



Adjusting to the U.S. Classroom

International Student Orientation
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Even the Most Successful Students...

...may experience a transition period

- You've made it this far: well done!
- There may, however, be some differences between higher education here and in your home country.
- Familiarizing yourself with expectations and norms in the classroom will ensure your continued success!



Registering for Classes

- All done through My UNC Charlotte/Banner Self-Service
- Use of 'permits', concept of 'pre-requisites'
- Dropping and adding period
- Getting into 'closed' courses



Anticipated Areas of Adjustment

- Having to select from many possible courses rather than following a completely prescribed curriculum
- ‘General Education Requirements’ (Gen. Eds) for undergrads based upon ‘well-balanced’, liberal education philosophy
- Declare a ‘major’ later rather than earlier in some cases
- Being assigned an ‘academic advisor’ and meeting each semester (at least in first year) to develop a plan



Anticipated Areas of Adjustment

- 'Credit Hour' = amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes; most classes are 3 credit hrs.
- 1 'Semester' = 15 weeks
- Fall (Aug-Dec) + Spring (Jan-May) = 1 academic year
- Grading system = A-F or 4.0-1.0



UNDERGRADUATE GRADES

LETTER	MEANING	GRADE POINTS PER SEMESTER HOUR
A	Excellent	4
B	Good	3
C	Fair	2
D	Passing	1
F	Failing	0
I	Incomplete	*
IP	In Progress	*
W	Withdrawal	*

Graduate Grades

Grade	Definition	Grade Points per Semester Hour
A	Commendable	4
B	Satisfactory	3
C	Marginal	2
U	Unsatisfactory	0
I	Incomplete	
IP	In Progress	
W	Withdrawal	



Anticipated Areas of Adjustment

- Be 'pro-active' about your learning!
 - You are in charge – no one is going to do things for you
 - Taking the initiative to being successful is highly valued
 - Get help as soon as you need it & use your resources



Anticipated Areas of Adjustment

- Frequent assignments, examinations and quizzes rather than only at the end of the term
 - Don't wait until the last minute to begin them!
- More 'objective'-type tests (true/false & multiple choice) in addition to 'subjective'-type tests (essays, written exams)
- Introduction to the 'take-home' exam



Anticipated Areas of Adjustment

- 'Direct' vs. 'Indirect' academic writing styles – different approaches in different cultures
- Success is more than just grades – includes involvement in extracurricular activities & leadership opportunities! (make your resume stand apart from others)



Professors' Expectations

- Expectation to analyze what you're learning rather than just memorizing
 - Strongest students *engage* with the material – ask questions about its relevance and application.
- Expectation to raise questions and participate in class discussions
 - Difficult for second language speakers but still expected in some form.
- Expectation to put forth your best effort
 - Professional approach, courteous manner, best work submitted.

The syllabus - a “contract” between professor and student

- The syllabus contains all important information regarding the course.
- A key element is the schedule where you will find important dates: when you have to take a test, when you have to hand in a paper, etc.
- Another very important part of the syllabus is the policy section.



E-mail, Canvas

- A significant part of your communication with your professors will be done through email.
- Be courteous, address your professor appropriately (Dr. Professor, etc.) and always identify yourself: This is X from you XXX class. State your message clearly.
- Professors may not respond right away – allow 24-48 hours for a response. Do not send multiple emails during this timeframe.
- If you have something very important to discuss: don't email, see your professor during his/her office hours. You can also drop by their office to discuss any difficulties you are experiencing with the course...



Canvas a virtual classroom

(NEEDS UPDATE)

<https://moodle.uncc.edu/>

<http://teaching.uncc.edu/moodle-help/moodle-resources>



Expectations of Professors: Outside of Class

- Office hours
- Timely response to emails
- Timely return of assignments
- Staying informed



Expectations of Professors: In Class

- Clear Expectations & Policies
- Collegiality
- Leadership
- Respect



Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Academic Integrity:

UNC Charlotte (2009) defines plagiarism as "intentionally or knowingly presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e., without proper acknowledgment of the source)."

Center for Teaching and Learning, UNC Charlotte. (2014). Academic Honesty and Integrity. Retrieved on July 28, 2016 at:
[http://teaching.uncc.edu/articles-books/best-practice-articles/academic-honesty-integrity.](http://teaching.uncc.edu/articles-books/best-practice-articles/academic-honesty-integrity)



Plagiarism can include:

- Turning in someone else's work as your own.
- Copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit.
- Failing to put a quotation in quotation marks.
- Giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation.
- Changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit.
- Copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not.

Center for Teaching and Learning, UNC Charlotte. (2014). Academic Honesty and Integrity. Retrieved on July 28, 2016 at: <http://teaching.uncc.edu/articles-books/best-practice-articles/academic-honesty-integrity>.

Consequences for plagiarizing at UNC Charlotte can include:

- A formal warning
- A reduced grade (including "F" if undergraduate student and "U" for graduate student) for the assignment
- A reduced grade (including "F" if undergraduate student and "U" for graduate student) for the entire course.
- For more information on plagiarism at UNC Charlotte, please visit the [Academic Policy](#).

Center for Teaching and Learning, UNC Charlotte. (2014). Academic Honesty and Integrity. Retrieved on July 28, 2016 at:

<http://teaching.uncc.edu/articles-books/best-practice-articles/academic-honesty-integrity>



How can plagiarism be avoided?

The best way to avoid plagiarism is to simply “give credit, when credit is due.” Provide proper citation in both oral and written works when using:

- another person’s idea, opinion, or theory;
- any facts, statistics, graphs, drawings—any pieces of information—that are not common knowledge;
- quotations of another person’s actual spoken or written words;
- paraphrase of another person’s spoken or written words (Indiana University, 2004).

Center for Teaching and Learning, UNC Charlotte. (2014). Academic Honesty and Integrity. Retrieved on July 28, 2016 at:

<http://teaching.uncc.edu/articles-books/best-practice-articles/academic-honesty-integrity>.



Academic Resources

Your Professors

- Our goal is to see you succeed!

Center for Graduate Life

- GRAD 6010/8010: *Graduate-Level Writing for International Students*
- GRAD 6030: *Workplace Communications*
- GRAD 6151/8151: *Professional Communications*

University Center for Academic Excellence

- Tutors for specific courses or areas of study
- Study skills
- Time management

Academic Resources

Writing Resources Center

- One-on-one consultation
- Assistance with online research
- Free service – included in student fees!



Classroom Etiquette

Cell phones, laptops, tablets?

Food and drinks?

Should I raise my hand?

...?

Observe!

Ask!

