

Survival Tips for Final Exam Week

Grading

- ✓ Remember that judgment is a part of every grade, whether it is what to measure and how to measure it or how to assign a point value.
- ✓ If your criteria for learning are clear, then it is easier to score and score consistently. Rubrics help you score more efficiently and in a way that students can understand how to improve. Visit <http://www.wku.edu/teaching/goodybags/critthkgrubric.doc> for an example of one rubric.
- ✓ Pace your grading so you remain fresh. Try to do all of the same thing at the same time as it is more efficient, e.g., all of essay question one, then all of essay question two.
- ✓ Make notes about things you want to change in your next set of instructions, based on common student errors.
- ✓ If the paper isn't going to be returned to the student, don't mark a lot of feedback. Just enough so if there's a question you can recall the basis for the grade.
- ✓ And, to conform to state law on records destruction, if the item contributes to a student grade, then destroy them 1 year after the date the grade is assigned.
- ✓ Visit our "Help with Assigning Final Grades" booklet to uncover variables to consider for grades falling on the borderline
<http://www.wku.edu/teaching/booklets/finalgrades.html>

Grade Complaints

- ✓ Beware of unplanned extra credit. At this point in the term it is usually done badly. And incompletes easily turn into F's.
- ✓ Do recheck your syllabus grading policies and your math to rule out if it is your mistake. If it is your mistake, then own it.
- ✓ You don't have to decide anything in the moment. Wait (but not past the grade deadline) until you and the student are calm. Everyone is stressed and we don't make good decisions when stressed.
- ✓ Be very careful about handling issues via e-mail. It is usually far better to call the student on the phone. And remember that if a parent calls, there are FERPA standards that limit what can be said. Refer to the department head, dean or registrar.
- ✓ You can be empathetic without changing your standards.
- ✓ Some students will always complain, no matter what you do. The bottom line criterion is whether the student product matches the learning objectives of the course.
- ✓ Remember that your course isn't the "only one" keeping a student from graduating. It is his/her entire track record.
- ✓ Record the events surrounding the grade complaint, keeping any e-mails or assignments, in case it moves to the department head level. Warn the department head of the most problematic situations.

And for fun

- ✓ Visit the fantasy software Grader 2.95
<http://www.wku.edu/~sally.kuhlenschmidt/fantasygrader.htm>

Sally L. Kuhlenschmidt, Ph.D.

Director, Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching (FaCET)

Professor, Department of Psychology

1906 College Heights Blvd. #11095

Western Kentucky University Bowling Green, KY 42101-1095

FaCET: 270/745-6508, FAX: 270/745-6145

<http://www.wku.edu/teaching/>