
Sample Student Choice Policy

When you see it in writing, a dissection choice policy seems like a pretty logical thing to ask for, doesn't it? Read over our sample policy and adapt it as you feel appropriate. It's important to push for a policy in writing because this makes it easier for other students to refuse to dissect and ensures that there will be no misunderstandings.

1. Alternatives to dissection must be available in all classes for students who choose not to dissect.
2. The responsibility for creating an alternative lies primarily with the department; however, students should be expected to assist instructors in finding the best alternative.
3. Requiring the student to watch others dissect is not an alternative; the student must be allowed to leave the room while the dissection is taking place. An alternative assignment must be provided so that the student can learn the subject matter.
4. Students will not be penalized or ostracized in any way for choosing the alternative exercise. A student's choice not to dissect shall be respected by all school faculty and administration, and the student shall be treated in a nonjudgmental manner.
5. All students must be informed in writing of their option to choose not to dissect at the beginning of each semester during which dissections are scheduled, a minimum of three weeks prior to the dissection. This information should be included in the course syllabus, on the course's Web page, and in the college course book and will reassure students majoring in biology and psychology—as well as *all* current and potential students—that they won't be forced to participate in dissections. Students will be encouraged to enroll in courses without fear of having to compromise their beliefs.
6. Those instructors who still teach dissection in their classes must verbally announce the policy to all students on the first day of the semester and on the day of the dissection.