

Faculty responsibilities

Faculty members should be very clear about how they expect students to perform and participate in courses. During the first week of classes, instructors should discuss their expectations, including acceptable conduct during class meetings (e.g., no cell phones, no Facebook, etc.). The discussion could also include specifics about attendance and whether late assignments are accepted.

Instructors should be clear about communication, including forms of address, timing and amount of phone or e-mail contact, and the degree of formality that's appropriate.

Students should be asked how they would like to be addressed in class and in e-mail communication (e.g. "Miss Smith" or "Ms. Smith" or "Jenny").

Instructors should also be clear about how quickly they will provide feedback on student work. Ideally, faculty identify standards similar to those they use for students.

As part of an open class discussion, instructors should explain how they will respond if students ignore guidelines for class conduct. **At all times, instructors should respect a student's right to offer alternate opinions and to ask questions.**

Some things must remain areas of instructor discretion, not subject to negotiation with students. These include course content, criteria for understanding/performance, nature and timing of assignments (in and out of class), and use of class time. As with other areas, these expectations should be made explicit at the beginning of the course.

What are the guiding values of a KU classroom?

- Focused on learning and communication
- Respectful of diverse understandings
- Committed to supporting learning
- Respectful of all people

So, what are the keys to civility?

1. Talk about and be clear about expectations—how to address each other, communicate in and out of class, and meet community standards for conduct.
2. Recognize that disagreements are part of university life, and there's a difference between understanding and agreement.
3. If you disagree with someone, be respectful.
4. Support the KU community as we all pursue learning and discovery.

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Guide to Civility

For Students and Faculty Members

KU THE UNIVERSITY OF
KANSAS

From Student Affairs and the
Center for Teaching Excellence

The University community

In any vigorous intellectual community, people sometimes disagree. Disagreements are part of university life and shouldn't be avoided. We should, in fact, expect to find different opinions, on both matters of fact and matters of value. But everybody has an obligation to disagree respectfully, regardless of their position in the community.

At the same time, it's important for everyone to **recognize the difference between understanding and agreement.** Instructors may ask students to demonstrate their understanding of ideas the students may not like. Students aren't required to agree with the ideas, but they are obligated to demonstrate an understanding of what's taught. In the same way, faculty members can ask for understanding of ideas and facts from their fields of study, but shouldn't require students to agree with values connected with that knowledge.

One of KU's main purposes is to sustain intellectual life in its many forms, including:

- Study in and out of class by all students;
- Discovery, creativity and research by students and faculty members;
- Engagement with local and global communities; and
- Open discussion of ideas and issues.

To support this intellectual life, students and faculty members need to talk about what they expect from each other as we all pursue the goals of learning and discovery. These expectations can cover many areas, and this brochure only introduces them. Discussions could be held within living units, classes and co-curricular groups to help everyone better understand each other.

Mutual responsibilities

When a semester starts, students and faculty members should discuss how they will work together. Respectful interaction is a foundation for teaching and learning. Disagreements should focus on ideas or facts. Verbal assaults on fellow students or an instructor are never appropriate.

Both instructors and students should follow community standards for conduct.

Social boundaries vary from person to person. Students should have a chance to discuss their expectations with an instructor and with each other. Students should express their preferences for classroom interactions that support their learning. They should know how their fellow students will react if they don't meet standards for behavior. Instructors should be very clear about consequences of not following the group's standards. And they should be supported by all students if consequences are enacted.

Instructors and students should talk about how they want to be addressed (for example, "Professor Smith" not "Mr. Smith" or "George" or "Hey, teacher"). They should also be clear about how they want to communicate in and out of class (some students prefer e-mail, some prefer Blackboard posts; some professors answer e-mail until late at night, some won't answer after 5 PM).

Class attendance is a privilege. To help students get the most out of class meetings, instructors should:

- Explain how class time will be used;
- Describe their need for students to be quiet and pay attention; and
- Identify opportunities for student-to-student interaction.

Student responsibilities

Whether they are asking for information or commenting on ideas during discussions, students should respect peers and respect an instructor as the classroom leader. One way to demonstrate respect for an instructor is to come to class prepared and on time.

Students should know an instructor's preferences for communication and follow them. They should understand how often—and how late at night—an instructor reads e-mail, and shouldn't expect a reply too quickly.

Students should be formal and polite when they are communicating with all instructors, both verbally and by e-mail. Students can be casual only if an instructor explicitly welcomes it. Learning to differentiate among individuals' communication preferences is a highly useful social and professional skill, and it should be developed.

There are many priorities in a full life; academic work should be very high among them. Students should have enough time to go to classes and complete assignments. Other activities, for money or other reasons, aren't grounds to expect reduced time on coursework. If students don't have time for classes because of work, then work time should be cut back. KU's policy is that students should allow for up to two hours of study for every hour in class. While some instructors don't take advantage of that policy, others reasonably expect full preparation. **Learning takes time, and students are expected to reserve enough time to complete the learning called for in their classes.**