Additional Guidance for Instructors of Record:

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board’s Statement of Principles  
Information on Open Educational Resources  
Academic Integrity in Online Courses  

THECB Statement of Principles on the Acceptance of Credit During the Current Emergency

*Guidance specific to Texas Tech is included in italicized font after the THECB’s statement.*

1. Institutional policies and the evaluation of grades and credit should recognize the extraordinary burden placed on students during this time. Even in the best of cases, student dislocation and the need to change the very basic patterns of life impose challenges on our students that may have an impact their performance.

   We applaud the efforts of all faculty working to retain continuity of instruction by offering students opportunities for engagement, feedback, and connection. The importance of this cannot be understated. We also want to be more direct than we have been in terms of best practices for instruction and expectations during this unprecedented time:

   a. Assuming that a student needs less time to complete an assignment because the student is typing instead of writing by hand is inaccurate. Do not make this assumption.
   b. Scheduling required activities outside of your regularly scheduled class time because you think students are sitting around with little to do is not okay. Do not do this.
   c. Increasing the amount of work from what was originally assigned creates multiple challenges for students. Here’s a timely resource for insight into what students are dealing with right now: [Grading for a Pandemic](#)

2. Institutional policies and practices should recognize that traditional inequities are exacerbated in the current crisis and that “equal” treatment of students’ transcripts is unlikely to result in “equitable” outcomes. Institutional policies and practices should, therefore, be as holistic as possible, taking into account the range of situational and behavioral circumstances in which our students find themselves.

   This is one reason that Texas Tech has elected to implement a [Credit/No Credit option](#) that will be available to students this term. We cannot control the environment in which students are living and learning right now, but we can control our ability to provide students with choice and agency when it comes to how their academic performance has been affected.

3. Institutional policies should, wherever practicable, provide flexibility in the timely reporting of grades and other markers of achievement, understanding that the dislocations mentioned above are also present for faculty, staff, and others.

   We do not discount the exceptional challenges imposed on our faculty and staff this term. Further, we are aware that many of our faculty and staff are working full-time while also serving as caregivers and educators for family members living in their households. In working to make sure we are not unduly adding to faculty and staff members’ workloads, we have articulated the following policies effective for this spring term:

   a. Faculty members and staff members serving as Instructors of Record are not charged with inputting grades of Credit/No Credit. Our policy requires no change to the final grade submission process.
   b. Because academic advising staff, including some faculty members who serve as academic advisors, are charged with submitting Credit/No Credit grade requests, we have extended the processing period after the final grade submission deadlines. The processing period is extended by one week to allow for complete processing of graduating student grades without overwhelming offices that are simultaneously processing grade changes for non-graduating students.
4. Institutional policies should aim for complete transparency. The circumstances under which credits and or grades are accepted and not accepted should be clear and publicly stated in accessible, specific, and easy to understand terms. The rationale for these policies should be made equally clear and transparent. This transparency should extend inside as well as outside the institution. Institutional policies that respond to this unprecedented and unique situation should be broadly communicated and disseminated within institutions. At a time when telework has become the norm, it is in the collective best interest of higher education that each student-facing employee understands new and existing policies.

The President’s Office has taken the lead in publishing all memos and a substantial amount of additional guidance on the university’s public-facing Emergency Communications website: https://www.depts.ttu.edu/communications/emergency/coronavirus/. Key information on this website is being translated into Spanish.

5. Institutional decision-making regarding individual students should be swift and definitive. Students and their families need clear, timely information on which to make decisions.

Texas Tech has published clear and consistent messages to students and keeps that information updated and fully available online via the Provost’s COVID-19 Academic Affairs Response Page.

We have provided centralized guidance for a number of different student-situation types so that students are treated uniformly no matter their academic college. This guidance also ensures that students should receive swift and informative decisions.

6. Finally, we ask that institutions clarify their policies as soon as possible. Students and families are making decisions now about, for example, whether to take courses pass/fail, whether to enroll in non-traditional coursework to fill gaps in their curricula, and whether to accept partial credit for coursework already underway. Uncertainty can only exacerbate the stress students are experiencing and could, in the end, harm students who make decisions today that might not serve them tomorrow.

We have published guidance and general information related to all of the following academic matters:
   a. Extended deadline to declare a course Pass/Fail;
   b. Choosing a grade of Credit/No Credit;
   c. Application of spring 2020 courses taken at other institutions as Pass to student degree plans at TTU;
   d. Availability of equipment to assist students with their remote learning needs;
   e. Information on grades of Incomplete, backdated drops, and backdated withdrawals;
   f. Students who have been called up for military service.

Open Educational Resources for Teaching Online

Texas Tech University’s Librarians are working to assist faculty members teaching courses online with the integration of OERs into their courses. Examples of forthcoming workshops include:
   • Introduction to Open Educational Resources (OERs):
   • Adopting/Adapting Creating OERs for Classes
   • Engaging Students with Open Education Resources
   • Workshop to Locate Open Education Textbooks for your course
   • Open Treasures at the Library of Congress
     o Locating and using Library of Congress Open Education Resources for class and research

Interested? Contact Librarian Laura Heinz for more information.