated than you would expect (based on earlier assignments from that particular student), or unusual repetitions.

These warning signs only serve to raise our awareness of situations where plagiarism may have occurred. It is then helpful to have techniques for detecting plagiarism more clearly. In this phase, meeting with the student to discuss their knowledge of the topics discussed in the paper can help. Technological tools can also help. For example, using a search engine such as Google to look up an unusual turn of phrase from a student’s paper may help identify whether an excerpt was plagiarized from some resource on the internet.

VIU’s Early Alert System
The Early Alert System is a campus-wide student success and retention tool to identify students in difficulty or crisis as well as those who may benefit from additional support of campus resources. The presence of an effective early warning system and connecting students early to campus resources have been consistently recommended to increase students’ persistence and achievement (Kuh, 2007).
WHY is an Early Alert System Important?
Many students arrive at university unfamiliar with the post-secondary environment and unprepared for the demands of university level courses. These students can quickly become overwhelmed and fall behind, struggling to understand expectations and manage their own learning. A referral through the EAS allows VIU to direct the student to resources that may be of assistance as well as provide the opportunity to intervene at a time when assistance is most likely to allow the student to make the corrections necessary to be successful.

Faculty as the First Line of Defense for Students at Risk of Failing
A faculty member is uniquely positioned to regularly observe students and identify behaviours that may interfere with a student’s ability to be successful in their class. Recent enhancements to the EAS have been made to allow faculty to identify particular behaviours, such as frequent absences, missing assignments and lack of participation in class, among others. These enhancements allow, targeted recommendations and follow up with the student identified as well as referral to the appropriate resources (Advising, Counselling, Writing Centre, other) based on the difficulty being experienced.

Ideally, the first line of intervention is a conversation between the faculty member and student regarding the particular behaviours that may be impeding success in the course. In many circumstances, this is not possible or comfortable for the faculty member however intervention is still desired to provide the student with the best opportunity for success.

WHEN Should the EAS be Used?
Any time a student is struggling and may benefit from assistance to be successful, but ideally within the first 4 - 5 weeks of the semester when there is still an opportunity to make adjustments in behaviour.

A student’s grades are not the only signs of a need for support, engagement in the learning experience, attendance and participation in class activities are also strong indicators of future success (Kuh, 2007).

PLEASE NOTE: EAS is NOT intended for referring students in situations of immediate crisis or where concerns about student health and safety are present. Please use the Crisis Intervention Process identified in the bright orange “Crisis Intervention Information” folder distributed by VIU Health and Safety Services or here http://sites.viu.ca/healthandsafety/files/2012/10/CrisisFolder2012.pdf

How Can I Let Students Know About the EAS System And My Participation In It?
One suggestion for letting students know about the EAS and faculty involvement is to include a statement on your course syllabus, website or statement of expectations. An example of a statement used by faculty at other institutions is found below.
“VIU faculty participate in an early alert system to connect students who may be experiencing difficulty with resources that may be helpful to their success. If over the course of the semester I become concerned about your progress in this course I may use the EAS to put you in touch with resources that I feel would support your success in this class. These may include academic advising, financial aid, the writing centre, counseling or other resources. This information is treated confidentially and is sent because I am concerned about you and your academic success.”

More information about the Early Alert System can be found at http://www.viu.ca/facultyhelp/InformationforStudents.asp

Where Does The Alert Go?
Once you have submitted the alert it will be sent to earlyalert@viu.ca where it will be monitored and a response coordinated for each individual student. This response may involve working directly with the student, or finding ways to put him/her in touch with other helpful resources on-campus.

EAS Procedure
- Access the Early Alert System https://records.viu.ca/reg/htbin/academic_alert
- You will need to enter your VIU credentials first
- Enter your Course ID and Section Number
- Select the Name of the student that you would like to send an alert for.
- Click “Continue”
- Identify the reason(s) for the early alert, and whether you have discussed with the student and/or suggested appropriate resources.
- Click the box if it is ok to identify you as the referrer
- Enter other information that may be helpful.
- Click Submit
- The information that you submitted will be shown on the next screen along with an opportunity to confirm the information or edit.
- Once confirmed the alert will be submitted and you will be prompted to “Close Window”

VIU Calendar and Important Dates
The VIU calendar is available on line and forms the contract we have with students. The important date’s section defines deadlines that both instructors and student need to pay attention to regarding course management, class start and end dates, withdrawals, etc.

https://programs.viu.ca/academic-programs-2017-2018
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Bill C-11 received Royal Assent on June 29, 2012, and most of its provisions were brought into force on November 7, 2012. The new legislation introduces changes to the Copyright Act that are broad and far reaching for educational institutions, faculty, staff and students. It broadens the scope of the fair dealing exception to specifically include education, in addition to research, private study, criticism and review. Fair dealing for the purposes of education does not currently require attribution of the source and author. Detailed information on the issues is available at: http://libguides.viu.ca/licenses

Frequently asked questions (FAQs) on fair dealings are on the VIU web-site at http://libguides.viu.ca/content.php?pid=164231&sid=1439771. Be sensitive to this, educate yourself and call for consultation with the library.

The bookstore produces course packs for compiled required readings. VIU has assessed options and will continue licenses with ACCESS copyright. There will be no additional expense to students.


Access Copyright Website: for Post-Secondary Educators http://www.accesscopyright.ca/

Copyright Licence in Post-Secondary Education

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  - Select and share content right way
- Create something new from content selected
- Reward the original creator and publisher