

### **III. CONDUCT OF CLASSES**

Instructors are expected to provide a written syllabus at the first meeting of each class. Dates for examinations, papers, and other required work, grading policies, and office hours should be specified. Planned faculty absences from a scheduled class must be approved by the department chair and arrangements made to cover the class whenever possible. Missed classes must ordinarily be rescheduled, but in such a case attendance cannot be required. Longer absences (more than two days) must be approved by the dean of the faculty. It is particularly important that instructors be present at the first and last meetings of a class and during study week and final examinations.

#### **A. Drop/Add and Late Change of Elections**

Students pre-register for classes at the end of the preceding semester or during the summer. The first two weeks of classes is an add period during which students may add new courses. Add forms require an adviser's signature and election of a new course requires the signature of the instructor. Students are responsible for work they may have missed if they join the class late.

After the first two weeks of the term, no additional elections may be made except with the permission of the instructor and the dean of studies or the appropriate class adviser in the dean's office.

A student may drop a course during the first six weeks of classes, but only if still enrolled for a minimum of 3.5 units. Abandoning a course after the sixth week will result in a failing grade, unless permission is given by the dean of studies or the appropriate class adviser in the dean's office to withdraw without penalty for reasons of health or other serious emergency.

#### **B. Scheduling of Classes**

The schedule of classes is administered by the Registrar. No change may be made in the regular schedule of a course except as arranged through the Registrar. Attendance at extra or unscheduled class meetings and at review or drill sessions must be entirely optional. Changes in class location must also be arranged through the Registrar. Classes cannot be scheduled on Saturdays or Sundays.

#### **C. Class Attendance**

Vassar does not have a system of specified "cuts" or automatic penalties for poor class attendance, though individual instructors or departments may adopt such a policy. The student bears the full responsibility for class attendance, for completing work on schedule, and, if allowed, for making up work missed because of absence.

Members of the faculty must explain to their classes at the first meeting of each course their expectations as to attendance and the place of attendance and class participation in the method of instruction and in final evaluation. This information should appear on the course syllabus.

Instructors are not expected to take class attendance. However, a faculty member who is aware of a student's absence from class for a period of a week or more should notify the Office of the Dean of Studies or the Dean of Freshmen. These offices will furnish information to faculty members about students who are absent from college or who have prolonged illness when this information is available. Departments will receive notices regarding students who are prevented from attending classes for extended periods because of illness or other emergency.

Faculty are expected to make appropriate allowances for excused absences, including observance of religious holy days.

At the beginning of a semester, students who have failed to attend the first two scheduled meetings of a class without a reasonable excuse may be dropped from the class by the instructor upon notification to the Registrar. Subsequently, instructors may, with the approval of the dean of studies, refuse a student who has cut frequently without a reasonable excuse the opportunity to make up work or to take the final examination, or may exclude the student from the course. In such cases, students are not to be graded according to the work they have completed, but have, in effect, failed the course.

**D. Written Work and Indication of Academic Status**

Students in introductory and intermediate level courses should have submitted and have had returned to them some written work and should receive some indication of academic progress by the mid-point of the semester. This is particularly important in view of the deadline for the drop period and NRO election and should occur before that date (usually at the end of the sixth week of classes).

All written work except "Final Exercises" should be due no later than the end of the study period. This includes "term papers" and other longer comprehensive course projects. Exceptions to this rule are by approval of the dean of studies.

**E. Office Hours**

It is college policy that office hours of faculty members must be posted, and must be given to the department or program secretary. Scheduled hours when faculty members are regularly available to students are important at all times during the year, but especially necessary during the advising season and during the study and examination periods at the end of term. Faculty have an obligation to be available to meet the reasonable needs of students to discuss course material and performance.

**F. Conferences**

Instructors are requested to confer with freshmen before Thanksgiving and spring vacation, as well as with all other students whose work is unsatisfactory. The purpose of faculty conferences is to point up ways of improving study habits and approach to the subject rather than to tutor the students.

**G. Tutoring**

Faculty members may not tutor a member of the student body for pay during the academic year and academic interns may not tutor in work in which they examine. Faculty members may not tutor for pay during the summer vacation if the instruction is in work which they will later examine.

**H. Field Trips and Observation Trips**

Observation trips to factories, museums and elsewhere are sometimes planned in connection with courses. So far as possible, trips are arranged to avoid conflicting with scheduled classes. If it is necessary to plan such trips at times which involve conflicts with scheduled classes, students with conflicts are not required to take the trip; if they do so, they are expected to secure permission from the instructor of any regularly scheduled class which will be missed. Instructors are under no obligation to grant such permission.

Instructors who wish to arrange such trips may wish to consult the Office of Field Work for assistance. Partial financial support may be available.

**I. Participation in Athletics Events**

To the degree possible, competitive athletics events—games, meets, tournaments etc. —are scheduled for times which do not conflict with classes. Given the complexities of scheduling and the distances involved, however, it is not always possible to avoid conflicts. The Athletics Director has established the policy that students' academic appointments and commitments are their first priority. In some instances, however, students may seek permission to rearrange an academic commitment to allow participation in a scheduled athletics event. Faculty members are asked to accommodate such requests if possible.

**J. Submission of Papers**

From time to time, excuses are given or misunderstandings arise because of the loss of reports, papers or other written work in the unstamped mail or through other informal arrangements. Instructors should make it clear to students that written work is not to be sent through the unstamped mail but must be delivered in person. It is the instructor's responsibility to be specific about time and place of delivery and to be on hand to receive papers and check them in or to have departmental secretaries or assistants specifically authorized to do so. Course work may not be turned in at Message Center.

**K. Integrity of Academic Work: Plagiarism**

In the *Student Handbook* students are told that, in signing the matriculation pledge, they assume the responsibility for the integrity of their academic work. Entering students are given the pamphlet "Originality and Attribution: A Guide for Student Writers at Vassar College," which contains detailed discussions of the requirements of academic honesty. It is recommended that instructors of freshmen and other first-year courses review the standards of attribution with their students in class.

At Vassar a joint faculty-student committee, the Academic Panel, chaired by the dean of studies, hears cases of suspected academic dishonesty. Any instructor who, on the basis of evidence, believes a student is guilty of an act of academic dishonesty must consult the dean of studies, who will summon the panel when, in the dean's estimation, the evidence is such that a case should be tried. It is of the utmost importance that faculty members call suspected offenders to the attention of the dean of studies and not deal with them themselves. They do not have the authority to do so. The faculty has established the Academic Panel (consisting of both student and faculty members) to deal evenly with academic offenses, and published due process is interfered with when faculty members do not take the responsibility of promptly reporting cases to the dean of studies.

The procedures of the Academic Panel are as follows: The faculty member making the complaint shall prepare a written statement of the charge and shall give the dean of studies all relevant material. The dean shall confer with the student and inform them of the charge, of the time and place of the panel meeting, and of the procedures followed by the panel. The student may request to be accompanied by a member of the college community. The members of the panel shall be notified in advance of the identity of the student involved, and any panel member who feels incapable of giving the case unprejudiced consideration may ask to be excused. At the beginning of the hearing, the chair shall read the written charge to the defendant

and the panel. The defendant shall plead guilty or not guilty and shall have the opportunity to make a statement and to explain any mitigating circumstances. The panel shall have an opportunity to question both the defendant and the faculty member who made the allegation, after which the panel shall determine by majority vote whether it considers the defendant guilty, and if so, what penalty to impose. The chair shall vote to break a tie only on matters of penalties for students found guilty by the Academic Panel. Restrictions governing penalties are provided in the *Student Handbook* under “The Regulations of Vassar College”, Part A, Section I.D.

#### **IV. FINAL EXAMINATIONS**

Instructors must be sure that they understand the examination system themselves; they are responsible for explaining it to students, especially to freshmen.

In general, all courses at Vassar must be “examined” by some sort of written work. This “examination” may consist of written work during the term or of a final exercise. There are four types of final exercise:

##### **A. Types of Examinations**

###### **1. Regularly Scheduled Examinations**

Departments request that certain courses be included in the examination schedule prepared by the Registrar. The examinations are assigned to one of fourteen time periods during the examination period at the end of the term. Once a course has been assigned to a time period, it may not be changed by the department or the instructor without the permission of the Registrar or the dean of studies. Grades are due in the Registrar’s office no later than seventy-two hours after the exam.

###### **2. Self-Scheduled Examinations**

Self-scheduled examinations may be taken by the student during specified daily hours from the beginning of the study period until the end of the first three days of scheduled exams. Specific classrooms are designated by the Registrar for this purpose. Examinations are picked up and returned to departmental or program offices during regular hours. Grades are due no later than 72 hours after the fourth day of the examination period.

###### **3. Take-home Examinations**

Take-home examinations may be assigned any time after the last day of classes. A take-home final should be recognized as a final examination and not a term paper. It is due no later than the end of the third day of the exam period and should not be a research paper. All parties should keep in mind that it replaces a two-hour scheduled examination. Grades are due no later than 72 hours after the fourth day of the exam period.

###### **4. Paper in Lieu of Examination**

This exercise should not be confused with the final of a series of papers in a course or with the course term paper or final project. It is, rather, a short paper which replaces a final exam. Thus, the assignment should require no more time, in preparation and execution, than such an examination. It is assigned during the last week of classes and due no later than the end of the

third day of the exam period.

**B. Announcement and Changes of Final Examination**

By faculty legislation, all instructors must announce to each class within the first week of the term whether they will be offering final examinations on a regular, self-scheduled, or take-home basis, a paper in lieu of an examination, or no final examination. The Registrar and the Dean of Studies will issue supplementary instructions about the conduct of self-scheduled examinations.

Instructors should be sure they have notified their students fully of their plans for final examinations and should include them in the course syllabus. Plans may not be changed once announced, except in an emergency and only with the permission of the dean of studies.

A student having three or more regularly scheduled final examinations occurring in three consecutive examination periods or having two exams scheduled at the same time, may request that the dean of studies office arrange to reschedule one of them. The dean or class adviser will determine, in consultation with the instructors involved, which examination will be rescheduled and what the new date of the examination will be.

Instructors are not permitted to give special final examinations to individual students except by permission of the dean's office. The dean of studies and the dean of freshmen are available for consultation about examination problems.

**C. Conduct of Final Examinations**

Members of the faculty are urged to contribute as fully as possible to making conditions in the examination room conducive to quiet, good order and honorable methods of work. The students are expected to maintain the integrity of their own work. Instructors should, for regularly scheduled examinations, be available in case of need, such as undue noise, illness, late arrival of students or other emergency. Students are expected to be seated in alternate seats during examinations. They are permitted to take into the examination room only such materials as the instructor has prescribed. Examination books in regular exams may not be taken by the students from the room; in self-scheduled exams, they are to be returned directly to the proper person by the student, according to instructions. For scratch work or trial answers, students are expected to use the back pages of the examination books. No pages should be torn out or inserted.

In regular examinations, instructors should be on hand before the end of the examination to receive the books and to check with their class lists before leaving the room to be sure that none are missing and that pages are not torn out or inserted. The instructor is responsible for securing examination books. Instructors should not leave unused examination books in locations available to students.

**D. Absence, Lateness and Failure**

Whenever possible, instructors are notified in advance when a student is expected to be absent from an examination. Unexpected absences should be immediately reported by instructors to the Office of the Dean of Studies. It is important for instructors to observe this regulation so that, if warranted, arrangements may be made for make-up of work not completed.

Absence from examinations at the scheduled time is excused only by the

appropriate dean and only for illness or serious emergency. After the dean confers with the student and determines that an "Incomplete" is necessary, an Incomplete form is issued with copies to the instructor, the Registrar and the student. A student who misses any examination because of illness at home must secure appropriate medical documentation.

Before submitting a grade for a student whose absence remains unexplained, the instructor should consult the Office of the Dean of Studies about the student's status. Only the dean's office may issue an Incomplete.

A student whose absence is not to be excused receives an F in the final examination. The grade for the course as a whole is determined by the instructor.

No examinations are given in the Infirmary except when authorized by the college Physician through the Office of the Dean of Studies. Such permission is given only in exceptional cases when the student is no longer seriously ill but is still infectious or has an injury which confines him/her to the Infirmary.

A student who comes late to a final examination while it is still in session may be allowed, at the discretion of the instructor, to take the examination.

A student taking either a self-scheduled or a scheduled examination after the regular period will be given a new examination.

Seniors who fail a course examination at the end of the second semester may be permitted by the department, after consultation with the dean of studies, to take a re-examination before Commencement, if they fail in only one course. If they fail two examinations, they must, except in unusual circumstances, wait until September to take the re-examinations, with the approval of the departments concerned and the dean of studies.

Examination books should be kept for one year in case of dispute over grades. After that period, they may be returned to students, at the instructor's discretion.

The rules of conduct for examinations which are not final examinations, as well as exceptions from these rules, may follow the above principles. They are, however, established and administered by the individual instructor or, in some cases, by departmental legislation.