

Roles and Responsibilities: SOM Graduate Course Instructors

A course instructor has a number of responsibilities all targeted toward teaching excellence. Specifically, a course instructor is responsible for:

- Coordinating with the course director on all aspects of the course including
 - timely resolution of all issues some of which may require partnering with relevant department chairs
 - developing the syllabus and logical flow of the material from lecture to lecture
 - ensuring they are available to lecture as scheduled and, in emergent and unavoidable situations when they cannot, coordinating with the course director, relevant chairs and Senior Associate Dean for Graduate Education to find a replacement instructor or a suitable alternative means of content delivery
 - delivering courses via the modality and using the grading system indicated in Banner
 - starting and ending lectures on time
 - ensuring they are teaching in an area of expertise
 - ensuring their lectures are up to date, accurate, and consistent with the learning objectives for their individual lectures and the course as a whole
 - ensuring course content is delivered at a stage- and course-appropriate level for learners
 - developing all course materials such as exams, hand-outs, problem sets, quizzes, etc. and ensuring they are readily available to students
 - maintaining the Canvas course learning system (if used)
- Serving as a point of contact for enrolled students especially regarding student concerns
- Facilitating student usage of and following all recommendations by the Division for Academic Success
- providing timely grades on individual assignments as well as final grades
- promoting continuous course improvement by assisting with analysis of and using student feedback gathered at the end of the semester
- providing course materials, Canvas course access and student feedback upon request to individuals with course, program or faculty oversight responsibilities including
 - leadership in the SOM (e.g. the Dean)
 - leadership in the SOM Office of Graduate Education (e.g. Senior Associate Dean for Graduate Education)
 - leadership of departments or units responsible for a course (e.g. department chairs)
 - leadership of graduate programs in which students in the course are enrolled (e.g. graduate program directors)
 - designees of the above
- Following all VCU Code of Conduct and Academic Integrity guidelines. Highlights include:
 - Reporting of all suspected violations of conduct and honor policies to the Office of Student Conduct
 - Treating students involved in reports like all other students while the cases are being processed by the Office of Student Conduct
 - Taking no other initial action except in situations involving student/instructor safety
 - Taking action only as directed by the Office of Student Conduct
 - Communicating with all enrolled students regarding changes to the lectures, activities, exams, assignments, etc.
- Deliver lectures effectively, using a variety of instructional methods (e.g., interactive questioning, small group discussions, active learning techniques)
- Adapt teaching strategies to meet the diverse learning needs of students
- Making students aware of VCU Counseling Services (as deemed necessary by the director and instructors)
- Demonstrate the professional behaviors expected of VCU and School of Medicine faculty, ensuring that instructors model the behaviors, attitudes, and actions taught to and expected of learners
- Contacting the course director, a student's program director, the Office of Graduate Education, or filing a report with the Dean of Students Office regarding any student exhibiting behavior that is troubling (e.g. unexplained change in attendance or performance, expression of significant signs of distress, etc.)