

Student Policy Guide: Attendance, Exams, and Appeals

This policy guide is intended to clearly communicate expectations and procedures regarding course modality, attendance, examinations, accommodations, academic appeals, and academic integrity. All students are responsible for reviewing their course syllabi and adhering to university and School policies.

1. Course Modality and Attendance Expectations

Course modality **cannot be changed for any student**.

- **Face-to-face courses** require **in-person attendance** as specified in the course syllabus.
- **Hybrid and online courses** follow the attendance and participation requirements outlined in the course syllabus.
 - In general, **hybrid courses require some in-person attendance**.

Students are expected to comply with the modality and attendance requirements stated in the syllabus for each course.

2. Short-Term Attendance or Exam Exceptions

Short-term attendance or exam exceptions may be considered **only on a case-by-case basis** and **only** under the circumstances listed below. Appropriate **official documentation** is required.

Exceptions may be granted for:

- Valid and documented **medical justification**
 - **Severe illness or injury of a person in the student's care**, with documentation
 - Approved accommodations from **Student Accessibility Services (SAS)**
 - **Jury duty** or required court appearances
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- **Military service obligations**, when official orders are provided
- **Death of an immediate family member**, with documentation
- **Religious observances**, when an exam conflicts with a recognized religious holiday or practice and the student notifies the instructor in advance
- **University-sponsored or approved activities**, including athletics, band, conferences, or other officially sponsored functions.

The circumstances listed above are the only cases in which faculty consideration for attendance or exam exceptions is required.

The following **do not** constitute valid reasons for attendance or exam exceptions:

- Work or employment schedules
- Personal or leisure travel
- Transportation issues
- Family duties or emergencies, except as explicitly listed above
- Illnesses or medical conditions **without appropriate documentation or SAS accommodation.**

3. Medical Issues and Accessibility Accommodations

Students experiencing **short-term or long-term medical issues** are **strongly encouraged** to apply for accommodations through **Student Accessibility Services (SAS)**.

SAS information and application instructions are available at:

<https://www.utrgv.edu/accessibility/>

Instructors are required to provide accommodations **only** when officially approved and communicated by SAS.

4. Examination Policies

- **All exams must be taken at the scheduled place and time.**
- Exceptions may be granted **only** for the reasons listed in Section 2 of this policy.
- Students enrolled in **online courses** may be required to:

- Take exams **on campus**, or
- Arrange **approved proctoring services**.

Specific exam formats, locations, and proctoring requirements are detailed in the course syllabus and must be followed.

5. Course Completion and Withdrawal Policies

5.1 Incomplete Grade Policy

If a student is unable to complete required coursework due to one of the valid reasons outlined in Section 2 of this policy, or due to other **documented exceptional circumstances** that preclude completion of course requirements, and the student was **on track to pass the course (C or higher)**, the student may request an **Incomplete (I) grade**.

- The assignment of an Incomplete grade is **at the discretion of the instructor**.
- An Incomplete requires a **written agreement** between the student and instructor specifying:
 - The remaining coursework to be completed.
 - The deadline by which the work must be finished.

Students are responsible for completing the agreed-upon work within the specified timeframe, otherwise the Incomplete grade will convert to an F, or as specified by the instructor.

For the official UTRGV Incomplete Grade policy, please see:

<https://utrgv.smartcatalogiq.com/en/2025-2026/student-policies/academic-policies-and-procedures/grades/general-grade-information/>

5.2 Drop and Withdrawal

Students facing **insurmountable circumstances** that prevent successful course completion may consider **dropping a course or withdrawing** from the university by the applicable deadlines.

- Drops and withdrawals are subject to **published deadlines** and **state-mandated drop limits**.
- Relevant dates are published in the UTRGV Academic Calendar:
<https://www.utrgv.edu/academics/general-acad-calendar/index.htm>

Given **documented extenuating circumstances**, students may appeal drop limits or missed deadlines.

For appeal procedures and additional information, please see:

<https://www.utrgv.edu/ucentral/appeals/>

6. Grade Appeals and Student Complaints

6.1 Informal Resolution

Instructors retain primary academic judgment over the evaluation of student work in their courses, and all grading policies and procedures are governed by the course syllabus. Before initiating a formal appeal, students **must first discuss the issue with the course instructor**.

6.2 Formal Appeal Process

If no resolution occurs after discussion with the course instructor, and the student wishes to proceed:

- The student must submit a **written appeal** to the SMSS **School Director**
- The appeal must be submitted **within one long semester** after the disputed grade or decision is issued
- The School Director will respond **in writing within 14 calendar days** (excluding holidays) of receiving the appeal

For full UTRGV Grade Appeal policy, please follow <https://utrgv.smartcatalogiq.com/en/2025-2026/student-policies/academic-policies-and-procedures/academic-responsibilities-and-appeal>

6.3 Grounds for Appeal

Appeals are considered **only** if one or more of the following applies:

- The instructor violated the terms of the course syllabus
- The instructor made an error in calculating or recording a grade
- The instructor violated a university policy when assigning work, administering exams, or assigning grades
- The instructor applied an inconsistent grading standard across students
- The instructor did not allow the student to complete assignments or exams missed before the student added the course

- The instructor violated a written agreement with the student
- The instructor failed to provide accommodations as required by Student Accessibility Services

Students must **clearly indicate which of the above criteria apply** when submitting an appeal.

6.4 Limitations on Appeals

- Appeals **will not be considered** if they are based solely on a disagreement with an instructor regarding the **content** of an exam answer, paper, or assignment.

6.5 Required Supporting Documentation

The following supporting documentation is required (unless otherwise noted):

- A written explanation of what occurred and how the applicable appeal criteria apply to the situation
- Correspondence from the instructor indicating that there was no resolution
- A copy of the course syllabus
- A timeline of events relevant to the appeal
- The assignment or exam in question (if applicable)
- A copy of the relevant university regulation or policy (if applicable)
- Correspondence with the instructor (if applicable)
- Any other documentation that supports the appeal

7. Academic Dishonesty

UTRGV takes instances of **academic dishonesty** very seriously.

Academic dishonesty undermines academic integrity, damages fairness in education, and hinders students' academic development. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- Using **unauthorized aids or equipment** on assignments or exams (including phones, calculators, or AI tools when not explicitly permitted)
- **Plagiarism**, including copying work without proper attribution
- Any other actions that violate university standards of academic integrity

For detailed definitions, examples, and university procedures, please see:

<https://www.utrgv.edu/srr/students/academic-dishonesty/index.htm>

Suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be **referred to Student Rights & Responsibilities** for investigation. If a violation is confirmed, penalties may range from a **reduced or failing grade on an assignment or course** to **suspension or expulsion from the program**, depending on the severity and circumstances.

8. Final Notes

This policy is intended to ensure fairness, consistency, and compliance with university regulations while maintaining academic standards. Failure to follow the procedures outlined above may result in denial of requests or appeals.