

UNIVERSITY POLICY
DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES
TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
Revised September 2005

A full disclosure of University policy is available in the main office of the Biological Sciences Building (Rm. 108). You may request further information or clarification by requesting access to the *Operating Policy and Procedure Manual* in the Chairman's Office.

Graduate students are regulated by the same policies as university faculty on the issues that follow. With permission of the Provost's Office, the statements below were taken directly from the Texas Tech University Faculty Handbook which can be found online at <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/officialpublications/pdfs/FacultyHB.pdf> (August 2004).

Important Documents

- Faculty handbook
<http://www.depts.ttu.edu/officialpublications/pdfs/FacultyHB.pdf>
- Student affairs handbook
http://www.studentaffairs.ttu.edu/publications/student_handbook0405.pdf
- Undergraduate and Graduate Catalog (University catalog)
<http://www.depts.ttu.edu/officialpublications/catalog/ViewCat.html>
- TTU Operating procedures. These are available in the departmental office or online.
<http://www.depts.ttu.edu/opmanual/>

Academic Freedom

“Institutions of higher education are conducted for the common good. The common good depends upon a free search for truth and its free expression. Hence, the faculty member must be free to pursue scholarly inquiry without undue restriction and to voice and publish conclusions concerning the significance of evidence considered relevant. The faculty member must be free from the corrosive fear that others, inside or outside the university community, because of their differing view, may threaten the faculty member's professional career or the material benefits accruing from it.

Each faculty member is entitled to full freedom in the classroom in discussing the subject taught. Each faculty member is also a citizen of the nation, state, and community, and when speaking, writing, or acting as an individual citizen, must be free from institutional censorship or discipline”.

Academic Integrity

The University is strongly committed to upholding standards of academic integrity. Any student found to have committed academic misconduct is subject to the disciplinary sanctions, conditions, and/or restrictions outlined in Part IX, Code of Student Conduct, Section B of the *Student Affairs Handbook*. This includes (but is not limited to): cheating, plagiarism, academic dishonesty, intoxication, drug possession, theft, possession of weapons, physical harm or threat, disruptive behavior, gambling, hazing, harassment, false alarms, terrorism, financial irresponsibility misuse of computer facilities, providing false information or abuse of the

discipline system. Complete definitions and examples of academic misconduct are available in the Texas Tech University Faculty Handbook.

Academic Regulations

Regulations concerning admission, registration, grading practices, class attendance, the University calendar, and other similar matters are stated in the current Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs. Faculty members are advised to consult the catalogs in order to become familiar with those regulations. Information concerning admission of graduate students is contained in the current Graduate Catalog. Additional information may be distributed as needed by memoranda or letters.

Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA)

“Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) require that universities, and all faculty and staff therein, make reasonable accommodation for all students with disabilities in all programs and activities, both academic and nonacademic. *If such reasonable accommodation is denied to any disabled student, the institution may be held in violation of the law.* It is advisable that you ask in each first class session that students with disabilities or health problems identify themselves to you (privately after class or during your office hours) and indicate to you any special accommodations you will need to make for them during the semester (for example, extended time examinations). Examples of how this may be done are included below. While disabled students are always told to notify their professors, some may be reluctant to do so.

Faculty are not obligated to provide accommodation for a student’s disability needs unless the student provides proof of a disability for which the accommodation requested is appropriate. While such proof should ideally be provided at the beginning of the semester, accommodation requests can be submitted at any time during a semester. The accommodations begin on the date the letter is signed by both the instructor and the student and are NOT retroactive. The university-approved mechanism for doing so is written notification from AccessTECH—a Letter of Accommodation (LOA). The LOA on official university letterhead indicates to professors that the student has given proof of his or her disability and that the accommodation noted is considered appropriate and reasonable. No further proof of disability should be required of the student. Students presenting verification other than the LOA should be referred to AccessTECH in the office of the Dean of Students for the appropriate identification. No requirement exists that accommodation be made prior to completion of the approved university process.

Faculty should be aware of the related student grievance process as detailed in the *Student Affairs Handbook*. It is our hope that this system will enable faculty and staff to easily and quickly access those resources necessary to respond effectively to these students’ needs, particularly those students whose disabilities are not visible or as familiar as others. AccessTECH is available to advise and assist faculty members in the accommodation process. They can train in disability awareness and accommodation procedures for any employees of the university. They can be reached at 742-2405.

Keep in mind that the purpose of classroom accommodation is to eliminate the competitive disadvantage caused by the disability itself. *Students with disabilities should be expected to do the same quality of work and the same quantity of work as every other student. It is the method by which this is accomplished that is sometimes different.* An example for a

statement in class would be: “I would appreciate hearing from anyone who has a disability that may require some special accommodations. I am sure we can work out whatever arrangements are necessary. Please see me after class or during my office hours.” Faculty are encouraged to insert one of the following into each course syllabus:

Option I: The university is committed to the principle that in no aspect of its programs shall there be differences in the treatment of persons because of race, creed, national origin, age, sex, or disability, and that equal opportunity and access to facilities shall be available to all. If you require special accommodations in order to participate, please contact the instructor at _____. Students should present appropriate verification from AccessTECH in the office of the Dean of Students. No requirement exists that accommodations be made prior to completion of this approved university process.

Option II: Any student who, because of a disability, may require some special arrangements in order to meet course requirements should contact the instructor, _____, as soon as possible to make necessary accommodations. Students should present appropriate verification from AccessTECH in the office of the Dean of Students. No requirement exists that accommodations be made prior to completion of this approved university process.”

Class Excuses from Student Health Services

Student Health Services is a primary care clinic staffed with licensed physicians and other health care professionals who provide care for minor illnesses, injuries, and mental health issues. Students generally pay a medical services fee which entitles them to access clinical and pharmacy services at Student Health Services. Clinic hours are 8:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Summer and interim hours vary. When possible, appointments are scheduled to avoid conflicts with class schedules. Students experiencing a prolonged illness that may affect their academic performance may consult their Student Health Services physician about obtaining a letter of explanation.

In accordance with state and federal law, a student’s medical information is confidential and cannot be released to anyone, including parents/guardians, without the student’s written permission, unless otherwise authorized by law. Contact Student Health Services at (806) 743-2860 or visit our website at www.studentaffairs.ttu.edu and select Student Health Services for additional information.

Faculty–Student Conflict of Interest

The university is responsible for ensuring the integrity of the roles of faculty and students during the period of graduate or undergraduate enrollment and protecting them from conflict of interest. Faculty must avoid academic supervisory, teaching, or evaluative relationships with students that pose significant conflicts of interest from the standpoint of personal or professional connections. Such connections might include husband-wife or other affectional liaisons, supervisor-employee relationships, or parent-child relationships. The appearance of conflict of interest should be avoided. OP 32.33 sets forth details of procedures that are to be followed in this regard.

Sexual Harassment - Faculty

”It is the policy of the university to maintain a work place and a learning environment free of sexual harassment and intimidation. Harassment of students on the basis of sex is a violation of Section 106.31 of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Harassment of Texas Tech

University employees on the basis of sex is a violation of Section 703 of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Texas Commission on Human Rights Act. Sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, participation in a university-sponsored educational program or activity, or in return for a grade or other consideration;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for an academic or employment decision affecting such individual; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's academic or work performance or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or educational environment.

Any faculty member, staff member, or student may pursue a grievance within the procedures outlined in OP 10.09 without fear of reprisal, stigma, or threats if a complaint is filed in good faith.”

Complaint Procedures - Students

Sexual harassment complaints must be filed within 180 days after the incident occurs. (Title VII of *Civil Rights Act* of 1964 and Title IX of the *Educational Amendments* of 1972).

Students believing they are the targets of sexual harassment in the academic environment by faculty, staff, or other students should report their complaint to the *Dean of Students Office (DOS)*.

Students complaining of sexual harassment in their employment capacity should proceed directly to the *Affirmative Action Office* as provided in the Faculty and Staff section of this policy.

When a signed complaint is filed, an investigation will be conducted by either the *Dean of Students Office* or the *Affirmative Action Office*. Investigation of a complaint of sexual harassment will include, but not be limited to, conferring with the complainant, the accused and the supervisor of the accused and may also involve examination of relevant documentation and interviews with other pertinent individuals. The appropriate Vice President or Provost will be notified of the complaint.

The investigation will be conducted as quickly as possible and the results reported to the complainant, accused, and the appropriate vice president and Provost.

In the event the complaint is valid, the accused will be subject to disciplinary action, as determined by the appropriate Vice President or Provost.

Appeals by either party may be directed to the appropriate Vice President or Provost.

Conduct of Graduate Students Serving as Faculty (Teaching Assistants)

Graduate students appointed as Teaching Assistants or Research Assistants serve in a limited role as faculty of Texas Tech University. As faculty employees, OP 33.04, “*Conduct of University Faculty*,” and OP 32.33 “*Faculty and Student Conflict of Interest*” apply fully. This

policy prohibits actions by a faculty employee which are a breach of the public trust. Penalties for such actions range from an oral reprimand to separation from the University. The classes of actions prohibited are as follows.

1. Academic dishonesty of any form, including but not limited to academic plagiarism or giving improper aid to a student on an examination or grade. Acceptance of money, gifts, or favors from students, or solicitation thereof, which would compromise integrity, are similarly prohibited.
2. Forgery, alteration, or unauthorized use of University documents or records.
3. Knowingly furnishing false information to the University.
4. Use of force or violence or other methods of obstructing the teaching, research, administration, or public service functions of the University.
5. Physical abuse, threats, or conduct dangerous to the health and safety of any person on University property or University-sponsored or supervised functions.
6. Sexual harassment connected in any way to the performance of University duties.
7. Theft or damage to the property of the University or to the property of a member of or visitor to the University.
8. Unauthorized entry to or use of University facilities.
9. Use, possession, or distribution of narcotics or other substances controlled by Federal and State law, except in strict compliance with such regulations.
10. Lewd, indecent, or obscene conduct on University-owned or controlled property or at a University-sponsored or supervised function.
11. Failure to comply with the lawful directions of University officials acting in the performance of their duties.
12. Violation of other promulgated University policies or rules. This prohibition includes failure to meet regularly scheduled classes or to administer scheduled examinations.

The foregoing are to be understood as illustrative, but not exhaustive, of the possible infractions of academic ethics.

Definition of Student Employment

A student employee performs part-time work incidental to academic training in an occupational category that requires all incumbents to be students as a condition of employment. These include:

A. Graduate Assistant—A graduate student in an institution of higher education employed to perform work which utilizes knowledge beyond undergraduate academic studies. The position of Graduate Assistant is intended for graduate students employed in capacities other than teaching or research.

B. Research Assistant—A graduate student in an institution of higher education employed in support of the research mission of the unit, its director or faculty, in laboratory, library, field, or computer, or such other activities as may assist the unit's research effort. The position of Research Assistant is intended for graduate students employed in research activities on research accounts.

C. Teaching Assistant—A graduate student in an institution of higher education employed in support of the teaching mission of the unit who is responsible for, or in charge of a class or class section, or a quiz drill or laboratory section. The position of Teaching Assistant is intended for

graduate students employed in teaching activities. The source of funds is ordinarily an academic account.

Disposition by the Dean of Students or Designee

A written report of any disciplinary action taken by the *Dean of Students* or designee will be sent to the appropriate academic dean and to the student. The final results of a grade appeal shall be reported to the instructor by the appropriate academic dean in the manner required by the grade appeals procedure (*Part V of the Student Affairs Handbook*).

Grade Appeal Procedure

The *Grade Appeal Procedure* (Part V of the *Student Affairs Handbook*) may be used to appeal a failing course grade, but not a failing grade given for a class assignment. The disciplinary penalty of a grade of *F* shall not be implemented until the disciplinary procedures or grade appeal process has been exhausted. A student may continue the academic class and course work until a final decision is made.

Instructor Responsibilities

The instructor in a course is responsible for initiating action in cases where there is an admitted act or convincing evidence of academic misconduct. Before taking such action, the instructor should attempt to discuss the matter with the student. If the alleged misconduct involves a final exam, the instructor may withhold the grade until a reasonable attempt can be made to contact the student after the end of the semester.

Instructor Sanctions

If academic misconduct is determined by the instructor, a failing grade shall be assigned to either the assignment in question or to the course grade. When a student is given a failing grade in a course as a result of academic misconduct, the instructor shall report in writing to the instructor's department chair the facts of the case and the action to be taken against the student. The chair shall provide a copy to the student, to his or her academic dean (and the Graduate Dean in the case of graduate students) and to the Dean of Students.

Plagiarism

This violation includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

Posting Grades

Student grades are not to be posted in any public location. However, with exceptionally large classes, the University recommends that grades be posted as random numbers. These numbers must be the sole property and knowledge of the individual student for that particular exam posting. This is the University Administration's policy based on legal action taken against instructors, teaching assistants and administrators. If your grades are posted in a manner that places you and the Department in jeopardy, they will be removed.

When possible, return the student's quizzes during the laboratory period. DO NOT place the

quizzes outside the lab on the floor or on the wall. DO NOT give a student's scores over the telephone unless you are sure that you are talking to the student; the student's parents or legal guardians are NOT exceptions.

Referrals to the Dean of Students

A student referred to the *Dean of Students* for alleged violation of academic misconduct is entitled to all substantive and procedural guarantees provided in the *Code of Student Conduct*.

Repeated Academic Dishonesty

In cases of repeated violations, either the instructor (through his or her department chair and/or academic dean) or the academic dean may refer the case to the *Dean of Students* for further disciplinary proceeding.

Sexual Harassment

The objective of the University is to provide an environment in which faculty, staff, and students may pursue their careers and studies with a maximum of productivity and enjoyment. Behavior or conduct which interferes with this goal will not be tolerated.

It is the policy of the University to maintain a work place and a learning environment free of sexual harassment and intimidation.

Harassment of students on the basis of sex is a violation of Section 106.31 of Title IX of the *Education Amendments of 1972*.

Harassment of TTU employees on the basis of sex is a violation of Section 703 of Title VII of the *Civil Rights Act* of 1964, § 39.03 Texas Penal Code, as stipulated in House Bill 370 passed in the 71st Legislative Session, and the Texas Commission on Human Rights Act of 1933.

Sexual harassment is defined as: Sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- a. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, participation in a University sponsored educational program or activity, or in return for a grade or other consideration;
- b. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for an academic or employment decision affecting such individual, or
- c. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's academic or work performance or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or educational environment.

Any faculty member, staff member, or student may pursue a grievance as set forth in the procedures outlined below without fear of reprisal.

Confidentiality of both complainant and accused will be honored to such extent as it does not compromise the University's commitment to investigate allegations of sexual harassment.

Smoking

OP78.16 prohibits smoking in all campus facilities.

Teaching Assistants (Considerations and Advice)

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR TEACHING ASSISTANTS

The purpose of your teaching assistantship is twofold: to help support you financially during your study for an advance degree and, of equal importance, to provide an essential service to the Department and to the University. You have been appointed to a responsible job which will have an impact upon the learning experience of many college students. There is so little time for orientation prior to the beginning of the semester, the following points are provided as a guide to help you get started.

1. A good instructor always meets his/her laboratories on time, stays in lab for the entire period, and is ill prepared in advance to cover the material for that laboratory.
2. You are encouraged to be innovative and to use your own experiences whenever possible. Remember, a positive approach is most effective, and the course in which you teach is a team effort with the other TA's and the lecturer(s) in the course. It is counterproductive to your effectiveness as a teacher to make derogatory remarks to the students about any aspects of the course.
3. It is courteous to the students to grade exams quickly, certainly by the following weekly lab period.
4. Since the lab grade is an essential part of the course grade, you must give the final lab grades to the section coordinator on time.
5. If it is unavoidable that you be absent from a lab period, be sure to check in with your coordinator (or leave a message), and make sure someone covers your lab duties. It is University policy that leaves from "campus" must have proper approval in advance. If you know you are going to be absent for any other reason, apply for official leave. Since no funds will be involved, all you have to do is have Dr. Holaday's approval.
6. Please use good judgment in your personal habits, hygiene, and dress. If your personal habits are such that they affect the students, someone will discuss the matter with you. What you wear is certainly up to you, but what you wear to a teaching laboratory is the Department's concern, so dress appropriately.
7. Treat all students with courtesy and fairness. To avoid even the appearance of favoritism, do not fraternize unduly with students assigned to your laboratories. It is unethical for you to date a student assigned to your laboratory. Such action would constitute basis for termination of further financial support from the Department.
8. Make every effort to be available to your students. However, do not give the departmental number for messages-except for emergencies. Students can leave a general message in the main office, Rm. 108.
9. Your duties may include the proctoring of lectures and final exams. Contact the lecture instructor early in the semester to find out what needs to be done and help get the materials to the examination room.
10. Please do your part to protect supplies and equipment from theft and to prevent damage to the building. It is difficult, and sometimes impossible, to replace items that "disappear".
11. Sometimes you may be asked to help clean, organize, or conduct inventories. Consider it part of your job.

12. You are responsible directly to your course coordinator. Any problems should be taken up directly with that person. In addition, you may speak with the Department Chairperson about any aspects of your duties.

REMEMBER THAT YOU HAVE ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT JOBS IN OUR DEPARTMENT, THE DEPARTMENT DEPENDS ON YOU.

PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED AFTER OBSERVING CHEATING (IMPEACHING)

In the event that you observe someone cheating, immediately tell the student(s) what you observed. If the infraction is visual, you may seek confirmation by another TA; however, such confirmation is sometimes not possible and is not necessary. You might take the student's answer sheet and ask him or her to leave the room. Tell the student to see you immediately after the quiz. You may allow the student to continue the quiz after your warning, depending on your assessment of the magnitude of the infraction. If the student refuses to give you the answer sheet when asked to do so, or refuses to leave the laboratory, call Campus Security.

Remember- TAs are not Instructors of Record. Only the Lecture Instructor can take official action against the student. IF you tell a student that you are going to give him or her a "zero" for the quiz, you have exceeded your authority. Immediately after talking to the student (you may tell him or her what your recommendation will be), counsel with the student's Lecture Instructor. If action is to be taken, the Instructor must do so in writing to the student's dean. Copies should be sent to the Departmental Chairperson, the student, and the Dean of Students. The letter should detail the infraction and state what action the Instructor has taken. If the student finished the quiz but failed, the Instructor might choose to write a letter detailing the infraction but let the grade stand. If action is taken against the student, the student must have access to appeal.

If the student becomes vocally or physically abusive the behavior should be noted in the Instructor's letter.

If you have evidence that one or more students have plagiarized work, accumulate the evidence and ask the laboratory coordinator to review the material. Show the material to the students' Instructor(s). After a decision has been reached by the TA and the Instructor, notify the student(s) immediately and tell them to contact the Instructor(s). The Instructor should file a letter with the student's dean, as above.

MAINTAINING YOUR TEACHING APPOINTMENT

TA appointments are made for an academic year starting with the Fall term. However, your performance as a TA and as a graduate student will be reviewed each semester and a poor performance could lead to the loss of the TA appointment or failure to receive a TA re-appointment for the next academic year.

Teaching performance will be evaluated from information provided by the faculty member serving as laboratory coordinator for the course in which you are teaching and from student evaluations. You must also remain in "good academic standing" by maintaining a GPA of 3.0 or higher each semester. Failure to meet this GPA requirement will result in being placed on academic probation by the Graduate School and could cause you to lose a TA appointment. The evaluation for TA re-appointments will include an assessment of your progress toward completion of your degree.

You are also reminded that you must conduct your class and interact with students or other TAs in a professional manner. Texas Tech University takes offenses, such as sexual harassment very seriously and you must be cognizant of how your actions or words might be interpreted by others.

If there is a course in which you would like to teach, contact the faculty member coordinating the labs. The course coordinator will request specific TAs for his/her course.

RESIGNING A TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIP

As soon as the student holding a teaching assistantship knows that he/she will resign, he/she should notify the Graduate Coordinator or the Departmental Chairperson in writing. This will allow the Department's interest to be best served by seeking a replacement as quickly as possible.

If the student wishes to resign a TA to accept a research assistantship several factors will be considered.

1) Before 1 June the student can resign the TA without concern 2) After 1 June he/she will not be released from the TA contract unless a suitable student can be found to accept the teaching responsibilities.

3) The same applies to a student wishing to resign a TA in the Fall to accept a RA in the Spring. He/she will be allowed to resign the TA without concern prior to 15 October.

TUTORING WHILE HOLDING A TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIP

Although you are encouraged to assist your students in every possible way to help them learn the course material, you are NOT allowed to tutor students for monetary gain who are in the course teaching.