

Our Faculty has two primary goals: world-class research and high-quality teaching.

We are committed to providing the students with the highest quality education possible. We are constantly looking at the whole curriculum and each course for improvement opportunities. We encourage innovations in teaching to improve quality. Each instructor shares the responsibility to help achieve our teaching objectives.

These guidelines are intended to clarify both principles and operational details for instructors. They extend and complement the Faculty Study Regulations, which you should in any case look into (available on this page: http://www.inf.usi.ch/regolamenti_tutti.htm).

Principles

1. Instructors are fully responsible for the course. They are expected to perform the key activities of the course and not to delegate them to their assistants or others.
2. Instructors must define and communicate a clear syllabus (including course description, text book, teaching methods, assessment/grading policy, attendance policy, cheating/plagiarism policy, etc.), and follow it throughout the course. The syllabus serves as contract between instructors and students and should not be changed during the semester unless there are very good reasons.
3. Instructors must provide timely, constructive feedback on student performance throughout the semester and not wait until the final exam.
4. Instructors educate their teaching assistants by involving and guiding them in the various teaching activities, and by providing constructive feedback.
5. Instructors should constantly try to improve teaching quality by evaluating the use of new technologies and innovative methods.

Operational Details

To ensure a smooth and timely communication between instructors, the Faculty, and the students, instructors should follow these steps:

1. Course descriptions should be periodically reviewed and updated.
2. Especially for the Bachelor courses it is recommended to use a textbook.
3. Instructors should use as criteria for grading things like homework assignments, in-class exams, class participation, project work, etc. It is important to give the students some indication of how they are doing in the middle of the semester. This is usually done with a midterm exam.
4. Any unusual situation should be reported to the Dean's Office. The same goes for ideas for improvements, such as equipment for the classrooms.
5. If the student numbers drop below a reasonable threshold, it should be reported to the Dean's Office.
6. It is advisable to use the e-learning platform Moodle (<https://www2.icorsi.ch/>) to manage courses. It offers a unique entry point to the students. Even if a course is supported by a dedicated web page, there should be a pointer to/from its conceptual sibling on Moodle.

7. Final grades should be reported to the Dean's Office within one week of the date of the final exam.
8. For written final exams you are supposed to use the official sheets of paper of the Faculty (which come with a stamp). After having corrected the exam do not throw them away, but hand them to the Dean's Office, so that they can be stored for some years.
9. Oral exams are possible. In this case the presence of at least another person -other than the instructor and the student- is mandatory. Usually this is either a teaching assistant or -if needed- another Faculty member. Oral exams should result in a written and signed report to be given to the Dean's Office.
10. Plagiarism cases should be reported to the Dean's Office, in accordance with the Faculty Study Regulations.
11. It is advisable to meet and discuss with the instructors teaching in the same semester, to detect potential problems and/or discuss the state of things.
12. Since students can opt out of courses without consequences within the first weeks of a semester, instructors should provide the students with explicit feedback about how they are faring within that time frame.

These guidelines represent a non-exhaustive and constantly evolving set of best practices, and should not be considered as written in stone. Stark disagreements about them or any kind of improvement/addition should be brought forth to the Faculty.

Michele Lanza, May 2014
Mehdi Jazayeri, Mar 2006