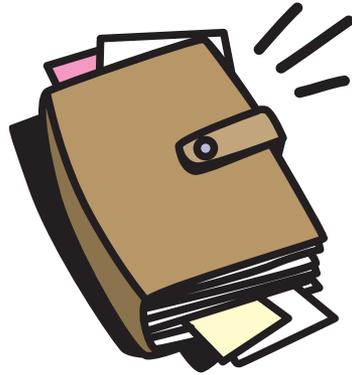




Make-up Test Policies Tips That Work Even if You Teach Part-time

by Steven McNamara, TFS Partner Author

When a student misses a scheduled test, what is your policy? If you're a part-time instructor, you probably have limited and imperfect choices. You may only teach one or two courses a semester and you may not have official office hours, so what can you do that is fair to the student, but also manageable for you?



Here is a list of policy recommendations that may help:

- ▶ Check with your department head or academic affairs office to see if your institution has codified a makeup policy that you are expected to follow.
- ▶ All important classroom policies should be written and distributed to students. Also, it's a good idea to include test make-up policies in your class syllabus.
- ▶ Students who have a legitimate excuse for missing a test should not be punished for something that is beyond their control.
- ▶ You must define what is a legitimate excuse.
- ▶ Request that students notify you in advance, if possible, that a test will be missed.
- ▶ Clearly communicate to your students that you rigidly enforce your makeup policy.
- ▶ You might also mention that you have a heart and are willing to consider legitimate excuses.
- ▶ Give specific examples of some irresponsible

excuses that you would reject if used.

- ▶ My policy states that if I accept an excuse, then the student is required to write a two-page paper based on topics from the missed test chapters. This paper is graded pass/fail. Assuming the paper earns a passing grade, the next test the student takes counts twice the normal value.
- ▶ Ideally, students who legitimately miss a scheduled test should take an equivalent test as soon as possible.

Implementing such an ideal solution, however, has proven to be unrealistic for me to manage as a part-timer. Furthermore, it is not a workable solution to construct a second test for one or two students because I simply cannot find time to administer a second equivalent test.

As a part-time instructor, I'm expected to accomplish many of the same tasks as full-time teachers. This expectation does not always match reality, but what I can do is be fair, flexible and creative in solving every-day teaching challenges.