

## Business & Management Department Academic Standards FINAL – June 19, 2011

- The academic standards were reviewed and revised at the department meeting of 08.11.2010 attended by: Regina Kecht – Academic Director; Chris Newman – Business & Management Department Head; David Pamphlet – MBA Director; Maria Madlberger – Full-Time Research Professor (Business; Arno Haslberger – Full-Time Research Professor (Management; Thomas Hippler – Half-Time Research Professor (Management); Luba Habodaszova – Half-Time Research Professor (Business; Norbert Wetzel – Area Coordinator HRM; Elisabeth Cassels-Brown – Faculty representative for the FDC 2010/2011; Claudia Wendrich; Gordon van der Veen; Gerhard Barcus; Julia Skobeleva; Marion Mansberger; Peter Gumpel; Annette Schreiber; Claus Ebster; Mehdi Ali; Svetla Pehlivanova-Porenta
- The revised copy was made available to the department’s faculty for feedback. The final version was presented to B&M faculty on May 25<sup>th</sup> 2011 and finalized June 19, 2011
- Please assure that your course syllabus reflects these standards.

### I. Feedback to Students

1. Provide feedback early in the course
  - **Mandatory:** The first graded, performance assessment (exam, quiz, case, homework etc.) must be provided at the latest by the end of week 4 in an 8 week course and the end of week 5 in a fifteen week course, so students understand your expectations and can learn how to better prepare for subsequent assignments, quizzes or exams.
  - **Recommendation:** A graded assignment once a week or at least every other week helps provide a continuous feedback loop for the student.
  - **Recommendation:** An instructor may wish to circulate a sanitized (**without the names of the students**) grade sheet or grade summary so that students see where they lie compared to their peers.
2. Provide feedback in a variety of ways
  - **Mandatory:** Give students ample opportunities to express their understanding in a variety of ways, and provide helpful feedback in each case.
  - **Mandatory:** Course grades must be based on more than one in-class, performance assessment (exam, quiz, case, etc.). See II.2.

### II. Course Requirements

The following requirements apply to both graduate and undergraduate courses unless otherwise indicated:

1. Homework guidelines
  - **Mandatory:** University guidelines (Graduate and Undergraduate) are as follows:
    - **8-week courses** = 2-3 hours per hour in classroom (i.e., assign 8-12 hrs /week);
    - **15-week courses** = 2 hours per hour in classroom (i.e., assign 6 hrs / week).
 Homework can be in form of class preparation (reading), written assignments, research etc. The Business & Management Department adheres to these guidelines. PLEASE NOTE: It is vital that course load guidelines are strictly

adhered to assuring our compliance with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)!

- **Recommended:** Announce the amount of homework a student can expect in your class early on. Include expected amount in Syllabus.
- **Recommended:** It is advised that faculty announce in class that we are regulated by European university regulations to follow course load guidelines. They are earning universally recognized ECTS credits through class time as well as the time they spend on course work outside the class.
- **Recommended:** In case of complaints about work load you may want to remind students that they consistently indicate (on the course evaluation forms) that the time they spend outside the class on course work falls far short of the requirements listed above.

2. Exercises & Exams (i.e., Performance Assessment):

- **Mandatory: minimum standard** concerning work load: 1- 2 graded assignments (in-class, homework, team projects, presentations etc. – see II.4. for guidelines) and 2 individual, written, in-class performance assessments (quizzes, exams, cases etc.).
- **Recommended:** there should be a variety of exercises, both group work and individual work (where appropriate: group projects, term papers, presentations, quizzes, exams, cases, written assignments)
- **Recommended:** one assignment every week

3. Reading assignments

- **Mandatory:** Students must be held accountable for the reading assignments. This can be achieved through ‘surprise quizzes’ (this is an especially effective tool in the Undergraduate courses), adding questions on the reading assignments to exams or assigning homework questions on the reading. The ‘participation’ part of the grade (if using such) should reflect a student’s knowledge of and reflection on the assigned readings in class discussions.
- **Recommended:** it is **strongly recommended** that supplementary reading material be assigned. This can be in form of current articles, cases and/or supplementary text books. To meet student complaints, remember the minimum homework standards outlined in II.1.
- **Recommended:** challenge students with articles from academic journals. This is especially recommended for graduate level courses.

4. Conducting Research

- **Mandatory:** See III.4. for mandatory rules on grading written assignments.
- **Recommended:** (Where applicable)
  - **Undergraduates:** course work should include one "Term Paper" surveying a particular topic, a concept, or arguing a point. Length: 2000 (+/- 300) words. Secondary sources: articles from periodicals (Economist, Business Week, et. al.) and newsprint, books, selected internet sites (company sites, professional associations, recognized internet news sources, etc.). Primary Sources: Interviews. Wikipedia is not acceptable;
  - **Graduates:** course work should include one "Research Paper" investigating a concept, or arguing a point using & analyzing data. Secondary Sources:

scholarly articles & texts; Primary: empirical data - where time constraints do not allow the use of empirical work, the analysis of secondary data and available statistics is acceptable. Length: 3000 (+/- 500) words;

- **Thesis/ Papers for Research Courses:** See rules on writing (mini) thesis papers and relevant course outlines.
- **Recommended:** The Chicago Manual of Style is recommended for writing citations.
- **Recommended:** Direct students to the citations guides provided in Connections through the Webster University Library:  
<http://library.webster.edu/citation/index.html>

### 5. Integrating Research

- **Mandatory:** (Where applicable) Graduates: supplementary reading should include at least one scholarly article from a peer reviewed journal.

## III. Grading

### 1. Class attendance

- **Mandatory:** Adhere to the University attendance policy, according to which students are required to attend all classes barring a major illness, injury, death in the family, etc. If there are extraordinary circumstances, the student should contact his or her professor and arrange to make up any work missed. If the student does not have a valid excuse for being absent, each week of class missed will result in the lowering of that student's grade by one half of a letter grade for each full week missed.
- **Mandatory:** Make-Up exam policy is standardized for the Vienna Campus. Please adhere to it. Inform students at beginning of course about the Make-up exam policy and include a caption about it in your syllabi. The policy includes the following points:
  - Make-up exams may be given only if the student has a serious and substantive excuse for missing an exam (e.g. serious illness, emergency business, death in the family, etc.)
  - All make-up exams must be coordinated with the “Academic Coordinators”
  - While at Webster, students are allowed ONLY ONE opportunity to take a make-up exam. If a student requests a second opportunity, he/ she will have to submit a petition to the Academic Director.
  - The documentation (hardcopy, in English or German language) of the reason for missing an exam must be submitted before proceeding with the request for a make-up exam.
  - Make-up exams must be different from and more difficult than the original exam. (Students should definitely be alerted to this fact at the beginning of the course!) Make-up exams must be given as soon as possible after the originally scheduled exam.
  - Under NO circumstances may a make-up exam be given BEFORE the scheduled exam.

- **Recommended:** It is up to the discretion of the instructor to accept late submissions of assignments. By default the same stringent criteria should guide that decision as outlined above for missed exams.
2. Cheating and Academic Integrity
- **Mandatory:** Adhere to the University policy on cheating, according to which any student caught cheating or plagiarizing any part of the course work should be given an “F” for the course and the Department Head and the Academic Director be informed. (see also III.4.).
  - **Mandatory:** Inform students of the University policy on your course syllabus and discuss your expectations concerning “Academic Integrity” in class.
  - **Mandatory:** Have students sign the Student Honor Code before each exam. You may want to add a brief summary on the header of your exam (e.g. *“I have read the Webster Vienna Honor code and promise to adhere to it. I will not cheat”*).
  - **Mandatory:** To circumvent cheating, instructors may not recycle their exams for a minimum period of four years.
  - **Recommended:** It is recommended that the honor code statement be added to larger written assignments that are subject to Turnitin submission (e.g., term papers)
3. Grading transparency
- **Mandatory:** Inform students of your grading system in your course syllabus, specifying the weights assigned to each part of the course work, your grading scale, and how you determine students’ grades, that is, what factors are used in evaluating students’ work. See I.1. & I.2.
  - **Mandatory:** Any changes of the grading scale, weights of assignments and amount of exercises from what was announced in the original syllabus **MUST** be clearly communicated to the students. The syllabus must be seen by all parties as a type of contractual agreement.
4. Written work
- **Mandatory:** The proper use of citations is mandatory wherever foreign sources are directly quoted. Instructors should reserve at least part of the grade of any written assignment to reflect the adherence to this standard. To address the problem of plagiarism the following precautions must be taken:
    - instructors should explain their expectations & review the rules for writing proper citations (this can be explained in writing in the assignment);
    - **Turnitin.com** (see Graduate Assistant for further detail) must be used for all substantial written assignments.
  - **Mandatory:** Plagiarism results in an immediate “F” grade for the assignment. Notify the Academic Director and the Department Head. Starting Fall I 2011 instructors must fill out a “Plagiarism Review Form” to be submitted to the Academic Advising Center in St. Louis. Forms will be made available at: <http://www.webster.edu/faculty/plagiarism/>
  - **Recommended:** Strongly advise students to have all term papers, research papers and other substantial writing projects reviewed by the university writing lab before final submission.

- **Recommended**: The Chicago Manual of Style is recommended for writing citations in the department.
  - **Recommended**: Refer students to the department’s guidelines on writing term papers on the department webpage and Webster’s “*Academic Integrity*” section of the St. Louis webpage: <http://www.webster.edu/students/plagiarism/>
  - **Recommended**: Refer students to the citation guides at the Webpage for the St. Louis Webster library: <http://library.webster.edu/online/educ70.html>
  - **Recommended**: Do not accept late submissions unless a valid excuse can be provided.
  - **Recommended**: Use of grading rubrics (i.e., a scoring guide or check-sheet that identifies the standards and criteria for a given assignment) is recommended to raise grading transparency and objectivity.
5. Group work
- **Recommended**: Group/Team work is encouraged where appropriate. There are many approaches to avoiding the problem of “free-riders” (team members not pulling their weight). Some of them are: add questions on the exam that refer to the problems worked on in the groups; let the group sign their names on the submitted material (names not included receive an F); allow the students to evaluate their team members’ performance (A-F) along with a written rationale for the grade and make this part of each individual students grade (Team grade + a variable component dependent on the aggregate of the peer review).
6. Grade Inflation:
- **Mandatory**: Grade inflation guidelines must be adhered to. Exceptions are possible but you must try to limit these to extraordinary classes. The guideline states:
    - 3.0 GPA for Undergraduate Courses (that’s a B average)
    - 3.33 GPA for Graduate Course (that’s a B+ average)
    - These are class average (individual grades can, of course, be distributed anywhere between A and F)
    - These are maximums GPA’s (i.e., critical heights) – the GPA of your class may be lower than this.
7. Class Presentations, Oral Exams, Class Participation:
- **Mandatory**: In many Business & Management courses the students’ performance during presentations are an important part of the grade. This is acceptable as long as the proper amount of exams & quizzes exists as well (see II.2. for minimum standard). Oral exams are generally discouraged. Exceptions are possible as long as the minimum standard is adhered to (II.2).
  - **Mandatory**: Class Participation must not exceed 15% of the course grade!
  - **Recommended**: To minimize subjectivity, instructors should draft a ‘score sheet’ for every exam and exercise they devise to assist them in their grading and to address possible future student complaints (i.e., a list with the answers they are looking for and the distribution of points for the correct answers).

8. Grade Complaints/ Extra Credit:

- **Mandatory:** Do **not** use extra credit assignments to motivate students to improve their grades.
- **Mandatory:** Initial Grade Complaints must be dealt with by the instructor. Show the student where he/she lost points and explain how the grade was calculated. Keep all submitted assignments & exams for the period of 1 year (unless submitted to the administration) for this purpose. If grade complaints persist after this initial meeting, send the student to the Department Head.

9. Failing & Dropping out

- **Mandatory:** Do not change your grade to accommodate students who are at risk of dropping out of the program (i.e., students on probation etc.). Instead send them to the Department Head or the Academic Director. No instructor should feel responsible for a student's poor performance especially when they have received poor grades in previous courses. Remind students that there exist several possible ways for them to continue their studies at Webster. Guide lines can be read up on in the Course Catalogs. In brief:
  - **Undergraduates:** GPA 2.0 = probation, if they fail to maintain at least a 2.0 during their probation they are dismissed. Dismissed students may apply for resubmission after one year. They need 12 credit hours completed successfully at another recognized institution.
  - **Graduates:** must maintain a minimum B average (3.0). 1 C = probation. Dismissal before Advancement occurs at 2C's or 1 F; after their advancement dismissal occurs at 1C & 1F or 2F's or 3C's. Students can send an appeal to the Graduate Council. If the appeal is accepted they are reinstated after approx. 1 term and they must repeat the courses in which they received unsatisfactory grades. If rejected they can apply for resubmission after 1 year.

Chris Newman  
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