

Incoming Faculty Orientation 2026: Student Support Case Studies

Case Study #1

You are teaching a class with 60 students. A student arrives for the second exam after the midterm, but you do not immediately recognize them. You check your attendance sheet and notice that one student attended a few classes early in the semester, was attendance-verified, and then stopped attending after the second week. They did not respond to check-in emails or Starfish flags. You assume this is *that* student, although you are not completely certain.

The student stays for the entire exam but appears visibly anxious and uncomfortable. As the last few students begin turning in their exams, the student approaches you and apologizes. They say they could not complete the exam, which is now crumpled and covered in writing, and they do not want to turn it in because it is essentially blank.

You explain that copies of the exam cannot leave the classroom and ask them to return it. When they do, you see that the name matches the student on your attendance list.

Meanwhile, students for the next class are beginning to enter the room.

What are some possible next steps?

Case Study #2

You are teaching a class that involves substantial individual feedback and several one-on-one conferences. One student has taken a class with you before, and you have a good relationship with them.

They are completing their work, but they seem less engaged than you remember, and the quality of their work has declined. They sometimes arrive late and do not always appear focused during class.

During a one-on-one conference, you ask how things are going. The student begins to cry and tells you they have been having a very difficult time. They explain that they were kicked out of their home and are currently couch surfing at their boyfriend's house. They are able to eat dinner there but do not have reliable access to food during the rest of the day. They are frequently hungry and cannot work enough hours to keep up with their bills.

The student apologizes for not doing better in your class and says they will work harder.

What are some possible next steps?

Case Study #3

A student frequently arrives late to class and often comes without materials, sometimes not even a pencil or paper.

During informal group work, they often do not participate or even turn toward the group. On some days, they put their head down on the desk for much of the class. On other days, they sit with their arms crossed, staring angrily across the room.

What are some possible next steps?

Case Study #4

A student in your class is generally engaged and attends regularly. Occasionally, however, they miss class and later email to say they overslept or became confused about which day the class met.

When the student is in class, they seem genuinely interested in the material. They frequently participate in discussions, share ideas, and tell you how much they enjoy the class.

At the same time, they are often unprepared. They forget assignments or required materials, have many missing assignments, and sometimes submit work that is incomplete or does not fully address the prompt.

You meet with the student to discuss the situation. They tell you they have started many of the missing assignments and even show you several in various stages of completion. They explain that they are having difficulty keeping track of their schedule. They want to complete the work, but they often forget assignments, deadlines, or what they need to bring to class.

What are some possible next steps?