

**Science  
Demonstrators  
Handbook**



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## INTRODUCTION

The aim of this handbook is to provide you with information and advice to assist you in developing new teaching and communication skills in your role as a science laboratory demonstrator, marker or field trip supervisor. Remember that demonstrating should be a stimulating and productive experience for both you and the students taking the class.

The topics covered in this handbook include:

- Aims of laboratory work.
- Preparing for teaching laboratory classes.
- Teaching strategies
- Assessment
- Occupational Health and Safety Issues.

Take a moment now to reflect on what *you* think makes a good demonstrator. Think back to teachers you have had during the course of your own studies and draw on some of the skills they used to help you learn. Here are some of the characteristics that have been identified as making an effective teacher:

- approachable to students
- show good knowledge of the theory, as well as techniques and skills
- give clear explanations of what is expected of students
- set a good example for students in their preparation for the session and their behaviour in the laboratory
- are able to link the material presented in the class with theory presented in lectures
- give clear explanations, when asked
- mark without bias towards individuals and are consistent with other markers
- provide feedback to students, including constructive criticisms and suggestions for future improvement

Demonstrating laboratories in Science courses can be an exciting and rewarding experience. It provides you with an opportunity to improve your existing skills and acquire some new ones, as you assess students' development of their new knowledge.

## IN THE BEGINNING

You may need to consider the following points regarding employment at Flinders University.

Activity	Suggested Action
<b>Internet access/ FAN WebCT</b>	You will automatically receive an email address when you are put onto the payroll system. The default password for staff is the last four characters of your payroll number followed by four characters of your birth date in the form ddm (day,day, month,month). You should reset your password after initial access. Your email address and password gives you access to WebCT and to most Internet services
<b>Subject Librarian</b>	Go in and visit your subject librarian. Sign up for a library orientation tour.
<b>Getting the right forms signed</b>	Do you know how to access the online time sheets? Have you signed the appropriate employment forms to get you paid?

## PREPARING FOR TEACHING

It can't be stressed enough, that good preparation is the key to a successful class – for both teachers and students! After all, if you don't know what's going on, how can you expect the students to? This section provides information on how to prepare for a class, so that you can have confidence in your ability to run a session, be it a laboratory, or a field trip.

### ***Your personal teaching approach***

If this is your first move towards the teaching side of learning, or even if you have already had some practice, it is important to put aside time to consider your teaching and what you are trying to achieve. Your approach will be partly shaped by the topic in which you are teaching. Speaking with the other people involved in the topic will help you to look at this but it will also be most helpful to note down a set of guidelines and ensure that these are at least similar to those of the course convenors before you start. A few questions to consider could include:

- is the emphasis on teaching concepts, facts or skills or a mix of these?
- how do you enable the students to have an active role in their learning?

You may also need to consider how the teaching role is going to impact on your other work. For example, if you are a higher degree student, how will you juggle your own research needs and time? It is very important to consider this at the outset.

It is equally important that you give some consideration to the motivation of the students with whom you are going to be associating. For many new students, University is a threatening experience, especially in their first few weeks. Try to remember your own experiences and ask yourself:

- why are the students studying this topic?
- what do they actually want to learn?
- what can you give them to help smooth their way?
- what do they expect of you to help them be successful?
- what do they expect of themselves?
- how might you encourage students to be active, self-motivated and independent learners?

### ***Aims of Laboratory Work and Field Trips***

In order to teach and assess a laboratory course successfully, it is important to understand the aims and anticipated learning outcomes of each topic. In the short term, the typical aim of a session spent in the laboratory is to provide context for lecture material as well as allowing the students to produce an assessable report. However, the long-term goals of laboratory and field classes are much more important. These aims include,

- To support and reinforce the theory presented in lectures by providing students with hands-on, practical experience
- To improve students' understanding of the methods of scientific enquiry through experiments, problem solving and project work
- To develop general skills such as measurement, observation, recording, reasoning, problem-solving, note-taking, team work, and written and oral presentation skills
- To provide students with specialised technical skills
- To increase levels of interaction between students and encourage open communication and exchange of views
- To break down barriers between students and staff
- To enthuse students with the subject!!!

- Periodically returning to these aims will help you make classes a memorable and valuable learning experience for students and will help you evaluate your progress as a teacher.

## **Getting Started**

To satisfy the needs of both the students and your topic coordinator, you must know what is expected of you as a laboratory demonstrator. It is important that you know what you are doing before you walk into class and this often means approaching the topic coordinator to find out. Make sure you clarify some general points before you even get started.

Many topic coordinators will hold regular meetings with demonstrators. Preparing for and attending these meetings is not only informative, but also helps you identify potential problems or difficult questions you may encounter *before* the session starts! Before you meet, ensure that you have read all the relevant material in the course manual and that you understand the aims of the session. Arrive at the meeting with any specific questions you have about the concepts, methodology or equipment that will be used. Make sure you know how to use any pieces of equipment (including audio-visual) and identify the person to contact if there are problems or if equipment malfunctions. It is also a good idea to find out from the topic coordinator where the students are in their learning and what material is currently being presented in the lectures. This will help you link the material presented in the practical class with the theory being taught. Make the most of these meetings - the better prepared you are, the more you will get out of them.

### **Suggested questions**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Suggested questions</b>	<b>Answers</b>
<b>The course</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the topic aims and learning outcomes?</li> </ul>	
<b>Role</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is my role?</li> <li>• How much time is expected of me?</li> <li>• How do I organise to get paid?</li> <li>• Am I expected to attend some or all of the lectures?</li> </ul>	
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can I have a copy of the laboratory manual and any other information students have been given?</li> <li>• Is there a teaching guide?</li> <li>• Where do I get a copy?</li> <li>• Are the books available or am I expected to buy my own copy?</li> </ul>	
<b>Expectations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is expected of the students?</li> <li>• What is the expected level of understanding?</li> <li>• What is the policy of the convenor on students changing tutorial times?</li> </ul>	

<b>Assessment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is the topic assessed?</li> <li>• How and when should students' work be submitted?</li> <li>• Am I required to assess students' work?</li> <li>• What is the policy for granting extensions or accepting late submissions of work?</li> </ul>	
<b>OH&amp;S</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the health and safety issues associated with this topic?</li> </ul>	
<b>Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who can provide me with technical support during the session?</li> <li>• How can I contact you if I have a problem?</li> </ul>	
<b>Room Allocations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check location of rooms before you begin tutorials.</li> </ul>	

### ***Planning to Teach***

Once you have established what's expected of you, you will need to develop an outline of how you will run the session. In some cases, topic coordinators or experienced demonstrators will be able to provide you with notes. If not, then it's up to you to develop a plan.

How can you give clear explanations and/or demonstrations to students during this period of time and expect the students to complete particular tasks or understand the points you wanted to make? What responsibilities do the students have to use their time and yours productively and how do you judge your success? The following guidelines may help you to successfully negotiate these problems.

There are a few questions you might need to address before you begin:

<b>Question</b>	<b>Your Notes</b>
<b>Are you clear what the task is?</b>	
<b>Is it necessary for the students to understand any particular concepts or have any particular skills before they begin this task?</b>	
<b>Is there a time limit - does the work need to be handed in at the end of the session or can it be completed at home?</b>	
<b>Is there a written set of instructions with examples already available to the students, e.g. in their topic guide?</b>	

<b>Is the work in itself an assessment task or is it part of the learning required to complete a separate assessment task?</b>	
<b>Do students need to be reminded about equipment they must bring with them to the class?</b>	
<b>Are there accommodations that need to be made for a student with a disability? What are they?</b>	

These, and any other points which come to mind, will need to be clarified with the coordinator and other teachers to ensure you are all giving the same information.

### **Planning a Pre- Laboratory Talk**

Most laboratory classes will require you to present a pre-laboratory talk. This should cover the following points:

<b>Pre-lab Points</b>	<b>Your Notes</b>
<b>Details of assessment – what is expected, the format of assignments and the due date</b>	
<b>The aims of the session and how these relate to the rest of the course and lecture material</b>	
<b>Definitions of terms or jargon that may be unfamiliar to students</b>	
<b>Introduction and explanation of concepts that are fundamental to understanding and successfully completing the session</b>	Don't rely on students being able to remember them from previous lectures!
<b>How the session will progress – include a rough timetable, if applicable</b>	
<b>A demonstration of how the equipment works</b>	
<b>Any special health and safety issues (see later section)</b>	

<b>Details of clean-up procedure, including disposal of any harmful chemicals and sharps</b>	
<b>A chance for students to ask questions before they get started</b>	

To help students learn, it is important to make your pre-lab talk both informative and stimulating.

### ***Rehearsal***

Run through your planned talk or pre-lab before the class or lab starts – either in your head, or out loud. This exercise will determine whether you are adequately prepared to run the session and will help reduce any nervousness you might be feeling. Make sure you give yourself enough time for extra preparation if you discover that you're not quite ready. This will also allow you to identify questions that students might ask and will give you a rough idea of how long each section of the session is going to take.

## **TEACHING STRATEGIES**

It is natural to feel a little nervous about facing a class for the first time. Despite how it may seem at the time, this is a positive sign that you are taking your teaching seriously. The following section outlines some teaching strategies that will aid in your demonstration and hopefully calm some of those nerves.

### ***Laboratory sessions***

Even experienced teachers sometimes find demonstrating laboratory classes a daunting task. Teaching a laboratory class differs markedly from tutorial and lecture classes, due to the practical, hands-on nature of the sessions. For this reason, the skills required to successfully teach a laboratory class differ from tutorial classes, in some respects.

Laboratory sessions are usually divided into separate sections, each requiring a slightly different teaching strategy. These are listed below.

<b>Task</b>	<b>Strategy</b>
<b>Beginning the lab</b>	Use this time to get warmed up and calm your nerves. Talking to students and asking them questions as they arrive can be a great way of finding out about the material that has been covered in lectures.
<b>The pre-laboratory talk</b>	Talk slowly and clearly and use teaching aids. State what the session is about and cover any important material (see above). At the end, encourage students to ask questions and give them an obvious signal that it is time to start work.
<b>Main practical session</b>	During this time, you will need to answer students' questions. Remember that one important aim of the session is to help students develop their reasoning and research skills. Avoid

	<p>spoiling students by doing their work for them. Instead, you should use your knowledge of the topic to guide them to the answer – this may involve explaining the theory in an alternative way, or pointing them to a good textbook.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't miss anybody</li> <li>• Ensure no one student or group takes up the majority of your time</li> <li>• Don't show favouritism</li> <li>• Be sensitive – try not to show students up or make them feel uncomfortable</li> </ul> <p>Encourage open discussion and communication between both yourself and other students – it helps to have a few questions prepared so that you can use to break the ice. These can range from the general ('How are you going?'), to the specific ('How do you explain what happened during the experiment?', 'Is what happen in the experiment what you expected?').</p>
<b>Summarising &amp; cleaning up</b>	<p>Regain the attention of the group and use this time to reinforce some of the key points that you want the class to remember. A summing up session should cover some of the following points,</p> <p>A summary of the experiment/project</p> <p>A link between the practical session and the theory covered in lectures</p> <p>Any problems that may have been identified</p> <p>Suggested further readings</p> <p>Reminder of assignment format and due date</p> <p>Clean-up procedure</p>

## ***General teaching strategies***

### **Providing assistance**

There are several strategies for running this part of the session and they are listed below. They can be used exclusively, but are often more valuable when used in combination, depending on how the class is progressing. Pay attention to how each individual in the class is going and determine the strategy that best suits the situation.

<b>Technique</b>	<b>Actions</b>
<b>Summoning</b>	Place yourself in a visible position in the room and wait for students to request help. This strategy does not work successfully for all students, as some are uncomfortable about asking for help. You may need to take the initiative with some of the less confident students
<b>Use a system</b>	Approach students systematically, one by one (or group by group). This will ensure that you talk to every student in the class. This is a good way of monitoring the progress of group work.
<b>Stay put</b>	Set yourself up in a position where each student has to pass you at some stage during the session. This may be near a piece of equipment, or a specimen. This will enable you to talk to everyone at least once.
<b>Watching</b>	Wait to one side and watch to see which students need assistance. This strategy requires good observational skills. Make sure you offer your assistance in a sensitive way so that you don't look like you are singling

	out particular students.
<b>Wandering</b>	Walk around the room and randomly approach students. This is a good way to keep students on their toes and allows you to stop and ask questions about how each student is progressing.

### **Questioning**

Questioning is a key element of small group teaching. However, some consideration needs to be made when using questioning as a positive learning tool:

<b>Technique</b>	<b>Actions</b>
<b>Pausing</b>	Allow students time to think about a question before responding.
<b>Re-phrasing</b>	perhaps the students aren't responding because they have no idea what you mean
<b>Reacting</b>	Always react in a positive way despite the response. In the case of an inadequate answer it may be necessary to clarify the question or redirect it to another student
<b>Probing</b>	Probing questions help to stimulate thinking skills. Teacher may probe for clarification or examples
<b>Encourage student questions</b>	Respond positively to any questions that emerge.

At some stage, you will be asked a question for which you do not know the answer. There's no need to panic! You can maintain credibility and the students' confidence in you, if you are honest and try to solve the problem in a straight forward way. Try one of these options:

- Find out the answer yourself – let the student know that you will get back to them with the answer. Make sure that you do!
- Work through the problem together – this is a good way to teach students research skills, through example. Have a look through the textbook together, or discuss the problem. Sometimes articulating the problem in a different way provides a solution.
- Encourage students to find the answer – have some good reference material (textbooks and scientific keys) on hand to assist them. This will help students develop their research skills and increase their problem solving abilities.

### **Written instructions**

If your topic already has a set of written instructions for the relevant task, be the guinea pig and sit down and follow them well before your first practical or demonstration period. Do they work? If not, why not? Where do changes need to be made?

If the instructions need amendment or are not operational it is tactful to discuss this problem with your supervisors before you actually change anything. You may then jointly revise the parts which are unclear and conduct a dry run with the rewritten format.

## ASSESSMENT

Assessment of laboratory assignments serves two important purposes: to grade students and to provide feedback. In order to mark students' work fairly and consistently, make sure you clarify some of the following questions with your topic coordinator:

Questions	Your Notes
<b>Can you provide me with marking criteria and explain the marking scale?</b>	
<b>What are the students expected to have done?</b>	
<b>Do I take marks off for poor spelling, grammar or referencing methods?</b>	
<b>What is the policy for granting extensions and are there penalties for late submission of work?</b>	
<b>Are marks moderated between demonstrators or double-marked?</b>	
<b>Can students appeal or have assignments remarked?</b>	
<b>How do I deal with suspected plagiarism?</b>	

If you have not been provided one, it is a good idea to draw up a mark sheet indicating how you will assess the assignment. You may need to take into account factors such as structure, presentation, style, spelling, grammar and referencing methods, as well as content. Returning a filled-in mark sheet with each assignment makes it clear to students how marks have been allocated and provides feedback on sections that require improvement.

Once you have established the marking criteria, there are a couple of ways you can go about marking. Many markers spend time reading several assignments before they start allocating marks. This method gives you a feel for the range of work you will be marking and helps identify great reports from good ones. Some markers read all the assignments and after placing them in a provisional order, allocate the final marks. Either way, it is best to have a look back through the assignments after you have finished, too check that your grading system has been fair. If in doubt, approach the topic coordinator and ask for advice.

### ***Academic dishonesty***

The University regards academic dishonesty as a very serious matter. At the commencement of each topic, students are given a handout that defines Academic Dishonesty and its consequences. You will need to draw students' attention to this, as they may never have heard of it before.

As a teacher, you are most likely to be confronted by Academic Dishonesty in the form of laboratory report plagiarism. Demonstrators may also need to be aware of students inappropriately 'sharing' experiment results. If you notice unintended Academic Dishonesty, use it as a learning opportunity for the student.

As the University considers this a serious matter, most AOU and Faculties have a formal procedure in place which involves recording incidents and action as considered appropriate by Heads of Department and Executive Deans.

A good resource to assist you develop the skills required to identify and deal with academic dishonesty and encourage academic integrity is available on <http://www.flinders.edu.au/AIMS>

### **How to notice plagiarism**

- Inconsistencies in writing style within a piece of written work.
- Language that seems inappropriate for the student's year level.
- Noticeable repetition from one student paper to another.
- Lack of quotation marks or correct referencing.
- Generally poor referencing technique.

### **Avoiding plagiarism**

- Clearly explain what plagiarism is and why it is considered important. For example suggest to the students that they would not want their research copied without acknowledgement
- Discuss the ways to avoid plagiarism with students before they begin writing
- Go through the avoiding plagiarism handouts available from the Student Learning Centre website
- Draw students' attention to *Making the Grade* (Hay et al. 2002) and other suitable publications

### **Taking action**

Despite all your attempts to prevent it occurring it is clear that most assessors will face some degree of plagiarism. How you deal with it will depend on the degree of the problem and the support and action taken within your AOU or by your particular topic coordinator.

Before you take any serious action, try to:

- Identify as clearly as possible the levels and extent of plagiarism
- If possible, identify the sources eg published book, paper, WWW. Note the particular points you are concerned about
- Discuss your concerns with the topic coordinator and get advice as to how to proceed.

The teacher does not generally have to take further action concerning plagiarism, as Heads of Department and Faculty Executive Deans deal with reported incidents.

### **Feedback**

In order to make report writing and assessment a valuable exercise, it is important to provide students with feedback. Adequate feedback is fundamental to marking. If the student is going to learn from the assessment activity they must read and act upon what you have written and respond accordingly in their next piece of work.

Feedback needs to:

- be prompt;
- give a clear indication of how work can be improved;
- allow students to adapt and adjust their learning strategies;
- support learning, so students know how to improve their performance;
- focus on mastery not effort or time spent;
- lead students to being capable of assessing their own work.

All students need to receive adequate feedback, not only those who did not do so well. Students who do well need to know why they achieved a higher mark and what else is needed

to enhance their performance. They need to understand how they achieved the grade they have.

### **Suggested feedback mechanisms**

- Use a department mark sheet
- Create of your own checklist, a proforma on which you mark the relevant points for attention.
- Hand out an A4 sheet to the entire class with examples of appropriate responses, examples of some misconceptions with some explanations about why they were not correct, and resources for follow-up study to correct the misconception.
- As well as written feedback, it is also useful to provide some general feedback to the whole class. This can be done at the start of the next session, if you demonstrate or teach the class on a regular basis.
- Use positive reinforcement and congratulate students on what they have done well
- Make *constructive* criticisms on potential improvements
- Clearly explain why you have awarded a particular mark
- Try to sign off on a positive and encouraging note
- Where applicable, encourage students to come and discuss the report with you.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES**

As a teacher and supervisor of students, you are responsible to ensure that students are aware of the health and safety policies of the University. Familiarise yourself with these policies and talk to students about general health and safety issues, as well as those specific to the day's session. If you are in doubt about any health and safety issues within the laboratory, you should approach the laboratory technician or topic coordinator, for advice.

### **For all emergencies:**

- Call the AMBULANCE/POLICE/FIRE BRIGADE. Phone 000 - remember to add an extra 0 if you are calling from an internal university phone.
- Give clear, concise instructions to the operator.
- Notify University Security on ext. 12880 and give them the same information. Security will meet the emergency service and guide them to the correct location on the grounds.

<b>Incident</b>	<b>Response</b>
<b>Evacuation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get marshalling areas map from Admin Assistant and display.</li> <li>• Read evacuation instructions and identify the names and locations of fire-wardens and first-aiders – in an emergency, students will look to you for assistance.</li> <li>• Evacuate immediately to designated area. Never assume it is just a drill. Follow the fire marshal's instructions.</li> </ul>
<b>Fire</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find the location of the nearest fire extinguishers and fire blankets</li> <li>• Familiarise yourself with the type of fire extinguishers available and their correct usage.</li> </ul>
<b>Chemical spill</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Familiarise yourself with the appropriate processes in the event of a hazardous matter spill.</li> </ul>
<b>Medical emergency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify any students with known problems, such as allergies or epilepsy and establish what to do if there is a problem</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify First Aid officers in your work area</li> <li>• Find the location of the nearest first-aid kit and emergency showers</li> </ul>
<b>Protective clothing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find out what level of protective clothing students require – lab coats, gloves, eye protection?</li> </ul>
<b>Prevention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Never leave a lab and ensure that the rules are obeyed and adhered to. Eject a student who refuses to comply</li> </ul>

The rules governing behaviour in the laboratory sometimes differ depending on the type of session, but there are a few standard rules that should be pointed out to students.

- No eating, drinking or smoking in the laboratory
- Close-toed shoes should be worn at all times
- Protective eye wear should be worn at all times
- Hands should be washed at the end of the session
- Long-hair should be tied back, where appropriate
- Naked flames should not be left unattended
- Sharps should be disposed of in marked containers only
- Hazardous chemicals should be disposed of in marked containers and not into the sewage system

## ***Accidents***

From time to time, minor accidents happen in laboratory classes, the most common of which are cuts and burns. Obviously as demonstrator, you should assist injured students to the best of your ability. Please remember:

- First aid kits containing bandaids, bandages and antiseptic are available in the laboratory/technical preparation rooms
- Shower head taps are present in laboratories
- In the case where an accident is not an emergency, students should be sent to the University Health Service to insure that their injuries are examined by a qualified professional
- Occupational Health and Safety policy requires that ALL accidents be reported in writing to the central OH&S office. Forms for recording accidents can be obtained from your school office and should be filled in on the same day as the accident occurred. The topic coordinator should also be notified so that further accidents can be avoided.

## ***Fire alarms***

The Science and Engineering buildings are equipped with a sophisticated fire alarm system. Here's what to do if the alarm sounds:

- The first stage of this system is a loud beeping noise – students should be told to remain where they are, but to await further instructions
- The second stage alarm consists of a loud whooping noise together with a periodic voice-over to evacuate – instruct everyone in the lab to stop what they are doing and evacuate the building by the nearest exit
- It is impossible to tell the difference between a drill and a real incident, so every instance in which the fire alarm sounds should be treated with the utmost seriousness.

## SUPPORTING FIRST YEAR STUDENTS

The first year at University is a time of social and academic transition for most students, and their early experiences are critical to their academic success and perseverance in study.

### ***Common difficulties experienced by first year students:***

- loneliness on campus
- lack of ability to find their way around
- confusion about subject choice and/or career direction
- lack of understanding of and confidence in using the system
- uncertainty about study expectations
- managing the reduction of structure
- balancing time between study, part time work, and family responsibilities
- lack of general study skills especially essay writing, report writing and time management skills
- information overload at the start of university
- financial, personal, health and family issues (Many students who are studying experience moderate to severe financial stress)

Students who overcome these hurdles in the first year can go on to become successful learners. Frequently, it is a matter of learning new skills. Support services staff work consistently with assisting students to learn self management strategies.

### ***Referring students to the support services***

Teachers of First Year students are in a position to recognise students who may not be coping well. Teachers may be alerted by students who persistently:

- skip classes
- hand assignments in late or do not hand in at all
- do not participate in class discussion - withdrawn
- submit poor quality work
- are upset in class
- argue with others

The Health & Counselling Service is staffed by counsellors, doctors and nurse practitioners with expertise and experience in the student issues which arise in an educational context. The staff will respond quickly to any Faculty staff who wish to consult or refer a student who appears to be distressed or experiencing difficulty.

Ph 8201 2117, or email [Health.Counsel@flinders.edu.au](mailto:Health.Counsel@flinders.edu.au)

### ***Other ways to contribute to the success of first year students***

- Provide comprehensive topic assessment expectations.
- Set times for students to consult and leave these on your office door.
- Be aware of the range of student support services on campus, their whereabouts, and know how to refer a student to them.

Visit the Teaching for Learning site for more tips and strategies for teaching first year students.  
<http://www.flinders.edu.au/teach/teach/firstindex.htm>

## TROUBLE SHOOTING

At some stage, you will meet a problem you may not be prepared for. The following are situations that have commonly occurred with some suggestions for handling and avoiding them. There's no need to panic! You can maintain credibility and the students' confidence in you, if you are honest and try to solve the problem in a straightforward way.

Problem	What to Do	How to Avoid it
<b>Question for which you do not know the answer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find out the answer yourself – make sure that you get back to the students with the answer!</li> <li>• Work through the problem together</li> <li>• Encourage students to find the answer by assisting them research the correct answer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accept that you don't know anything!</li> <li>• Prepare as soundly as possible before hand</li> <li>• Have reference materials on hand to encourage students to find the answer</li> </ul>
<b>Door to teaching room is locked</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell the students to wait. Go and ask your departmental Admin Assistant to help you urgently.</li> <li>• Ring Security (1 2880)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get there early.</li> <li>• Find out who has keys to rooms and their phone number in case you need them.</li> </ul>
<b>Harassment of one student by another in class.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain why you have a problem with the behaviour why it is unacceptable.</li> <li>• If further action is required, refer to Topic Co-ordinator or Head of Department.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish expectations from week 1 so that students know what kind of behaviour is expected</li> <li>• Get the group to set ground rules regarding behaviour.</li> </ul>
<b>OHP bulb blows or doesn't work.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look in adjacent rooms. There may not be classes in progress, so borrow one and don't forget to return it.</li> <li>• Use the whiteboard instead.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrive early</li> <li>• Know where you can get a spare bulb</li> </ul>
<b>Student complains about the marks you have given</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refer to assessment criteria you marked to.</li> <li>• Ask them to demonstrate to you where in the assignment they meet the various assessment criteria.</li> <li>• Refer to departmental policy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain assessment tasks and criteria clearly,</li> <li>• mark carefully,</li> <li>• cross-check marking with other teachers.</li> <li>• Know the department policy on disputes about marking.</li> <li>• Keep records of your marking.</li> </ul>

## EVALUATING YOUR TEACHING

So how do you know if you are doing a good job?

It is useful, and indeed necessary, if you intend to continue in an academic role that you constantly review your work as a teacher. Some of this process will take place through the University requirements for Student Evaluation of Teaching (SETs) to be undertaken at regular intervals.

### ***Student Evaluation of Teaching (SETs)***

SETs are pre-developed questionnaires completed by the students towards the end of the topic teaching period. While they generally include a series of standard questions, topic coordinators or teachers can add in other pre-written questions or their own questions.

Students usually complete SETs during a lecture period and the completed proformas are returned to the relevant individuals after analysis. The contributions from the students are anonymous and the results returned only to the individuals concerned.

If you have taken time at the beginning of your topic teaching period to discuss aims and objectives, and also student and teacher expectations, it is a good idea to spend some time revisiting these early ideas towards the end of the semester and before the SET takes place. Remember, students may be completing multiple SETs within a short period of time, often more than one in each topic. A reminder of your joint goals for the topic is therefore useful in assisting students to respond thoughtfully.

SETs can be a useful tool in revising topic content, teaching methods, what worked, and why, and are also becoming more important for job applications, promotions etc.

## **IN CLOSING...**

Remember that you are a bone fide valued member of staff at Flinders University. There is a wealth of support and opportunities that are there for you to use if you choose to. If you are a student as well, you can access all the student services such as Career advice and Health services. As a staff member, you are able to access professional development opportunities through the Staff Development and Training Unit and can access support from the HR services.