

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN TEACHING AND LEARNING CHARTER

Overview

This charter outlines the goals we have set for ourselves in Teaching and Learning at the University of Cape Town.

A university education offers the opportunity to enhance all aspects of the individual, to nurture a culture of learning and to maximise the wealth of opportunities available in the academic endeavour. By accepting a place at the University students accept responsibility for their own learning. This requires a commitment to hard work, and to participate fully in academic activities. It also recognizes that if students approach their studies in an open-minded, intellectually inquiring manner, they will enhance their own educational experience and that of their fellow students and the academic staff.

By taking up academic appointments at the University, academic staff accept responsibility to endeavour to teach with enthusiasm, creativity and rigour, and in a manner which reflects and interprets the research-intensive identity of the institution, and to provide all reasonable assistance to students to enable them to do as well as they can.

The University community acknowledges that effective teaching and learning is best encouraged in a constructive and supportive environment within broadly agreed principles of good practice. Heads of academic departments are formally responsible to Senate for teaching and learning in their departments and allocating teaching duties to staff to ensure that teaching staff are qualified and experienced to levels commensurate with their teaching responsibilities. Individual academic staff are accountable for their teaching contribution which is assessed according to agreed performance criteria.

Mutual commitment

Students are expected to:

1. Treat staff and fellow students with dignity and respect and without discrimination or favouritism.
2. Prepare for and attend all classes, tutorials, practicals and other activities scheduled for the courses in which they are registered (the availability of lecture recordings does not affect this expectation).
3. Complete all academic requirements according to schedule, to achieve optimal performance in all courses, and to recognise the value of feedback in the educational process. Students take responsibility for their own learning, while also interacting constructively with their fellow students, lecturers and tutors.
4. Address personal issues that affect learning before these limit learning opportunities.
5. Not act with dishonesty nor submit the work of others as their own.
6. Complete course and lecturer evaluations for each course for which they are registered.
7. Respect all University property, and use University facilities in an acceptable and considerate manner which respects the needs of others.

Academic staff are expected to:

1. Treat students and fellow staff with respect and dignity, and without discrimination or favouritism.
2. Strive for excellence, relevance and clarity in their teaching and create an environment where questions and enquiry are encouraged.

3. Understand both local and global teaching contexts and use pedagogically relevant philosophies to shape curriculum content and classroom engagement.
4. Provide all reasonable assistance to students to enable them to perform optimally and to be available in clearly advertised ways to respond to student queries (e.g. by face-to-face consultations, email or other online means within a reasonable period and/or at reasonable times).
5. With respect to courses that they teach:
 - a. Provide clear, written course outlines stating the outcomes and expectations of students, DP requirements (if any) and how the DP is calculated, and how performance in the course will be assessed;
 - b. Adhere to agreed and published timetables for the courses;
 - c. Provide lists of required and recommended readings, timeously, and ensure that such materials are available to students on paper or online;
 - d. Design and implement a system of assessment for each course, which is consistent with the course outcomes;
 - e. Return work submitted for assessment within a reasonable period of time, with appropriate and constructive comments and other forms of evaluation, and ahead of formal examinations, so that students learn from this;
 - f. Ensure consistent and fair marking and effective moderation of marking;
 - g. Organize an evaluation for each course and use the feedback to improve the course.

Students registered for Master's and Doctoral degrees, and staff supervising these studies, should read this charter in conjunction with the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between supervisors and students, which guides supervisor – student interactions and timelines.

The University strives to

- Provide a safe and effective learning environment, free from harassment, intimidation and discrimination
- Provide support and developmental opportunities for teaching
- Provide all reasonable facilities and structures to support student success.

The University undertakes to

- Provide secure and reliable processes in respect of assessment and certification procedures.

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