



# Spring 2026

## Semester Information and Reminders

Dear UB Faculty and Instructors,

As we approach the start of the new semester, we want to bring to your attention important semester-related information and ask for your assistance to ensure critical policies and practices are addressed at the beginning of and during the semester. Please use this as a reference tool throughout the semester.

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### Course Design, Syllabus and Management

#### Spring 2026 Info for Faculty

Information about important dates, grading deadlines, faculty resources and helpful links is available on the Office of the Registrar's [newly launched Info for Faculty page](#).

#### Classroom Maintenance

We know that the quality of our classrooms is critical for faculty and student success. If you notice an issue or have a concern, please [report it](#)!

#### Course Content Accessibility

[New federal ADA Title II regulations](#) require that all digital course materials at UB, including documents, videos, slides and other online instructional content, [meet the WCAG 2.1 Level AA accessibility standards](#) by April 24, 2026. The updated regulations emphasize ensuring accessibility of digital course materials before sharing with students rather than relying on individual accommodation requests. To support the new requirements, UB has established [Unit Faculty Accessibility Liaisons](#) in every decanal unit, with central support provided through the Office of Curriculum, Assessment and Teaching Transformation (CATT).

To get started, CATT has developed several support resources and training opportunities on the [Digital Accessibility of Course Materials webpage](#).

### **Guidance for Artificial Intelligence**

UB has no universal policy about student use of artificial intelligence tools (e.g., ChatGPT and Grammarly). As with any other technology, instructors have the academic freedom to determine what tools students can and cannot use in pursuit of meeting course learning objectives. As you decide if and how to allow AI use in your classroom, you can find [guidance for you](#) and [your students](#) on the [Office of Academic Integrity website](#). Please be aware that some commonly used tools, such as Grammarly, are now powered by generative AI. Be explicit with your students about what you allow and be transparent with students about your own use of AI in the classroom.

It is highly recommended that you provide clear guidance to your students about the parameters of artificial intelligence use in class discussion and in the course syllabus. Some sample syllabus language includes:

#### *To prohibit any use of generative AI:*

All work submitted for this course must be your own. As a result, any use of generative AI (e.g., ChatGPT or Grammarly) is prohibited in this class and will be considered a violation of UB's academic integrity policy. Details of what resources are allowed will be provided for each assignment. If you are unsure if a resource or tool is allowable, be sure to ask.

#### *To allow the use of generative AI:*

This course allows the use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT or Grammarly) on certain assignments within given guidelines. Failure to follow these guidelines may be considered a violation of UB's academic integrity policy. If you are unsure how and when generative AI can be used, be sure to ask.

### **Planning Your Course Schedule and Requirements**

As you plan your syllabi, you may consult the [Avoiding Conflicts with Religious Holidays webpage](#) when determining dates for any major class requirements, such as exams. As you plan for final exams, please note that UB's Faculty Teaching Responsibilities Policy states, "*Final examinations shall be offered as officially scheduled, not during the final week of classes.*" Additionally, please see the [Exam Conflict Policy in the Undergraduate Catalog](#) for information on conflicts during the term.

### **Syllabus Requirements**

As stated in the Faculty Senate policy:

- A course syllabus must be finalized and distributed to the class during the first week of classes.
- During the semester, instructors are expected to conform to their course syllabi, except as

unanticipated circumstances require deviation. In such situations, instructors should inform all students and provide an opportunity for discussion with students prior to making a final decision regarding changes in the course syllabus.

Faculty should ensure their syllabi have all the required elements found in the [undergraduate course syllabus guidelines](#) (UBITName and password required) and [graduate course syllabus guidelines](#). Of particular significance is the requirement that every syllabus (regardless of level) must include:

- enumerated student learning outcomes,
- each required class activity (assignment) with the corresponding deadline,
- which activity (assignment) assesses which outcome, and
- how the class outcomes link to larger unit program outcomes.

Faculty may wish to include information about additional student resources, such as Student Emergency Funds and Blue Table. An overview of important student resources can be found under the “Resources for Students” section at the end of this message.

A syllabus sets the tone for the entire semester, and the way it is written can shape whether students feel recognized, supported and motivated from day one. Even small shifts in language and framing can help students feel more connected and confident as they begin your course. [This recent article](#) discusses how faculty can help students feel seen. [The CATT website](#) has additional resources for developing your syllabus.

### **Instructional Resources**

The Office of Curriculum, Assessment and Teaching Transformation (CATT) provides numerous resources to help instructors prepare for and deliver courses. For essential instructional support updates, visit the [This Semester at UB webpage](#). Additionally, [Teaching at UB](#) is a resource built by CATT that provides quick access to helpful resources across UB.

### **Mode of Instruction**

Delivery of instruction should adhere to the instruction mode, campus and location listed in HUB. Instructors should not change the modality of instruction without explicit approval from their department and decanal unit. Any approved changes in course modality must be reported to the Office of the Registrar and clearly communicated to enrolled students. [Definitions of modes of instruction are available on the Registrar's website](#).

### **Course-Related Fees**

Before any fees are levied for course activities, they must be approved according to UB and SUNY policies using the detailed process on the [Administrative Services Gateway's Fee Development and Cost Accounting page](#). For assistance, contact your chair and unit business officer.

## **Online Proctoring**

Instructors cannot require students to pay for online proctoring services without offering an alternative accommodation for students who are unable or unwilling to pay. Guidance regarding online [proctoring tools](#) and [environment scans](#) is available on the Office of Academic Integrity website.

## **Learning Management System**

UB Learns, powered by Brightspace, is UB's exclusive learning management system. For more information and to review training resources, visit the [Learning Management System support website](#) and the [Need-To-Know for the Semester Startup webpage](#). UB Learns can be accessed at [ublearns.buffalo.edu](https://ublearns.buffalo.edu).

# **Academic Integrity, Class Attendance and Behavioral Expectations**

## **Academic Integrity**

The university's academic integrity policy requires that all infractions, regardless of severity, be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity through the online [Academic Dishonesty Report Form](#). Instructors can find extensive information related to academic dishonesty cases and academic integrity on the [instructor page of the Office of Academic Integrity website](#).

## **Class Attendance and Excusable Absences**

To promote student responsibility, each class instructor determines and conveys specific class attendance policies through the course syllabus, as well as dates and times for classes, exams and all other required activities.

The [undergraduate](#) and [graduate](#) class attendance policies define excusable absences. Please use all means at your disposal to allow students to make up work and engage in class activities missed due to excusable absences, as appropriate for your course. We recommend clearly communicating expectations for alternative assignments or makeup work and maintaining flexibility based on student circumstances and attendance policies.

## **Behavioral Expectations in the Learning Space**

Students are expected to abide by the behavioral expectations outlined by an instructor for a learning space. Lawful, civil expression of disagreement with the instructor or other students is not in itself "disruptive behavior" and is not proscribed under these or any other regulations. However, when student conduct interferes with or prevents the conduct of classes or other university functions or when the safety of members of the campus community is endangered by threats of disruption, violence or violent acts, the administration has approved the following course of action: Advise, Remove, Report. Guidelines for faculty to address disruptions in the classroom are available on the [Behavioral Expectations in the Learning Space webpage](#).

## **Improper Distribution of Course Materials Policy**

Instructors may, at their discretion, restrict the distribution of course materials prepared or assigned by them. While this is primarily to prevent students from sharing faculty intellectual property with online vendors, be sure to clarify if you do not want course materials uploaded to AI tools. Instructors must opt in to this policy by including guideline language in their [undergraduate](#) (UBITName and password required) or [graduate](#) syllabus. It is also advisable to discuss this with students. Violators can be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity through a [report form](#) and will be required to complete an educational sanction about the value of intellectual property.

## Course Grading, Evaluation and Records

### F Grade Participation Tracking

UB does not require faculty to take attendance. However, to ensure compliance with financial aid regulations, the University at Buffalo must confirm eligibility requirements for every student. At the time of grade entry, faculty will select from three failure options that indicate if and when the student receiving an F grade participated in the class. [Additional information and FAQs are available on the Office of the Registrar faculty and staff website.](#)

### Incomplete (I) Grades

Undergraduate course instructors are encouraged to review [guidelines for assigning incomplete grades to undergraduate students](#). Undergraduate students seeking an incomplete grade must submit a request to the instructor; only students who hold a passing average at the time of the request are eligible.

### S/U Grading

S/U grading functions differently for undergraduate and graduate students. View [information on S/U grading for undergraduate students](#). Information for graduate students related to S/U grading can be found on the [Graduate School website](#). More information is also available on the [S/U Grading page](#) on the Office of Registrar Faculty and Staff website.

### Grade Changes Online

Faculty can change grades via the HUB Faculty Center until the day grades are due. After the grade change deadline, undergraduate, graduate and pharmacy grade changes must be submitted via the [electronic grade changes tool](#) (UBITName and password required). The completed form will be routed automatically to individuals within your department for necessary approvals and sent to the Office of the Registrar for processing. Faculty Senate policy states that grades other than incomplete or blank can be changed only to correct an error in the calculation or entry of the grade or as a result of re-evaluation of an end-of-session assignment or exam. Grade changes based on additional or revised work completed after the semester ends cannot be approved. For more information, please visit the [Grade Changes page](#) on the Office of Registrar Faculty and Staff website

### Mid-Semester Review for Undergraduate Students

Early assessment of student progress can be pivotal in helping students address academic issues. Mid-semester review for undergraduate students will begin in week four and conclude at the end of week seven. This allows us to provide valuable academic feedback to students earlier in the semester when students need it most. Faculty will receive email notifications when mid-semester grading rosters are available. When contacted by the Office of the Registrar, please evaluate your students using the tools provided.

### **Posting of Student Grades**

Student exams, papers and final grades are sensitive data not to be posted publicly using any identifier that can be known or determined by others (e.g., name, birthdate, UBITName, or any portion of a person number). To distribute grades using UB Learns, follow the guides available on the [UB Learns support website](#).

### **Course Evaluations**

You can visit your [course evaluations dashboard](#) (UBITName and password required) as early as the end of February to confirm which of your courses will be evaluated. Instructors are permitted to add three customized questions to each course evaluation. You may add your questions until course evaluations open (two weeks before finals week begins). Prior to evaluations opening, please contact your department scheduler if you do not see a course section that you believe should be set up for an evaluation. To preserve confidentiality and anonymity of student feedback, in-class time designated for the completion of course evaluations is conducted without instructor supervision. Instructors may provide necessary instructions and then exit the physical or virtual instructional space for the duration of the evaluation period. This practice supports unbiased student participation and upholds the integrity of the course-evaluation process. Only course sections with a response rate of at least five students will receive a report. For support with UB course evaluations, contact [ubce@buffalo.edu](mailto:ubce@buffalo.edu). The Office of Curriculum, Assessment and Teaching Transformation (CATT) has collaborated with the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and the Office of Faculty Affairs to design a process to address explicit bias in course evaluations. If you receive comments with explicitly biased language, you are encouraged to [file a report on the EDI website](#).

### **Records Retention**

All course materials that contributed to assessment and grading should be retained for one year following the conclusion of the semester. Materials include papers, exams, quizzes or other graded work, as well as scoring sheets, grade books and rosters. Retention for one year after course completion meets the SUNY/SED mandates regarding student records maintenance.

## **Resources for Students**

### **Accessibility Resources**

Students who require assistance to ensure their ability to participate fully in class should be referred to [Accessibility Resources](#) for determination of any appropriate accommodations, which



students should then share with you to guide your instruction.

### **Emergency Funds**

Student emergency funds at UB seek to award grants to eligible students experiencing an unforeseen hardship that could impact their ability to remain enrolled in school. To learn more, visit the [Emergency Funds webpage](#).

### **Pulse and Navigate Apps**

Two free mobile apps every student should download before the semester begins are [Pulse and Navigate](#). With one easy view of their course information (e.g., calendars, assignments, discussions, etc.), the Pulse app allows students to visualize upcoming activities, receive notifications from their instructor, and stay on top of coursework. Students should download the Navigate app to make appointments with advisors, tutors, and other support staff, manage tasks related to their academics, find Study Buddies, and connect with resources. This app offers many benefits for undergraduate students, and graduate students can also download Navigate to utilize applicable functionality.

### **Student Support Websites**

Undergraduate students can find support and information on the [Student Guide](#) and the [Student Success Gateway](#). Graduate students can find [current student resources on the Graduate School website](#). Graduate students looking to find mentors regarding issues beyond coursework, comps and dissertations can be referred to the [Network for Enriched Academic Relationships \(NEAR\)](#). Graduate students can connect with mentors who have experience navigating obstacles like their own or who can be allies throughout their academic and professional journey.

### **Students of Concern**

Faculty sometimes encounter a student whose well-being or circumstances raise concerns. [Students of Concern](#) is a resource that can help you identify students who may need assistance. You may refer such a student to various [UB resources](#) or contact [Student Conduct](#), who will then contact the student directly.

### **Addressing Food Insecurity**

Blue Table is a food pantry for enrolled UB students who do not have access to food as a result of an emergency. The program is available to offset unanticipated hardship and short-term food insecurity and is not meant to replace a meal plan or be a means of consistent grocery access. For more information, visit the [Food Support webpage](#).

### **Support for Mental Health**

UB has a variety of services to help students' mental health and wellness, including [Counseling Services](#) and [Health Promotion](#). See the [Student Guide's Mental/Emotional Well-Being page](#) for other sources of help at UB.

As you ready your courses for the start of the semester, I wish you a successful semester and a

fruitful learning experience with your students. Please let us know if our offices may assist your efforts.

Warm regards,

Graham Hammill  
Senior Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs and Dean of the Graduate School

Ann Bisantz  
Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education

cc: President  
Provost

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