



# UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN COUNCIL

## GUIDELINES FOR ACADEMIC CONDUCT

*These guidelines describe a set of expectations for ethical behaviour in the teacher-student learning environment at the University of Saskatchewan*

Approved by University Council June 17, 1999

# GUIDELINES

## for Academic Conduct

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These guidelines describe a set of expectations for ethical behaviour in the teacher-student learning environment at the University of Saskatchewan. The guidelines are described under three general principles, and are illustrated by specific examples of ethical behaviour. The three general principles and the classifications of expectations within these general principles are as follows:

***Principle I: Learning and Growth***

Student Development  
Subject Matter Competence  
Pedagogical Competence

***Principle II: Honesty and Integrity***

Academic Honesty  
Fair and Valid Assessment  
Managing Interactions and Relationships

***Principle III: Respect for the Dignity of Others***

Confidentiality  
Dealing with Sensitive Topics  
Respect for Others  
Respect for the Institution

Each section identifies the relevant roles and responsibilities of each of the three partners actively engaged in the learning environment; namely, students, faculty, and the institution as represented by the organizational units within it.

These guidelines are primarily meant to be an educational tool, intended to motivate the members of the university community to engage in thoughtful, ethical behaviour in all of their interactions in the learning environment. This document is intended to serve as a guide and inspiration to those who will craft future versions of the relevant rules, regulations and agreements that formally define everyone's roles and responsibilities at the University.

Ethical behaviour is defined by the ideals and values shared by a community. The ethical principles and expectations in this document advance the first objective of the University of Saskatchewan's Mission, which is "*to maintain the highest ethical standards in all its scholarly*

*activities.”* These guidelines should aid in the aspiration of the University of Saskatchewan to become “...*a model of scholarly inquiry, a place where all who contribute to its achievements – students, faculty, and staff – can take pride in their commitment to this center of excellence.*”

These guidelines were developed by a committee whose members were nominated by each of the partners in the learning environment. The committee was established by University Council in response to a request from the student body for the development of a code of conduct to guide interactions between students and faculty at the University of Saskatchewan. The principles elaborated in this document are adapted with permission from “*Ethical Principles in University Teaching*,” published by the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education in 1996.

No attempt is made in this document to distinguish the level of organizational unit (e.g. central administration, college or department level) which has the duty to exercise any specific collective responsibility. It is recognized that many appropriate policies and procedures are already in place, both university-wide, and within individual units. It is anticipated that the Office of the Vice-President (Academic) will coordinate a process of definition of which collective responsibilities apply to which unit, to ensure that the university as a whole does not neglect any particular collective responsibility.

This guide is applicable to other, more general university units that service and support the learning environment, such as the registrar’s office, the library, recreation services and athletics. It does not cover activities outside the overall teacher-student learning environment. For example, it does not address other faculty responsibilities such as research, public service, nor the administration of matters unrelated to teaching, nor does it cover students in the role of research assistants. It does not cover relationships between faculty and staff beyond the teaching context.

For those who seek advice on ethical behaviour in these other contexts, it is hoped that this document may assist in helping formulate some general principles for conduct. It is anticipated, for example, that administrators, staff and students may wish to treat each other with the same dignity and respect that students and teachers are expected to show to each other, and that any interaction between administrators, staff and teachers may generally adhere to the spirit of the standards described here.

This document recognizes and promotes the right to academic freedom within the framework of its corresponding duties and responsibilities.

# PRINCIPLE ONE

## Learning & Growth

The University of Saskatchewan's Mission is "... to achieve excellence in scholarly activities of teaching, discovering, preserving and applying knowledge." In keeping with this mission statement, the first organizing principle recognizes that the learning environment should contribute to the learning and intellectual growth of students, and that this requires teachers to continue their own growth and development throughout their careers, aided by the institution.

### Student Development

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One overriding responsibility of teachers is to contribute to the intellectual development of students. Teachers have a duty to design instruction that facilitates learning and encourages independent thinking, to treat students with respect and dignity, and to avoid actions that inhibit student development. Students are responsible for actively participating in the learning opportunities that the institution creates for them.

#### *Student development: the teacher's role*

The teacher is responsible for contributing to student development, both individually and through working cooperatively with members of the academic community and the community at large. A teacher is expected to encourage and promote the free pursuit of learning.

A teacher can encourage student development by:

- designing instruction that facilitates learning
- encouraging class participation
- promoting critical thinking rather than mere fact memorization
- stimulating autonomy and independent thinking in students
- serving as an intellectual guide and counselor
- properly supervising student projects, research and theses
- being available to students outside of class

When a student performs any of the roles of a teacher (for example, as a marking assistant), then the supervising teacher has a duty to provide proper guidance and supervision to the student.

### *Collective responsibilities for student development*

Organizational units are responsible for developing and implementing policies that promote student development. These policies should cover;

- student access to regular educational programs
- provision of counseling concerning program planning, class selection and program decision-making
- provision of internal scholarly forums for students such as lecture series, academic or professional conferences, and expositions
- creation of practical or applied learning opportunities (for example, clinical experiences, practica, internships, professional opportunities, or funded student employment.)
- provision, where feasible, of opportunities for students to attend external events such as conferences
- monitoring the terms and conditions of any student employment within the unit to ensure fair and equitable treatment of students, and an employment context that fosters student development

### *Student development: the student's role*

Students should take advantage of the development opportunities offered to them and work cooperatively to foster their development. A student should:

- actively participate in the learning process
- promote the free pursuit of learning
- promote the free exchange of ideas
- express their personal views and values
- consider and discuss other views and values
- develop independent thinking
- develop critical thinking skills
- respect the learning activities of others
- meet attendance expectations and requirements
- be prepared for each class

## Subject

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### **Matter Competence**

Students are entitled to be taught by teachers who are competent in the subject, and whose course content is current, accurate and relevant to course goals and objectives.

### ***Maintaining subject matter competence: the teacher's role***

Achieving competence requires a teacher to take active steps to maintain an up-to-date knowledge base sufficient to teach any course that may reasonably be assigned as a normal duty. To accomplish this, a teacher should keep abreast of any scholarly developments that may affect course content.

- conform to the calendar description of the course
- be current and accurate
- be appropriate to the course level
- adequately represent important topics within the subject area

For a course that is part of a structured, sequenced series of courses for students following a particular educational stream, a teacher should know the content of prerequisite courses and of courses for which the teacher's course may be prerequisite.

In this context the teacher must teach those materials that are designed to be covered in the particular course, e.g. to avoid needless duplication of material taught in a prior course, and to cover course material that prepares students for subsequent courses in the stream.

For courses which faculty have collegially decided should be theoretically identical (most typically separate sections of the same course taught in any one year), an individual teacher has the responsibility to teach material that does not substantially deviate from the collegially defined objectives and content of the course.

While it is to be expected that a teacher should, if appropriate, incorporate their own scholarly efforts into the instructional content of a course, care must be taken to ensure that these materials are presented at a level that matches the competence of the students, and that there is a balanced presentation of other non-personal research in the topic area.

### ***Collective responsibilities regarding subject matter competence***

Each organizational unit has a duty to ensure that every teacher in the unit is appropriately qualified, and that the unit has the breadth of expertise required to deliver scheduled courses and to meet its commitments to student research supervision.

An organizational unit should collegially decide when separate sections of the same course should have similar coverage. If, for example, the objective of the course is critical thinking, then clearly there may be variation in textbooks, reading assignments, illustrative problems, cases or scenarios used in different sections. For courses where content coverage

has been defined as being similar, then the organizational unit has the duty to ensure that the collegial decision is realized.

Organizational units should review and update programs, courses and calendar course descriptions on a regular basis, and ensure that significant content changes are vetted and discussed with other affected academic units.

***Subject matter competence: the student's role***

Students should read and understand the calendar description of any course they are enrolled in to be aware of the content of that course as described in the course outline. A student should know of and meet prerequisite course requirements for any course in which they enroll.

## Pedagogical Competence

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Students, teachers and the institution share a responsibility to create an environment that is conducive to learning. Teachers must not only know their subject matter, but also must practice effective instruction and stimulate learning.

***Pedagogical competence: the teacher's role***

Maintaining general pedagogical competence requires a teacher to be conversant with the current range of alternative teaching strategies that could be used to teach any course that may reasonably be assigned as a normal duty. To accomplish this, a teacher is expected to:

- keep abreast of pedagogical research developments, and to actively seek effective methods to integrate research and scholarship into teaching
- be prepared to participate in instructional development initiatives
- actively seek and constructively respond to feedback on instructional performance from students and peers

A teacher should plan the general pedagogy and the particular instructional delivery of a course in advance, and communicate these plans to the students at the start of the course via a course outline. A course outline serves as the primary contract between a teacher and the students and at a minimum will contain descriptions of the following:

- course objectives derived from the course calendar description
- instructional methods that will be used in the course

- planned general content of the course, and the sequencing of topic coverage in the delivery of this course content
- any activities (e.g. reading, lab work, and practical experience) required of students during the course
- any additional requirements of students which may be assessed, for example attendance regulations or class participation
- various component measures of assessment, including any minimum performance requirements, the contribution of these component measures to the final grade, and their timing and sequence in the course
- specific dates of activities which are critical for student learning or evaluation

A teacher should select course content and materials related to course objectives in advance, and then deliver this content and materials in accord with the instructional plans described in the course outline. The instructional method and the assessment method must be congruent with the stated course objectives (e.g. a fact-memorization exam is not appropriate for a course designed to teach problem-solving skills). A teacher should be fully prepared for class, keep office hours, and attend every class for the full class period where appropriate.

For planned absences (e.g. when a teacher is out of town at a conference) alternative arrangements such as replacement must be made and the department head or dean informed in advance. For sudden absences (e.g. illness) every reasonable effort should be made to inform students.

Some examples of unacceptable pedagogical practices are:

- arbitrary denial of access to instruction
- significant intrusion of material unrelated to the course
- holding examinations outside of scheduled times without the agreement of all students and the consent of the department head or dean
- teaching while under the influence of alcohol or recreational drugs
- teaching when incapacity or personal circumstances render the teacher unfit or unable to teach

A teacher should have the pedagogical flexibility to be able to:

- manage and balance the time devoted to components of course content
- adopt reasonable means to maintain a productive and orderly learning environment
- openly acknowledge any personal bias related to course content
- collaborate where appropriate with colleagues teaching other section of the same course, pre-requisite courses, or courses for which the current course is a pre-requisite

- collaborate where appropriate with colleagues involved in team teaching

### ***Collective responsibilities regarding pedagogical competence***

Organizational units are responsible for stimulating effective instruction by:

- encouraging teachers to learn about instructional methods
- encouraging mentorship and other forms of mutual support among teachers
- providing in-service and other training opportunities to teachers, and access to instructional development programs
- including those concerning new technology
- recognizing and rewarding innovative pedagogy

Organizational units should:

- design the unit's class schedules and assign teaching duties as early as possible
- establish a process for collecting reliable data on student and peer evaluation of teaching
- evaluate a teacher's pedagogical competence
- inform teachers of the results of their teaching evaluations
- recognize and reward teachers who exhibit superior pedagogical performance
- offer assistance to those teachers whose pedagogical performance has been identified as a problem through formal evaluation (e.g. assistance via mentorship)

Organizational units should maintain and foster the social, physical and technological climate in which the instructional duties of faculty may be effectively carried out, including the provision of clinics, laboratories, studios and other physical facilities, information technologies and library resources.

To assist students in making informed choices about their selection of courses in any one year, organizational units should provide students with timely details of the names of those teachers who have already been assigned to teach particular courses or sections.

### ***Student learning responsibilities***

A student will consider the course outline as a contract that describes course objectives, and which details the student's responsibilities during the delivery of a particular course. A student is expected to show substantial effort regarding:

- being punctual and meeting attendance requirements for lectures, tutorials, seminars and laboratories
- being free from the influence of alcohol or recreational drugs when attending scheduled learning activities
- being prepared for classes, tutorials, seminars and laboratories
- participating in class discussions
- completing papers and projects as assigned
- collaborating fairly with colleagues in group projects
- acknowledging the contributions of others in group work

A student is responsible for having the learning skills appropriate for the course being taken, for example having adequate study and writing skills. The student is responsible for the initiation of contact with a teacher outside of class when necessary or appropriate. The student assumes primary responsibility for the correction of learning deficiencies by taking writing courses, study courses, and by seeking to adapt to the effect of any impairment. If a student with an impairment that affects learning or performance wants this to be taken into account in any course, then it is the student's responsibility to inform the teacher and the organizational unit of that impairment at the earliest possible time so that plans can be made for the appropriate instruction and evaluation of that student.

## PRINCIPLE TWO

### Honesty & Integrity

All members of the academic community are expected to engage in scholarly activities with honesty and integrity, and to avoid bias or conflict of interest. Trust depends on academic honesty, and honesty is fundamental to the integrity of the learning environment at the University.

### Academic

#### **Honesty**

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Teachers must encourage an environment of academic honesty and be models of academic integrity. Students are expected to be assessed on the basis of their independent work, and should acknowledge the contributions of others when submitting work that is not fully their own.

### ***Academic honesty and integrity: the teacher's role***

A teacher should foster honest academic conduct and discourage all forms of academic dishonesty. In the learning environment a teacher must acknowledge academic debts to colleagues and students if teaching materials that originate from these sources are used. Plagiarism of teaching materials is unacceptable. A teacher must be aware of and observe copyright laws regarding teaching materials. A teacher must acknowledge student contributions to other scholarly activities, for example in the creation of artistic works, or in the publication of research papers.

When pertinent, a teacher should remind students of the need for independent work on assignments, of the need to acknowledge the work of others, and of the definition of plagiarism and its implications.

Assisting in or covering up any academic dishonesty is itself misconduct. Faculty should report academic misconduct to the appropriate authority.

### ***Collective responsibilities: academic honesty and integrity***

Organizational units must foster honest academic conduct, and are responsible for the management of policies that protect and ensure academic honesty. Units must inform students about policies regarding academic dishonesty, and in particular ensure that students know how the university defines plagiarism and its consequences.

Organizational units that require medical excuse notes to reschedule lab and assignment dates may wish to consider the use of signed student affidavits as a general policy for handling student claims of incapacitation by temporary ailments that have since ceased and which no longer evident to medical personnel.

### ***Academic honesty and integrity: the student's role***

Honesty and integrity are expected of every student in class participation, examinations, assignments, patient care and other academic work. Every student must perform his or her own work unless specifically instructed otherwise. The same standard of student honesty should apply to interactions with personnel such as lab instructor, teaching assistants, sessional instructors and administrative staff, as applies to interactions with full-time faculty.

Student misconduct includes cheating; plagiarism; forgery; fabrication; theft of instructional material or tests; unauthorized access to or manipulation of laboratory or clinical equipment or computer programs; alteration of grade books, clinical records, files or computer grades; misuse of research data in reporting results; use of personal relationships

to gain grades or favours or other attempts to obtain grades or credit through fraudulent means; unprofessional conduct related to patient care; threats to university personnel; and other conduct inconsistent with academic integrity.

Cheating includes giving or receiving unauthorized aid in academic work such as the improper use of books, notes, or other students' tests, papers or lab reports; the buying or supplying of term papers, lab reports, essays or analyses; passing off the artistic work of others as one's own; taking a dishonest competitive advantage (for instance, preventing others from fair and equal access to library resources); or using work done for one course in fulfillment of the requirements of another, without approval of the teachers involved.

Plagiarism is the theft of the intellectual creation of another person without proper attribution. It is the use of someone else's words or ideas or data without proper documentation or acknowledgment. Quotations must be clearly marked, and sources of information, ideas, or opinions of others must be clearly indicated in all written work. This applies to paraphrased ideas as well as to direct quotations. A student must acknowledge and fairly recognize any contributions made to their personal research and scholarly work by others, including other students.

Fabrication includes furnishing to a university office or official or faculty member a written or oral statement known by the student to be false or misleadingly incomplete. This includes, but is not limited to, medical information and student data for financial aid and admission. Unauthorized access includes clandestine entry into any university facility or property, unapproved use or manipulation of university documents, records, or files, including computer data and programs.

Unacceptable use of computing services and violation of copyright law are also considered to be academic misconduct.

Students who fail to identify themselves at examinations or who participate in any misrepresentation of the identity of a student at an examination will be considered to be engaged in academic misconduct.

Assisting in or covering up any academic dishonesty is itself misconduct. A student should report academic misconduct to the appropriate authority.

## Fair & Valid

### **Assessment**

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Assessment in the learning environment should adhere to the principles of honesty and integrity; i.e. it should be valid, open, fair, and consistent with the objectives of the course.

### ***Fair and valid assessment: the teacher's role***

A teacher is responsible for selecting a method of assessment of student academic performance that is congruent with course objectives and content, is valid reflects true merit, is fair and impartial, and that provides a consistent and balanced evaluation.

A teacher should inform students at the onset of the marking system to be used. Where feasible and appropriate, the same marking system should be used for all duplicate sections of a particular course. A teacher should evaluate student work by use of the university's grading system and criteria, such as the current set of literal descriptors, and should evaluate student performance only with criteria directly reflecting course objectives. Examples of inappropriate criteria include the awarding of unwarranted high marks to garner positive student evaluations (or suppress negative evaluations), and the imposition of artificially low marks to shock students with the threat of failure, and hence stimulate increased study effort.

A teacher should have appropriate expectations regarding the workload of students in any one course, recognizing that they will have commitments in all of the other courses in which they are enrolled. Teachers should avoid the excessive proliferation of assignments whose individual contributions to a final grade are small.

Student assignments and examinations should be graded diligently and promptly, and anonymously if feasible. Students should receive advice about their work regularly throughout a course, including counsel on how to improve performance when possible. Teachers must keep a record of the means used to allocate marks to individual students so that in the event of any appeal an audit of the mark assignment can take place. When the relevant organizational unit formally requests a teacher to accommodate a reasonable special assessment need of a student with an impairment, the teacher should comply.

Teachers who do not wish their exam materials to enter the public domain are expected to make an announcement in the examination room prohibiting their removal and/or publish in the exam paper a clear prohibition against removal, copying and distribution.

### ***Collective responsibilities: fair and valid assessment***

Organizational units should participate in the development and operation of evaluation and examination regulations and appeal procedures. Policies for the management of student assessment should include:

- early setting of dates for final examinations
- accommodating the special needs of individuals with impairments

- choosing particular methods of assessment
- the design and operation of anonymous evaluation and examination systems, where feasible
- treating students equitably
- equity of workload expectations and standards across courses
- monitoring student academic workloads (in individual courses, and overall for any one term) where feasible, and reviewing assignments/mid-term exam dates to avoid overload
- assessing the consistency and fairness of evaluation across sections, including consideration of grade patterns for identical assignments and of attendance regulations (if any) across separate sections of the same course
- ensuring that grades assigned to students are based on academic performance related to the course objectives, and are not distorted by non-academic issues
- providing guidance to teachers in the distribution of marks, for example, by providing literal descriptors of benchmark levels of academic performance
- appeal of grades assigned to students

Organizational units must ensure that data collected from students and faculty peers on the performance of teachers is legitimate and representative.

***Fair and valid assessment: the student's role***

A student must be aware of the examination regulations of the unit in which they are taking a course, and of the particular assessment structure described in the course outline.

A student who chooses to disclose to the teacher and the relevant organizational unit that they have special needs should do so as soon as possible in a course. It is the duty of the student to make any formal request regarding special needs well in advance of any assessed activity.

A student should observe examination regulations, and not commit, aid or abet academic misconduct such as plagiarism, cheating, or misrepresentation.

Examination materials are not to be removed from an exam room if a teacher prohibits the removal and/or the exam materials are clearly marked with a clear prohibition against removal, copying and distribution. An individual student or an organized student group or body must not collect, file or distribute past examination materials that a teacher has expressly forbidden to be removed from an examination room, or exam materials that have been compiled from memory. It is unacceptable for an individual student or student bodies to offer financial payments or other

incentives to encourage students to collect exam materials from teachers who do not wish these materials to be released into the public domain.

Given that student evaluations can play a critical role in the formal decision processes of promotion, tenure and annual salary review for faculty at the University of Saskatchewan, it is expected that every student will provide an honest assessment of a teacher's performance when volunteering to do so.

## Managing Interactions & Relationships

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Establishing a good rapport with students can be pedagogically productive, but in rare circumstances the development of a close personal contact can lead to the misuse of the power differential between teachers and students. At the extreme there are serious risks of exploitation, compromise of academic standards, harm to student development, and damage to reputations. While a teacher bears most of the responsibility for managing student-teacher interactions, and for avoiding any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that relationships can produce, students are also expected to behave in such a manner as to maintain an appropriate relationship. It is acknowledged that non-exploitative dual relationships can evolve, however, and thus there is need to specify guidelines for the practical management of such relationships to avoid even the perception of a conflict of interest.

### *Managing interactions and relationships: the teacher's role*

A teacher should respect students, treat them with dignity, and recognize the power differential between students and teachers. A teacher should always avoid the perception of favouritism or nepotism regarding matters such as grading or employing research assistants. Teachers must not exploit students, discriminate unfairly between students, or allow conflicts of interest with students to arise.

The teacher is responsible for keeping relationships with students focused on academic matters, and for creating an appropriate social environment that fosters the educational objectives of the program or course. The teacher must ensure that faculty-student personal relationships do not detract from student development.

A teacher may encounter several types of dual relationships. Accepting an instructional role (e.g. grading) over a member of one's immediate family, or over a close friend, client, patient or business partner will place the teacher in a conflict of interest. A teacher who cannot avoid such relationships should disclose them to a supervisor, and arrange to adopt a method of assessment (e.g. anonymous grading, use of an independent assessor) that precludes actual or perceived nepotism.

Teachers must recognize that any form of sexual or close personal relationship with a current student will not only produce a conflict of interest, but may also expose the teacher or the student to accusations of sexual harassment, exploitation and manipulation if the relationship deteriorates. If a close personal relationship does develop, then for the protection of all parties the teacher is advised to report the relationship to a supervisor as soon as possible. The supervisor should then make alternative arrangements for the supervision or evaluation of the student.

There are a variety of interactions with students that risk producing accusations of favouritism or exploitation. These include excessive socializing with students outside class, either individually, or as a group; lending money to or borrowing from students; giving or receiving non-trivial gifts (i.e. valued in excess of \$10); or requiring students to participate in a political or social movement advocated by the teacher. Such behaviour is best avoided.

A simple sign that a particular form of relationship is unacceptable is any effort by the teacher to conceal it.

### ***Collective responsibilities for managing interactions and relationships***

Organizational units are responsible for ensuring a fair and equitable environment for students and faculty, and for managing matters such as hiring practices, equity, harassment, grading and dual-relationships. Units should have policies that thwart the abuse of the power differential between teachers and students.

Units should create an environment in which concerns may be raised without fear of retribution, in which the power differential between teachers and students is recognized, and in which complaints are dealt with promptly and with due process.

### ***Managing interactions and relationships: the student's role***

A student should keep relationships with teachers focused on academic matters, and adopt social behaviours that are appropriate to academic relationships.

If a student becomes personally involved with a teacher, the student is advised to seek independent advice. Because of the power differential the student is advised to disclose the existence of the relationship to a student counselor, so as to ensure the student can be advised of the best means of managing the various consequences of the relationship, including the possibility of actual or perceived favouritism or malice by the teacher.

When a student assumes any or all of the duties of a teacher (either as an employee or as a volunteer) he or she has a duty to adhere to the same

ethical standards concerning relationships with other students as identified for teachers in the section above.

# PRINCIPLE THREE

## Respect for the Dignity of Others

All members of the University community are expected to contribute to the development of a learning environment where ideas, values and beliefs can be discussed and received with respect and dignity.

### Confidentiality

#### **Confidentiality**

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It is expected that students, teachers and other members of the institution will value and practice a level of confidentiality that is appropriate for professionals involved in a mentoring relationship. Upholding this standard serves to maintain and nurture academic trust and motivation in the teacher-student relationship.

#### *Maintaining confidentiality: the teacher's role*

Details about the professional relationship between an individual student and the teacher shall remain confidential except in cases of formal discipline procedures or of overriding concern for individual or collective welfare, or where it is appropriate to monitor and discuss student academic progress within an organizational unit.

Examples of information about students that would normally be confidential include:

- non-academic personal information such as age, address, and marital status
- student number
- academic, classroom and lab performance, attendance, general behaviour, level of contribution, quality and quantity of assignments
- personal opinions and political viewpoints expressed by students in a formal educational setting
- any materials submitted or produced by a student in an educational setting

Examples of behaviour that would normally violate the norm of confidentiality include:

- providing student records to any third party without student consent
- discussing without consent a student's grades or academic problems outside of the normal institutional mentoring context, e.g. with student peers, or with a relative or colleague of the student
- using confidential information about an individual student to prejudice another teacher's expectation of that student's performance
- using privately communicated materials as teaching or research materials without consent
- posting of grades or distributing student papers or exams without attempting to minimize the public identification of the performance of individual students

Any faculty member who receives confidential information about another individual in the university environment (for example other faculty, administrators, staff or researchers) has a responsibility to respect that person's right to confidentiality. When the teacher reasonably suspects major misconduct, the disclosure of otherwise confidential information to the appropriate authority is warranted, and the teacher has a duty to take appropriate action.

### ***Collective responsibilities regarding confidentiality***

Organizational units have a duty to participate in the development, implementation and monitoring of policies and procedures that protect confidentiality. Within an organizational unit it is preferable that there be uniform policies to:

- restrict disclosure of confidential personal and academic information
- ensure and protect the anonymity of grading whenever possible
- inform students of all rules and protocols regarding confidentiality and their importance in the academic setting

### ***Maintaining confidentiality: the student's role***

All students have a responsibility to be aware of and follow all the rules and policies regarding confidentiality in the organizational units in which they are studying.

Each student has a duty to protect the confidential relationship between the student and the teacher in a way that mirrors the duties of the teacher towards the student as described above, with the exception that from the student perspective the classroom is considered to be a public arena unless deemed otherwise by all participants in a particular course.

Each student has a responsibility to protect the confidentiality of other students, and not to disclose without consent facts about others such as personal information, academic information and progress. Such disclosure is warranted for the assessment of the contributions of others to group work, for discipline proceedings, or when there is an overriding concern for individual or collective welfare. When the student reasonably suspects major misconduct, the disclosure of otherwise confidential information to the appropriate authority is warranted, and the student has a duty to take appropriate action.

All students must demonstrate that they have obtained consent before acting on another student's behalf, for example in acquiring another student's grades, papers or feedback from a teacher, or in discussing another student's progress with a teacher. A student must not use privately disclosed information in assignments or papers without consent.

All students have a duty to protect the confidentiality of any formal university procedures in which they are invited to participate, for example discipline inquiries, or selection committees for senior academic appointments.

## Dealing with **Sensitive Topics**

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Members of the academic community must work together to create an atmosphere where sensitive issues are addressed in a fair and dignified manner. The critical inquiry that is essential to the life of the university will often necessitate the discussion of sensitive issues. The sensitivity or unpopularity of an issue is no reason for its discussion to be suppressed.

### *Dealing with sensitive topics: the teacher's role*

A teacher should realize that some necessary elements of course content may evoke discomfort among some students. If this reaction can be anticipated, a teacher should take particular care in introducing that particular topic. If it is thought necessary not to have a dispassionate, neutral position on the issue, the teacher may identify his or her view on the topic, but should compare this to an alternative approach or interpretation, thereby providing students with an understanding of the complexity of the issue, and the difficulty of achieving a single "objective" conclusion.

A teacher who expresses a firm view on a sensitive issue should be alert to the distinction between indoctrination and education. It is considered an abuse of power for a teacher to force his or her own views on students. Whether personal views are expressed or not, it is unacceptable for a

teacher to assign marks based solely on student conformity to the teacher's viewpoint.

A teacher should respect differing views and have the pedagogical flexibility to be able to allow for the expression of alternative views in the classroom. It is unacceptable for a teacher to slander, belittle or ridicule a student or to act in any way as to cause a student embarrassment about personal beliefs or attitudes.

### ***Collective responsibilities for dealing with sensitive topics***

Organizational units are expected to enable the teaching of sensitive topics, and to support teachers whose classes contain sensitive content.

### ***Dealing with sensitive topics: the student's role***

Students should identify their own perspectives on sensitive issues, respect alternate views, and refrain from imposing their own values on others. Every student should respect the rights of others by treating all participants equitably, by tolerating and respecting their views, and by avoiding stereotyping. Any one student or group of students with a specific agenda should not dominate classroom discussion.

A student should help maintain a safe environment for discussion that facilitates open debate, recognizing that any view can be legitimately examined critically in an objective and disinterested fashion.

## **Respect**

### **for Others**

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Members of the academic community are expected to respect the dignity of colleagues, and to work cooperatively in the interest of fostering a learning environment conducive to the development and growth of all members.

### ***Respect for others: the teacher's role***

A teacher must be aware of the ethical responsibilities that attach to the role of university teacher, and show tolerance and respect for students and colleagues. A teacher who participates in any professional practice as a student or practitioner must adhere to the relevant ethical code of that professional discipline.

A teacher has a responsibility to interact with students, colleagues and the institution in a professionally dignified manner. Many student complaints stem from a lack of respect from faculty. Examples of disrespect for students by a teacher include; writing demeaning comments on papers and

assignments; dismissing student questions or answers as silly or stupid; singling out individuals in class to make a general point; telling students that a teacher is too busy to see them and not offering an appointment for a later date; and making threats of failure instead of offering words of encouragement for students in difficulty.

The teacher is responsible for creating a learning environment that fosters respect for all student views and the human rights of all students, avoids stereotyping of individuals or groups of students and encourages the development of student self-esteem and confidence.

A teacher must be fair and objective when presenting a professional judgment of a colleague, and not allow personal feelings or bias to influence such judgment. A teacher should defend the rights of their colleagues to exercise academic freedom, and prevent unjust discrimination and exploitation of other employees. A teacher has a duty to respect the confidentiality of information about a colleague gained during committee work dealing with personnel matters (e.g. tenure, promotion and discipline).

It is unethical for a teacher to observe misconduct and fail to respond appropriately. An appropriate response will depend on the situation and could range from talking directly to the individual about the situation to a formal complaint.

In the case of serious misconduct by a colleague or student, then the teacher must initiate a formal and confidential complaint as the first step in handling the matter. For cases of minor unethical conduct by a colleague or student, a teacher may first attempt to resolve the issue informally before considering a formal process. The inappropriate use of formal means of complaint applied to minor misconduct could risk irreparable damage to professional reputations.

In any ongoing dispute or disagreement, the participants should behave in a professional way. Parties to a dispute have a duty of confidentiality and respect towards an adversarial party. It is unprofessional for a teacher to make derogatory personal remarks about another individual or fail to acknowledge academic debts to colleagues or students based on personal grounds. It is inappropriate to provide academic advice based on personal bias about an individual teacher.

### ***Collective responsibilities regarding respect for others***

Organizational units must have formal policies and procedure for the investigation of alleged inappropriate behaviour that allow for due process and protect the reputation of teacher, students and the institution until the investigation is complete.

Organizational units should accommodate informal mechanisms for the resolution of allegations of minor misconduct, with the aim of forestalling any unnecessary escalation to the level of formal investigation.

Organizations within the university must not allow their self-interest or bias to influence decisions regarding course approval or program planning.

***Respect for others: the student's role***

A student should adhere to the expectations of student ethical conduct, and show tolerance and respect for colleagues and teacher. A student acting as a practitioner in professional practice must conform to that profession's code of conduct or ethics. When students assume any or all of the duties of teachers (either as employees or as volunteers) they have a duty to adhere to the same ethical standards concerning relationships with other students as identified for teachers in any of the sections of this document.

Students should play a role in the development of peers, for example, by assisting in any ethical way any other students whom they may see to be in difficulty.

A student who observes and suspects serious misconduct by a member of the university community should initiate a formal complaint. In cases where the suspected misconduct is thought to be less serious, then the student is encouraged to approach the individual concerned or the appropriate authorities to seek a resolution of the matter.

Students must be fair and objective when presenting an opinion on students or teachers, and particularly should not allow personal feelings or bias to influence their assessment of the professional competence of teachers.

A student should:

- not discriminate unjustly or exploit other students
- not disrupt the classroom or general learning environment, for example by talking or signaling in class, or by leaving and entering the class at inopportune times
- not harass, intimidate or threaten other students, staff or teachers
- not hide, hoard or destroy communal learning resources such as library materials, laboratory equipment and computers

The reputation and welfare of the University of Saskatchewan are of concern to many individuals and organizations apart from the current members of the University community. The importance of the institution's reputation must be considered by those whose conduct may affect the institution.

### ***Respecting the institution: the teacher's role***

A teacher has a responsibility to work for the good of the university as a whole and to abide by university policies, regulations and ethical standards pertaining to the education of students.

A teacher should cherish and protect the right to free expression, and uphold the educational goals and standards of the university. The dialogue involved in striving for the best goals and standards for the university may require criticism of current or planned organizational policies; criticism and dissent are essential and inevitable elements of university life. Faculty should ensure that criticism is based on accurate information, and addresses the issue and not the individual involved.

A teacher should represent the university appropriately when off campus, for example during conferences, internships, exchanges, or work/study programs. A teacher has a duty to avoid behaviour that damages the reputation of the institution and to avoid misconduct against the institution; for example:

- misrepresenting oneself as speaking for the institution when this is not the case
- misrepresenting the institution's view point
- subverting, or aiding and abetting the subversion of properly constituted discipline procedures of the institution, or the outcome of any particular discipline process
- significant use of university property for non-academic purposes or personal gain, including the misuse of university stationery, letterhead, phones, fax machines or computers
- defacing, damaging or vandalizing university property

### ***Collective Responsibilities – respect for institution***

Organizational units have a duty to participate in the development and operation of appropriate policies, procedures, rules and regulations that guide the activities and conduct of faculty and students. Units are responsible for educating and informing the academic community about relevant policies and procedures, and for ensuring that these policies and procedures are followed.

Organizational units have a duty to protect free speech and academic freedom, and to maintain the institution's integrity.

### ***Respecting the institution: the student's role***

The student's responsibilities toward the institution are similar to those described above for the teacher. A student should be aware of, respect and

follow the university's educational goals, policies and standards. A student has a duty to avoid any behaviour that significantly interferes with the rights of others to pursue their studies.

Every student should cherish and protect the right to free expression, and uphold the educational goals and standards of the university. The dialogue involved in striving for the best goals and standards for the university may require criticism of current or planned organizational policies; criticism and dissent is an essential and inevitable element of university life. A student should ensure that criticism is based accurate information, and addresses the issue and not the individual involved.

A student has a duty to avoid behaviour that damages the reputation of the institution and to avoid misconduct against the institution; for example:

- misrepresenting oneself as speaking for the institution when this is not the case
- misrepresenting the institution's viewpoint
- subverting, or aiding and abetting the subversion of properly constituted discipline procedures of the institution, or the outcome of any particular discipline process
- significant use of university property for non-academic purposes or personal gain, including the misuse of university stationery, letterhead, phones, fax machines or computers
- defacing, damaging or vandalizing university property
- disrupting or interfering with the learning environment in the classroom

Students should represent the university appropriately when off campus, for example during conferences, internships, exchanges, athletic competitions or work/study programs.