

## **Tips for teaching and advising international students**

### **General tips:**

- International students are a diverse group in terms of educational experiences, language proficiency, learning style preferences, ability to participate, and academic skills. Their proficiency in spoken and written English may differ. For example, some students are very strong writers, but are not proficient speakers.
- Let students know how you would like to be addressed as this varies culturally.
- Provide clear but compassionate feedback on what is culturally appropriate if students violate norms. They may not know they are doing so.
- Some international students come from very hierarchical cultures and may feel uncomfortable approaching faculty for help. Ask if they need help, invite them to office hours, or otherwise reach out.
- Make your expectations clear, and do not use idiomatic language when doing so
- Don't make assumptions about students based on their accents or home country.

### **Class discussions:**

- Explicitly identify what you count as participation. Consider including nonverbal participation (body language, eye contact, notetaking, active listening) or written responses.
- Use small groups – it's often easier for international students to interact with a small group of classmates.
- Give students more preparation time, e.g. longer wait times after asking questions, assigning discussion questions before class, or Moodle discussions.
- Many international students report difficulty following the flow of a class discussion and knowing when and how to participate. Others are afraid to participate in class discussions because they lack confidence in their English skills. Meet with these students outside of class to discuss additional strategies to help them participate.
- Develop a classroom environment that respects linguistic diversity, including diversity of expression and accent.

### **Writing:**

- What may seem to be a lack of organization, an argument, or analysis may actually be a cultural difference in writing style. Give students models of the type of writing you expect from them and point out the stylistic elements that make them good examples of academic writing. Refer students to writing tutors for additional help.
- Grammatical and linguistic issues may trouble otherwise proficient writers unless instructors give them feedback. Point out one or two recurring errors in their writing so that they will notice the problem and continue to develop their grammatical competence.
- Ask ESL writers if they would like extra time on exams with a significant written component.

### **Academic Integrity:**

- Cultural attitudes toward academic honesty may also play a role in inadvertent plagiarism by international students. Many international students have a different cultural understanding of what constitutes plagiarism. For example, in some cultures, quotes from famous works may not need to be cited in class papers because to do so would imply that the professor does not know the quote.
- Be clear about expectations for citing and referencing others' work in the assignments and exams for your class. Provide resources, such as citation guides, models of assignments, and plagiarism quizzes, such as this one from Indiana University: <https://www.indiana.edu/~tedfrick/plagiarism/item1.html>
- English language proficiency may affect a student's ability to paraphrase well. Encourage ESL writers to work with tutors to construct paraphrases that do not inadvertently plagiarize.