

# TEACHING EXCELLENCE HANDBOOK

2014-2015



*A green light to greatness.*

**UNT<sup>®</sup>**

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# Chapter 1: Teaching Personnel at UNT

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**The Teaching Excellence Handbook is provided as a resource for individuals who are responsible for instructional activities at UNT. Included in this resource are helpful tips and important university information that will assist instructors — whether a first-time teaching assistant or an experienced full professor — in carrying out their teaching responsibilities.**

**“Instructor” is used in this document as a generic term referring to teaching personnel at the university.**

## Types of Teaching Personnel

### Teaching Assistants

A teaching assistant (TA) is a graduate student who assists a faculty member in a class or laboratory, but does not have total instructional responsibility for the class. TAs working during a long semester must be enrolled as students; specific guidelines are available in the Policy Manual (<http://policy.unt.edu> [Chapter 6, Policy number 15.1.27]). In order to qualify for reappointment as a TA, a graduate student must demonstrate competence and responsibility in carrying out TA duties, maintain high academic standards (usually a minimum of 3.0 GPA), and continue to make satisfactory progress toward degree completion.

### Teaching Fellows

A teaching fellow (TF) is a graduate student who assumes total responsibility for instruction in one or more classes. The TF is the instructor of record and is responsible for assigning grades. TFs working during a long semester must be enrolled as students; specific guidelines are available in the Policy Manual (<http://policy.unt.edu> [Chapter 6, Policy number 15.1.27]). In order to qualify for reappointment as a teaching fellow, a graduate student must demonstrate effective teaching skills, maintain high academic standards (usually a minimum of 3.0 GPA), and continue to make satisfactory progress toward degree completion.

### English Language Certification for International TFs

An international student must be certified by the International TA/TF Program (sponsored by the UNT’s Intensive English Language Institute) before being appointed by a UNT academic department as a TF. The certification program is designed to measure the candidate’s effectiveness in spoken English and provide training and assistance tailored to individual needs. A detailed description of the International TA/TF Program and the Intensive English Language Institute is given in Chapter 9, “Advice to International Teaching Personnel.” Contact the Intensive English Language Institute ([ielimainoffice@unt.edu](mailto:ielimainoffice@unt.edu) or 940-565-2003) to schedule the review.

## **Adjuncts**

Adjuncts are faculty members who have been appointed on a temporary, semester-by-semester basis to teach specific courses. Adjuncts must meet the faculty qualifications established by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. They serve as instructor of record in the courses they teach, and they may not be enrolled as UNT students. Reappointment decisions are often based on department resources and demand for specific courses. While there is no guarantee of reappointment of adjunct faculty, an adjunct who wishes to be reappointed should make an effort to demonstrate teaching effectiveness to the chair or hiring committee of the department in which he or she works.

## **Lecturers**

Lecturers are generally full-time teaching personnel working on a one-or multi-year contract with UNT. They may be promoted (from lecturer to senior lecturer to principal lecturer), but they are not eligible for tenure.

## **Professors**

Professors are full-time employees of UNT who are either working toward tenure (assistant professors) or have tenure (associate and full professors). Professors generally have responsibility for teaching, research, and university service.

## **Employee Benefits Eligibility**

TFs, TAs, adjunct faculty, and other salaried faculty and staff whose appointments require them to work 20 hours or more per week are eligible to participate in the university's group insurance program. Under certain conditions, adjuncts are eligible for employee benefits and should consult with their department chair and the Business Services Center to determine their eligibility. TF and TA enrollment information may be obtained from the Business Services Center at <http://bsc.untsystem.edu/graduate-student-insurance-benefits>.

# Chapter 2: Classroom Policies

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## Class Rolls

### Preliminary Class Rolls

It is important to provide accurate information about student attendance during the first weeks of class even if an instructor does not have a formal attendance policy. Instructors will want to familiarize themselves with a class prior to the first meeting to get a general sense of the composition (e.g., size, majors, classifications, and names). The most up-to-date class roster is available through Blackboard ([learn.unt.edu](http://learn.unt.edu)) or myUNT ([my.unt.edu](http://my.unt.edu)):

- Click on the [Faculty] tab
- Then select [Access Your Faculty Center]
- Choose the current term
- Select a course from the list
- Select the “people icon” in the left-most column of that list

The roster may be downloaded as a comma-delimited file by clicking on the small “checkerboard” symbol with a red arrow in the corner. The resulting file can be opened in any spreadsheet program, such as Excel.

### Audit Rolls

Early in the semester (usually the 12th class day for long semesters and the equivalent class day for short semesters), UNT takes a census of all students currently enrolled for purposes of reporting to the state. On or about this date, a new column with an icon for an “audit roll” will appear in the myUNT faculty center list of courses. Clicking on this icon will reveal a list of all students who are registered for the class on the census date. For each student on the list, the instructor must check a box indicating that the student has attended at least once or a box indicating that the student has never attended. At the bottom of the audit roll, there is space to list students who have attended class but who are not officially enrolled.

Instructors should carefully follow the directions for completing and submitting the audit roll. These audit rolls are often referenced for state and federal reporting purposes and may be audited by the financial aid office to ensure compliance with state and federal financial aid rules and regulations.

**Helpful Hint 1:** *To facilitate taking attendance in large classes, consider using a sign-in sheet. A simple list of student names with check-off boxes can be circulated quickly and without class disruption. If you are only taking attendance to certify your audit roll, you can remove students from the list after they check in once, so you are ultimately left with a short list of the students who never attended at all.*

## Dropping Courses

Students who wish to drop a course before the census date (12th class day during long semesters) may do so without permission; they may do so online by visiting [my.unt.edu](http://my.unt.edu) or

in person at the Registrar's Office (in the Eagle Student Services Building). After the 12<sup>th</sup> class day (or the equivalent class day for short semesters), students must first receive written approval of the instructor prior to dropping a course.

A grade of W (withdrawal) will be recorded for any course dropped during the automatic W period. After that time, the student must have a passing grade in order to receive a grade of W for a dropped course; otherwise, the grade will be WF (withdrawal/fail). Instructors mark either a W or WF designation on the student's drop form.

***Helpful Hint 2:*** *Including one or two assignments, quizzes, and/or tests that must be completed prior to the 12th class day in your syllabus is a great idea. This completed work provides the basis for determining whether or not a student, who wishes to drop a course, has obtained a passing grade up to that point. Completing a drop form by assigning a W or a WF then becomes an easy and justifiable decision.*

Early feedback is critical to student success (see Helpful Hint 2). Assignments early in the course also can provide the instructor a basis for determining whether a student who drops receives a grade of W or WF. Generally students may not drop a course after the Tuesday of a given semester's 10<sup>th</sup> week (the summer term has 15 class sessions); exceptions to this general rule are quite rare and made only under extreme circumstances. Drop deadlines specific to each semester/term are published in the Academic Calendar (<http://calendar.unt.edu/event-calendar/Academics>).

Instructors may drop students with grades of WF from courses for nonattendance at any time after the automatic W period if they have advised students in writing of this policy.

## **Dropping All Courses –**

### **Student Initiated Withdrawal from the Semester**

Students needing to drop all of their courses for the semester must visit the Dean of Students' office (Stovall Hall, Room 150) during office hours for assistance. After the census date (12<sup>th</sup> class day during long semesters), students will meet with a Dean of Students' staff member during office hours to complete their withdrawal.

During the meeting students will:

- Be advised of implications of withdrawal.
- Be informed of any obligations they may have with UNT or need to fulfill prior to withdrawing.
- Complete the withdrawal form and other necessary documents.

The Dean of Students office can only withdraw students from the first class day until the official last day to withdraw as set by the University calendar. Prior to the first class day, students wishing to cancel their courses for the semester must contact the Registrar's Office. After the last day to withdraw, students must seek out their Academic Dean for possible approval for a late withdrawal.

Students enrolled in online only classes may request to withdraw in person, via email ([deanofstudents@unt.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@unt.edu)) or by fax (940.369.8440). Students may be asked to complete additional forms and steps after their initial request is received.

The online student must include the following in their request:

- Name
- Student ID number
- Semester & courses to be dropped
- Email Address
- Phone number
- Written signature (cannot accept digital signatures)

For more information on the withdrawal process and deadlines, please visit <https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/withdrawals>.

## Attendance Policies

### Requiring Class Attendance

Responsibility for class attendance rests with the student. If a student's grades are to be based wholly or partially on attendance, then the instructor must notify the students in writing at the beginning of the semester. In other words, if a student's grade will be reduced for failing to attend class, this policy should be stated clearly in the course syllabus.

An instructor who informs students in writing about the necessity of class attendance may request the Registrar to drop any student from the course with a grade of WF upon the accumulation of a stated number of absences. The instructor should obtain an unsatisfactory progress form from their department and submit the completed form to the Registrar's Office for processing.

If the instructor completes an unsatisfactory progress form to drop a student for non-attendance during the time period when the student is eligible to drop with an automatic W, the Registrar's Office will notify the student that he or she will receive a WF unless the student initiates the drop procedure before the end of the automatic W period.

### Authorized Absences

Absences due to participation in sponsored activities must be approved in advance by department chairs and academic deans. Within three days following the absence, students must obtain authorized absence cards from the Dean of Students for presentation to their instructors. Students with authorized absence cards may make up the work missed, when practicable, or be given special allowance so that they are not penalized for the absence.

Absences due to other causes, such as illness, emergency, death in the family, etc. are termed "excused" or "not excused" at the discretion of the instructor, but in accordance with applicable absence policies set by the department/division, school, college, or the course syllabus. Students should show proof that the absence was unavoidable, such as a physician's statement, accident report, obituary, etc., and should contact the instructor. (Note: The Student Health and Wellness Center provides cards that verify the date and time of a student's visit. Hospitalized patients are given a form showing the inclusive dates of their hospitalization.)

### Absence for Religious Holidays

In accordance with state law, students who are absent due to the observance of a religious holiday may take examinations or complete assignments scheduled for the day missed within a reasonable time after the absence. Travel time required for religious observances shall also be excused. Only holidays or holy days observed by a religion whose place of worship is exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20 of the Tax Code may be included.

### Instructor Attendance (Walks)

Instructors are required to meet with their classes according to the university schedule. If an instructor must miss class for any reason, he or she is expected to contact the department chair and make appropriate arrangements to cover course content accordingly. **Cancelling**

classes or giving “walks” is not recommended.

## Students with Disabilities

In accordance with university policies and state and federal regulations, the university is committed to full academic access for all qualified students, including those with disabilities. Students must be registered with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to receive an accommodation. The ODA collects proof of disability and recommended compensation techniques from the licensed or certified professional who made the diagnosis of disability. Students who have disabilities that are covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act and who have been properly registered with the ODA are called “qualified students.” Instructors are expected to make reasonable and appropriate adjustments to the classroom environment and the teaching, testing, or learning methodologies in order to facilitate equality of educational access for such qualified students with disabilities.

Qualified students must notify the instructor that disability accommodations will be needed. A qualified student should present an Accommodation Request Form that contains information relative to the needs of the student and assures the instructor that proof of disability is on file with the ODA. Students who do not present such a form can be referred to the ODA for assistance in registering with the ODA.

The qualified student and the instructor will attempt to reach mutual agreement on how accommodation is to be achieved. The ODA can be called upon to give assistance in determining the accommodations that shall be provided and in providing some of those accommodations. (See Chapter 11: Other Helpful Facilities and Services.)

***Helpful Hint 3:** While some accommodations are relatively easy to implement (such as providing extended time for exams or allowing students to sit near the front of the class), others may be harder to implement without either drawing attention to the student with the disability or causing other students to question the fairness of procedures. If a student presents you with a list of accommodations, ask the student to privately discuss how that accommodation will work in the context of your class. If you still have questions, contact the ODA for assistance. Make sure you inform TAs of any necessary accommodations. Finally, while you should keep all paperwork relating to accommodations, you should also carefully protect the privacy of that information.*

*It is essential for many accommodations that course materials, syllabi, reading lists etc. be available as early as possible. Significant time is required to convert textbooks to Braille/e-text, arrange Sign Language Interpreters and schedule accommodated exams. Students needing such accommodations may fall behind if such content is not made available by faculty with as much lead time as possible.*

## Students Called to Active Duty

The University of North Texas has an interest in supporting students who serve in the military and who are called to active duty while enrolled. A student who is a member of the National Guard, Reserve, or other branch of the United States Armed Forces and is unable to complete classes because of military activation may request course withdrawals, incompletes or grades, depending on the timing of the activation and the individual needs of the student. These requests will ensure understanding and standardized guidelines for awarding grades to

students called to active military duty during an academic semester.

A student who is called to active duty while enrolled in the University of North Texas will be required to provide documentation of military orders to the Dean of Students office and to follow procedures for withdrawal through this office and indicate the options of withdrawal, requesting an incomplete or requesting assignment of grades depending on the time of activation during the semester. A Dean of Students' representative will meet with the student to discuss options and consider all areas that affect the student upon withdrawal.

The Dean of Students office will review the form, verify the military orders, and review the academic options available to the student. If incompletes or grades are requested, the student will be referred to the faculty member or academic department for assistance. The Dean of Students' office will send notification of the verification of military orders and the student's preference (for incomplete or grade assigned) to the faculty member/instructor of record, academic department and Associate Dean.

Per Texas Education Code 54.0006 (f) 3, grades are either assigned or incompletes are granted. If a student receives an incomplete he or she will have one year from the end of their active duty to complete the course. The Dean of Students office will complete the official withdrawal of the student and fully refund appropriate tuition and fees. If a student opts for an incomplete or grades are assigned, no refund will be given.

## Grades and Grading

In the UNT grading system, the letters A, B, C, D, F, **W**, **WF**, **I**, **P**, and **NP** are used. Letters other than A-F have the following significance:

**W** indicates a drop or withdrawal during the automatic W period as designated in the Academic Calendar. (See Dropping Courses, p. 6.)

**WF** indicates a drop or withdrawal with a failing grade given after the automatic W period as designated in the Academic Calendar. (See Dropping Courses, p.6.) While a W does not affect a student's GPA, a WF counts as an F on the student's transcript and does affect the student's GPA. Instructors should check with the department chair for W/WF protocol within the academic unit.

**I** indicates incomplete and is a non-punitive grade given only during the last one-fourth of the semester and only if a student

- is passing the course,
- has a justifiable reason why work cannot be completed on schedule, and
- arranges with the instructor to finish the course at a later date (must be completed no later than one year after the end of the semester) by completing specific requirements that the instructor must list on the electronic grade report.

The grade of **I** should be given only in extraordinary or unusual situations such as serious physical illness. Instructors should check with the department chair before agreeing to an Incomplete. If approved, ask the student to submit a written request that states:

- the reason for the Incomplete,

- what work will be completed, and
- the date by which the work will be completed.

Alternatively, instructors may use a standardized “incomplete contract” form. The department administrator can tell instructors whether the department uses the standardized form.

If the student does not complete the required work by the stipulated deadline (not to exceed one year), then the grade of **I** will default to an **F** (or other grade specified by the instructor).

The grades of **P** and **NP** are given to students who are taking a class on a pass (**P**)/no pass (**NP**) basis. The instructor gives a normal letter grade (**A-F**), and the **P** or **NP** is recorded by the Registrar’s Office.

**P** is a credit grade given in the following situations:

- on the pass-fail option
- for student teaching
- in selected graduate individual problems and research courses
- in selected internship courses

**NP** indicates a failing grade on the pass-fail option; it is, however, non-punitive (meaning it does not affect the student’s GPA).

## Submitting Grades

All student grades are submitted online. Grade Rosters are made available via **my.unt.edu** and should be submitted by the deadline assigned by the UNT Registrar’s Office. Final grades may be exported from Blackboard for importing into my.unt.edu.

Steps for accessing the online grade roster:

- Log into **my.unt.edu**.
- Select the [Faculty] tab at the top.
- Select “Access your Faculty Center.”
- Select the current semester.
- Select the grade roster icon from the choices for each course.
- After entering the grades for some or all students, select “save.”

When all grades are entered and saved, the instructor changes the “approved” status for the course to ready for review (if a TA) or as approved (if the instructor of record, including TFs). The last step is to save the action.

**Helpful Hint 4:** *Student grades can be uploaded to the myUNT faculty center. In large classes, it may be easier to upload a comma delimited (.csv) file with students’ grades rather than manually entering grades one at a time). At the end of each semester, the Registrar sends out information to instructors’ official UNT e-mail addresses about how to upload grades, so keep an eye out for that e-mail.*

## Grade Changes

Grades can be accessed and changed on the electronic Grade Roster during the grading period prior to the grading deadline. After the deadline, grades cannot be changed online.

Generally speaking, once grades have been posted in EIS, they cannot be changed. There are three exceptions:

1. If a student has been given a grade of **I** and the student completes the agreed-upon work for the course, the instructor should consult with his or her department about the procedure for changing the I into a letter grade.
2. A faculty member who makes a clerical error when reporting grades may correct it. Requests for error correction must be initiated within 30 days after the close of the semester or summer term the grade was awarded. Corrections require the approval of the department chair and appropriate dean.
3. If the student successfully appeals his or her grade, then a grade change can be processed. (See Grade Appeals Process.)

## Posting Grades

Students should be notified of their grades in a manner that protects their right to privacy. Instructors should not post student grades in a public forum. Grades may be kept in the Blackboard Learn gradebook tool, UNT's online learning management system. This allows students to see the instructor's record of student performance without compromising student privacy.

More information regarding university training on FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) is available at [www.unt.edu/ferpa/](http://www.unt.edu/ferpa/).

## Grade Appeals Process

The University of North Texas policy on Grade Appeals is available at <http://policy.unt.edu/policydesc/grade-appeals-procedure-15-2-7>.

## Pre-Finals Week and Finals

UNT policy regarding pre-finals week is found in the Policy Manual (<http://policy.unt.edu> [Chapter 7, Policy number 15.2.16]). Student activities (including athletics) are curtailed during pre-finals week. Final exams are scheduled by the Registrar; the schedule for final exams is available on the Registrar's web page (<http://registrar.unt.edu/exams>). Faculty are expected to give some sort of exam during the scheduled period. Note that final exams are generally held in the room in which the class meets, with occasional exceptions.

The Sage Hall Computer Testing Center is available for courses needing computerized testing in support of distance, blended, or face-to-face classes. Visit <http://it.unt.edu/test> for more information.

# Emergency Response in Classrooms

During an emergency on campus, instructors are to take appropriate action upon official notification of an impending or occurring emergency situation on campus. There are three steps for instructors to follow during any emergency situation at UNT:

## 1-STOP

Stop class activities immediately upon receiving official emergency notification. Instructors need to acknowledge an official warning in order to react properly. Also, it is important for instructors to stop class and allow others to enter the classroom if the room is designated as a shelter location. To determine if your classroom is a shelter location visit <https://emergency.unt.edu/university-plans/Evacuation-Shelter-Maps>. (You must be logged into the UNT system to access this website).

## 2-INFORM

Inform students of the emergency situation. Instructors are a credible source of information; therefore, students are more likely to react to the threat. Additionally, informing students of a potential or actual emergency will reduce panic and anxiety.

## 3-ACT

Take action after informing the students of an emergency situation. Instructors are leaders in the classroom and must take this role to lead students to safety. The following are common actions for emergencies:

- Sheltering (example: tornados)
- Evacuating (example: fire and bomb threat)
- Locking down (example: active shooter)

For more information please visit <http://emergency.unt.edu>

**Official notification is provided through the following sources:**

- Eagle Alert (UNT)
- Administrative Announcements (UNT)
- KNTU 88.1 FM (UNT)
- www.unt.edu (UNT)
- UNT Safety Coordinators (UNT)
- CodeRED Alert (City of Denton and Denton County)
- Media Advisories (Local Media Outlets, Ex: WFAA)
- Weather Radios (National Weather Service)
- Students (UNT) \*\*

\*\* Students can be a source for official notification if they have received their information from one of the other aforementioned sources of official notification (example: Student receives an Eagle Alert and shows the instructor).

## Records Retention

Student records are private. While students have a right to review their own records (e.g., their exams, papers, etc.), instructors should not discuss a student's grades with other individuals—including parents, other students, potential employers, etc.—without verifying that the student has waived his or her educational privacy rights (consult with the department chair or advisor if this situation arises).

The instructor of record should maintain all course records for at least one calendar year; the grade book should be maintained in the department for a period of five years. This means keeping student exams and answer sheets (along with a key), student papers, and any calculations of student grades in a secure place (e.g. a locked cabinet in a private office or on a password protected computer). If students submit papers or assignments via Blackboard, the system will maintain the records; however, check to be certain that the electronic version includes grading information and any comments. Arrangements should be made with the department chair for retaining important student records.

The grade book in Blackboard remains in place for only one year. It is the responsibility of the instructor to download his or her grade book for keeping in the department for five years.

The disposal of student educational records should be done in a secure way. Department administrative staff can provide information about secure, bulk shredding of documents.

# Chapter 3: University Policies

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## Records Policies

### State Privacy Policy

State law, with few exceptions, gives individuals the right to be informed about the information the University of North Texas collects about the individual. It also gives individuals the right to receive and review collected information and the opportunity to have UNT change any incorrect information. UNT's privacy policy (1.7.9) is available at <http://policy.unt.edu>.

### Student Education Records

Pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the university has established policies relating to the accessibility of student information in the custody of the University of North Texas. The UNT FERPA policy statement appears in its entirety in the UNT Policy Manual, policy number 18.1.9. Information not covered by FERPA will be released only in accordance with the policy on public information found in policy number 10.6 of the UNT Policy Manual. Requests for public information not subject to FERPA must be submitted to the university public information officer in writing. The UNT Policy manual with the complete FERPA policy can be found at <http://www.unt.edu/ferpa/>.

Before releasing anything other than "directory information," faculty should consult the full policy. Directory information includes the following:

A student's name; address; university assigned e-mail address; university assigned enterprise-wide user identification number (EUID); month, day and place of birth; major field of study; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; weight and height of members of athletic teams; dates of attendance; enrollment status (e.g., undergraduate or graduate; full-time or part-time); classification; degrees, awards and honors received (including selection criteria); expected graduation date; dissertation and thesis titles; most recent previous school attended; and photograph.

Directory information will be provided without a student's consent upon request unless the student files a request in the Registrar's Office asking that his or her directory information not be disclosed without specific authorization. The request should be submitted prior to the 12th class day in the fall and spring terms, the 2nd class day of a three-week session, or the 4th class day of a five-week summer session. A request to withhold information may be submitted after the stated deadline for a term or session, but information may be released between the deadline and receipt of the request. The university will comply with a student's request to have his or her information excluded from available directory information until the request is amended in writing.

Faculty may release information to parents under the following conditions:

1. The student is a dependent of the parent for tax purposes as evidenced by appropriate documentation, including the parent's most recent tax return or a student financial aid application;
2. A health or safety emergency necessitates disclosure to protect the health or safety of the student or another individual; or
3. The student is under 21 years of age at the time of the disclosure and the student has violated a federal, state or local law or any rule or UNT policy governing the use or possession of alcohol or a controlled substance and UNT has found the student in violation of the Code of Student's Rights, Responsibilities and Conduct.

For information regarding the university's policy on access to student education records contact the Office of Registrar. For information regarding access to public information contact the UNT System Office of General Counsel.

## Sexual Harassment

### UNT Policy 1.3.19

It is the policy of the University of North Texas that no member of the university community may sexually harass another and that all allegations of sexual harassment be investigated. All members of the faculty, staff and student body will be subject to disciplinary action for violation of this policy. Please refer UNT Policy 1.3.19 (<http://policy.unt.edu>). These matters must be reported to the Office of Equal Opportunity and Title IX Coordinator.

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

#### Criteria for sexual harassment:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of an individual's employment or education, or
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment or education decisions affecting such an individual, or
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or education performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or educational environment.

#### Types of Sexual Harassment:

- **Quid Pro Quo**

Examples: "If you have sex with me, you will get a raise."  
"If you have sex with me, you will get an 'A' grade."

- **Hostile Environment**

Unwelcome behavior that is severe and pervasive and unreasonably interferes with the person's work or education. There are generally three categories of behavior that can create a hostile environment:

1. Third Party: Sexual conduct that is welcome and reciprocated but creates a hostile environment for others.
2. Sexual Favoritism: Sexual conduct that is welcomed and reciprocated, but results in unfair treatment of others.
3. Sex-Based: Any harassing conduct (including, but not limited to, sexually charged “jokes,” singling out students for additional work, or inequities in grading policies) that is based on gender.

**Responding to Sexual Harassment:**

- Confront the harasser and tell that person that the harassment must stop.
- Report the harassment to appropriate personnel (i.e., supervisory personnel, Human Resources, and the Division of Equity and Diversity.)

**Behavior Which May Constitute Sexual Harassment**

Category	Examples
Sexual comments	Jokes or remarks that are stereotypical or derogatory to members of the same or opposite sex; repeated comments about a person’s anatomy; sexual innuendo
Undue attention	Flirtation
Verbal sexual advances	General verbal expressions of sexual interest; inquiries of sexual values or behaviors, but short of a proposition
Visual sexual displays	Display of pornographic pictures, posters, cartoons or other materials, including use of the Internet
Body language	Leering at another person’s body
Invitations	Personal invitations for dates or to one’s house or apartment, but sexual expectations not stated
Physical advances	Kissing; hugging; patting; pinching; fondling; provocative touching
Explicit sexual advances	Clear invitations for sexual encounter, but no threats or promises
Sexual bribery	Explicit sexual propositions which include or strongly imply promises of rewards for complying (e.g., higher grades, better recommendations) and/or threats of punishment for refusing (e.g. lower grades, less favorable recommendations)

(Table adapted from *The Minority Review*, Vol., 1, No. 3, December 1990)

## **Consensual Relationships**

### **UNT Policy 1.3.23**

It is the policy of the university that consensual relationships between faculty or staff members in positions of authority and their subordinates or their students are not permitted.

Staff in positions of authority and faculty need to be sensitive to the potential for sexual harassment as well as conflicts of interest in personal relationships with their subordinates, faculty and staff members or with their students.

## **Nondiscrimination/Equal Employment Opportunity, Affirmative Action, and Non Retaliation**

It is the policy of the University of North Texas not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, disabled veteran status, or Veterans of the Vietnam Era status, in its educational programs, activities, admission or employment policies. If such discrimination occurs, it must be reported to the Office of Equal Opportunity.

## **Title IX Coordinator**

"No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." -Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 to the 1964 Civil Rights Act. If such discrimination occurs, it must be reported to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity at [oeo@unt.edu](mailto:oeo@unt.edu).

## **Academic Integrity**

A discussion of academic integrity is provided in Chapter 7. For additional information, refer to UNT Policy 18.1.16.

# Chapter 4: Preparing to Teach

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## Preparing the Course Syllabus

*Instructors of record are responsible for developing course syllabi. The university requires consistent elements in each syllabus, which mirrors the legislatively mandated information, including a brief description of each major course requirement, each major assignment and examination, learning objectives, required/recommended reading, and a general description of the subject matter of each lecture or discussion.*

*The course syllabus for each undergraduate classroom course is posted online each semester by the 7th class day of the term.*

## The Syllabus

The first step in preparing to teach a class is to prepare a comprehensive syllabus. The syllabus should cover a variety of information about the class, including the following:

- Title and section number of the course
- Instructor's name, office number, office telephone number, and e-mail address
- Office/consultation hours
- Required or recommended textbooks, workbooks, and other supplies (such as clickers)
- Course goals
- Grading policy (relative weights of components of the grade)
- Academic dishonesty policy
- Attendance policy
- Semester drop dates
- Retention of student records policy
- Policy on accepting late work
- Other policies about conduct in class and on online forums
- Course content by topics and dates
- Reading assignments
- Approximate test dates
- Deadlines for turning in assignments
- Disability accommodation statement
- SETE (Student Evaluation of Teaching) information
- Other items required by the academic unit

**Note:** For online courses, the syllabus must include information for F1 visa holders. Requirements and recommendations may be found at <http://clear.unt.edu/f1visa>.

As part of the "Succeed at UNT" initiative, it is suggested that the following language be included in course syllabi:

UNT endeavors to offer you a high-quality education and to provide a supportive environment to help you learn and grow. And, as a faculty member, I am committed to

helping you be successful as a student. Here's how to succeed at UNT: Show up. Find support. Get advised. Be prepared. Get involved. Stay focused.

To learn more about campus resources and information on how you can achieve success, go to <http://succeed.unt.edu>

The syllabus should map out plans for the semester, including approximate due dates for assignments and exams. It is good practice to tell students that the schedule is a guide for the semester and is subject to minor modification as the course develops.

Senior members of the faculty, the department chair, or the faculty member who supervises a particular course are all good sources of information about required content or course objectives. Some departments, for example, have a list of learning outcomes for a particular course, or a text that all instructors are expected to use. Instructors should ask about such expectations as early as possible. Most faculty are happy to share their syllabi and will not mind letting new instructors copy useful passages (although the instructor should ask permission before doing so).

Appendix 2 of this handbook provides some standard language about various UNT policies (e.g., ADA statements, academic dishonesty policies, attendance requirements). Instructors may use this language in their syllabus; in fact, they are encouraged to do so.

A copy of the course syllabus should be turned in to the department administrative assistant during the first week of the semester, along with a separate listing of office hours. Instructors should also ask the department's administrative staff, chair, or faculty mentor about the UNT Faculty Profile System (<https://faculty.unt.edu>). This system, which is required by state law, serves as a public repository for all syllabi. To comply with state law, instructors must upload all syllabi by the 7<sup>th</sup> class day, so it is unwise to wait until the last minute to prepare the course syllabus. Each instructor must also upload a copy of his or her curriculum vita for the Faculty Profile System; this should be completed before the semester begins.

## Setting Expectations for TAs

An instructor of record may need to oversee one or more teaching assistants. While TAs can be a tremendous help to instructors, the instructor has to think about how best to utilize that resource. The instructor of record must identify tasks that will need to be done both in and out of class (e.g., taking attendance, setting up A/V equipment, proctoring exams, grading homework assignments, monitoring online discussion boards). The instructor should consider how to best to divide up those tasks. Which tasks should the instructor handle and which can be delegated to a TA? Should one task (such as monitoring a discussion board) fall to a single person, or can it be shared between two people? If dividing work among multiple TAs, what is a fair distribution? Will the TAs be allowed to decide among themselves how to split jobs, or will the instructor do it for them?

It is important to communicate expectations to TAs as soon and clearly as possible (ideally in writing). TAs should be given feedback throughout the semester to let them know if they are meeting expectations and how they can improve.

# First Day of Class

## Preparing For the First Class Meeting

The first class is a common source of anxiety for both new and experienced instructors. There are a host of potential problems that can easily be avoided with proper preparation.

Before the first class session, it is helpful to meet with the professor who supervises the course. If there is not a supervisory professor, a meeting with the graduate advisor or department chair can provide guidance. Ideally, an orientation meeting should be planned that includes all the instructors teaching a particular course. This preparation will ensure that all instructors are clear on their responsibilities and can prepare properly for the semester. In addition, veteran instructors (including TFs and adjuncts) who have taught the course can share what to expect with their less experienced colleagues. Reading the material required for the earliest part of the course will enable instructors to give their students an accurate idea of academic expectations.

The first day of class is an excellent opportunity to begin sharing tips for success with students. Appendix 1, "Student Success Equals Faculty Success," provides suggestions.

***Helpful Hint 5:** Set up folders in your e-mail client that will allow you to keep student correspondence in one place. If you are teaching multiple classes, you should have a folder for each class. You may want sub-folders for items such as make-up exam requests, draft papers, content questions, etc.*

*Obtain expandable file folders for each course you are teaching (or devote a portion of a file drawer to each course). Prepare files for specific administrative documents: ODA requests, athletic schedules (which document excused absences), attendance sheets (if you're keeping them), and copies of exams/handouts/assignments.*

*Prepare separate folders for completed exams/answer sheets, assignments, and papers. Even if you plan to return papers and assignments to students, some students will not pick them up in a timely manner. It will be better to have those materials neatly organized and easy to find if and when the students decide to collect their materials.*

*Maintain a separate set of folders for letters of recommendation (and the supporting documentation) as well as memos and forms related to academic dishonesty cases.*

## Preparing Course Record-Keeping

One of the most astonishing things for new instructors is the sheer amount of "stuff" generated by a classroom of students. Instructors can save many headaches by setting up an organizational system before the semester even begins (keeping in mind, however, that it needs to be flexible to account for unexpected changes and challenges).

## Conducting the First Day of Class

There is no best way to conduct a first class. What goes on the first day may differ among courses and even among instructors in the same course. Some instructors prefer not to discuss class materials during the first session, but instead focus more attention on creating an open class atmosphere. Others may have no choice because they are required to cover specific material in the first session.

A case of the pre-class jitters is shared by most first-time instructors. Some instructors say that careful preparation helps ease apprehension; others stress that discussing teaching methods with more experienced colleagues before the first class calms them down. One instructor suggested getting to the classroom early and chatting with students before class formally begins, in order to avoid arriving late into a classroom overflowing with anonymous faces. At a minimum, having plenty of time to set up A/V equipment, locate notes and class handouts, and taking a deep breath before the class begins will help lessen pre-class jitters.

## Setting the Tone for the Course

The tone set on the first day is more important than the content covered. For many students, the first day of class is all about expectations. What will the instructor expect of students? And what can students expect from the instructor? In short, the instructor should begin the class with the same tone they intend to use throughout the semester.

No matter how informal the instructor's approach to teaching, it is important that he or she establish on the first day that they are in charge. Appearing indecisive or overly accommodating may lead students to consider the instructor less authoritative on any issue.

## Creating a Positive Class Atmosphere

On the first day, students are most concerned with the basic aspects of the course. They want a list of required books and supplies and an explanation of the grading policy and exams. Instructors should be responsive to those concerns, handing out a syllabus and a reading list, or walking students through the components of the Blackboard course shell. The instructor should explain the grading policy; let the students know the nature and frequency of exams and other assignments; and tell students whether class participation and attendance are taken into consideration in grading. It is important to begin and end class on time and, most importantly, convey concern to the students about their education and well-being by eliciting their questions and responding to them openly and candidly.

## Adopting Realistic Expectations

New instructors should not expect too much out of their first classes. Just as it is difficult for strangers to speak to each other in social settings, instructors may find it hard to provoke lively discussions in the first class meeting.

It is good to remember that many students may not be very interested in making the first class an exciting educational experience; they may have other concerns on their minds—such as whether the assignment list is too heavy to be compatible with the other work they have to do during the semester.

Instructors should give themselves and their students' time—at least a few weeks before

jumping to any conclusions about the quality of the discussion or the success of the course.

**Helpful Hint 6:** *Introduce yourself as well as any TAs you may have. Distribute and thoroughly discuss the syllabus. Be sure to emphasize available resources for students who need help. Take questions as you move through class policies, so that students feel comfortable asking questions and so you can be assured that expectations are clear.*

*Consider an ice-breaker activity. In small classes, this could be as simple as having students introduce themselves and offer an interesting tidbit about their lives (where they're from, for example). In larger classes, consider breaking students into small groups (even just pairs) to discuss a topic related to the course. This will engage students and give them a chance to meet someone else in the course.*

*Try to cover some substantive intellectual material during the first class. Many instructors feel it is important to get beyond mundane administrative details and at least briefly discuss some exciting problems or issues germane to the course. This will immediately get students engaged in the material and motivate them to prepare for the next class meeting.*

# Chapter 5: Working With Students

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## Understanding Student Rights and Responsibilities

Instructors and TAs need to understand the rights and responsibilities of students. The Division of Student Affairs and the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs have developed the list below.

1. **Protection of Constitutional Freedoms** – Students and all other members of the university community are guaranteed the constitutional freedoms of speech, peaceful assembly, petition and association.

**Responsibility:** Students and others must exercise their rights by lawful means subject to university rules and regulations regarding time, location, method and duration. Students may not disrupt the operations of the university or interfere with the rights of others to exercise their constitutional freedoms.

2. **Academic Freedom** – Students and all other members of the university community are guaranteed the rights freely to study, discuss, investigate, teach, conduct research and publish as appropriate to their respective roles and responsibilities. Students have the right within the scope of the course of study to state divergent opinions, challenge ideas and take reasoned exception to the data or the views offered.

**Responsibility:** Students and faculty share the responsibility to protect and to preserve conditions that are conducive to the learning process, including withholding judgment on matters of opinion, ensuring a fair hearing for divergent viewpoints and observing rules of courtesy in the classroom.

3. **Academic Standards** – Students have the right to know the standards of academic performance established for each course in which they are enrolled.

**Responsibility:** Students are responsible for seeking clarification of any standard in question at the beginning of the term, for preparing assignments in advance of each class session, and for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled. Rules applying to academic dishonesty must be followed, including those related to plagiarism.

4. **Academic Evaluation** – Students have the right to be evaluated solely on an academic basis, without regard to issues of diversity, opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards. Students have the right to review tests and other written work after the instructor has evaluated them. Students are protected against prejudiced or capricious academic evaluation by the grade appeals process.

**Responsibility:** Students are responsible for bringing academic grievances first to the attention of the instructor who performed the evaluation in an effort to resolve the issue. If the matter cannot be settled at this level, it may be appealed in writing as outlined in the Grade Appeals policy.

5. **Improper Disclosure** – Except when disclosure may be required by state or federal law, students have the right to confidentiality of information about views, beliefs and political associations which they may share privately with instructors, advisors or academic counselors. Judgment of ability and character may be provided under appropriate circumstances, normally with the knowledge and consent of the student.

**Responsibility:** Students have the responsibility to state clearly what is and what is not confidential disclosure.

6. **Personal Safety** – Students have the right to a classroom environment that is free of obvious hazards to safety and security.

**Responsibility:** Students are responsible for compliance with university rules and regulations prohibiting firearms, explosives, incendiaries and weapons of any kind on the campus. Students also are responsible to abide by all health/safety rules and procedures in all academic courses and laboratories.

7. **Illegal Drugs and Alcohol** – Students have the right to a learning environment free from illegal drugs and alcohol.

**Responsibility:** Students are responsible for compliance with university rules and regulations prohibiting possession, use or distribution of illegal drugs or alcohol in classroom buildings.

8. **Disruptions** – Students have the right to pursue an education without disruption or interference and to expect enforcement of norms for acceptable classroom behavior that prevent disruption of the teaching and learning process.

**Responsibility:** Students may not disrupt class or any other university process by any means whatsoever (including sideline conversations, comments, arguments, noise of any kind or other activity which would hinder access to or utilization of academic information by other students).

9. **Non-discrimination** – Students have the right to learn in a classroom environment where diversity is respected.

**Responsibility:** Students are responsible for respecting diversity and for behaving courteously to both faculty members and other students in the classroom regardless of difference in race, creed, color, religion, age, nationality, sex, sexual orientation or disability status.

10. **Intellectual Property** – Students have the right to expect that presentation of material in a class will be in compliance with copyright law and that their own creative work will not be disseminated or published without their permission.

**Responsibility:** Students who receive written notification from a faculty member that the information provided in his or her course is the faculty member's intellectual property shall not distribute, use for commercial purposes, or create derivative works of the intellectual property without obtaining the express permission of the faculty member. Students shall not assume permission in the absence of written notification from a faculty member. Students shall also respect and treat in similar manner, the intellectual property of other students.

# Interacting with Students

## Clarifying Roles

In the beginning of the semester, instructors should determine what relationship with students would be most effective. New (and even seasoned) instructors often struggle with striking a balance between asserting authority and commanding respect on the one hand, and being approachable on the other hand.

Those who decide to conduct class in a more formal way should be cautious about demeaning or alienating students. Students should be provided some forum or opportunity in which to ask questions (whether in class, during office hours, or online), and the instructor should respond to each student question or comment in a professional, constructive, and informative manner.

Those who decide to adopt a more relaxed approach toward their students still need to be cautious of alienating students—particularly shy students who may find a casual instructor even more difficult to approach. Again, students should be provided an opportunity to approach the instructor privately with questions and concerns. Avoiding any kind of personal criticism, in class or on written assignments, even in an attempt to be funny is imperative.

It is particularly easy for TAs, TFs, and new or transitional faculty to forget how much power they have over students because they often feel powerless themselves. An instructor's feelings of powerlessness—and the insecurity they can generate—complicate the problem of authority in the classroom. No matter what role an instructor plays in the classroom, he or she must remember that students are the most vulnerable participants.

## Students with Personal Problems

Students who come to the instructor with personal or family problems or problems with university life outside of the scope of the course, should be referred to the appropriate student services office (see Chapter 11: Other Helpful Facilities and Services for a list of resources on campus). While it may be tempting to help students personally, doing so often complicates the relationship between teacher and student and can be considered inappropriate. When a student is in a non-emergency crisis it is best to contact the CARE Team at (940) 565-4676 or [careteam@unt.edu](mailto:careteam@unt.edu) from 8am to 5pm so that they can assist the student with the proper resources and follow up.

## Disruptive Students

Students occasionally disrupt class discussion by having separate conversations, giggling, passing notes, doing other work, texting on a phone, etc. Often a stern look or a frown is enough to discourage students from such behavior. Sometimes simply walking towards the disruption, while continuing to speak, is enough to stop the behavior.

If students persist in disruptive behavior, the instructor should verbally request that they desist or that they see them after class—the latter is in some ways better since it will avoid humiliating them in class. In meeting with the student, the instructor should explain that it is disrespectful to ignore or disrupt fellow students. Ultimately, it may be necessary to ask the Dean of Students office for assistance in talking to the student about the behavior and/or possible violations of the Code of Student Conduct (UNT Policy 18.1.11).

Many new instructors understandably feel uncomfortable policing the classroom like this, but in real classroom situations instructors will sometimes face a choice between asserting their authority and letting disruptive students undermine the learning process. The former is clearly the better option.

### **Flirtation, Familiarity, and Favoritism**

Another way to help maintain authority in the classroom—and to minimize grade disputes—is to make it clear to students that everyone is treated equally.

Friendliness has its drawbacks. If some students perceive that an instructor is especially friendly to other members of the class, they are likely to assume that the instructor will not grade objectively. It is important to evaluate, establish, and maintain the social distance between the instructor and students carefully. The instructor should be equally friendly and accessible to all students.

An instructor should avoid becoming personally involved or conspicuously friendly with individual students. (Instructors are discouraged from asking students to babysit children, to take care of the house or family pets and/or to socialize outside the classroom.) All instructors need to be sensitive to the potential scenarios that would require charges of sexual harassment, as well as conflicts of interest, when developing personal relationships with students. The university has specific policies dealing with this and other related subjects.

See also “Sexual Harassment” in Chapter 3: University Policies.

### **Dealing with Students Who Have Language Difficulties**

Instructors should be aware they might have a student in class whose first language is not English. Showing appropriate and respectful concern and awareness about students’ specific language difficulties will aid in their overall performance in the class.

In a class based upon students’ verbal participation, heavy accents may prevent students from contributing to the class discussion and may consequently affect their grades. Usually, accents do not change even when students improve their English skills. Certainly, instructors cannot correct accents, but they can encourage students to participate and help students with their efforts to express themselves. Instructors can help students in the following ways:

- Repeating the student’s main point. An instructor should state openly if he or she does not understand the student’s point. One of the most frustrating experiences of international students is to talk without any reaction.

- Asking for further explanation. Many students, out of politeness or indifference or a fear of embarrassing their classmate, prefer to remain quiet and to give the impression that they understand.
- Correcting expressions or language that may help the student in the future. This, of course, is probably best done in private.

Pronunciation can become clearer to Americans if the speaker can identify his or her specific difficulties. In extreme cases, if a student's accent is incomprehensible, an instructor can suggest ways of improvement, such as attending a course offered by the Intensive English Language Institute. (see Chapter 11: Other Helpful Facilities and Services).

When the course requires extensive written work such as essays or term papers, the international student may face an even greater disadvantage. The instructor cannot and should not exempt such students from these assignments, but there are ways of helping international students. If the midterm and final exams are taken in class, the instructor has only limited opportunities, such as giving some extra time to the international student or allowing the student to bring a dictionary to the examination.

If some of the assignments are take-home exams or term papers, the instructor together with the student can ease the burden of language. With the consent of the student, an instructor might ask for a volunteer among the American students to proofread the paper and to correct grammar, spelling and style. The student can also be referred to the UNT Writing Lab for assistance. (see Chapter 11: Other Helpful Facilities and Services.)

# Chapter 6: Effective Teaching

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## Motivating Students

The ability to engender motivation in students is one of the most important skills in effective teaching. If students are excited by both the course content and by the process of learning, then instructional work will be a gratifying experience. All instructors should carefully consider ways to encourage students to take an active role in their own educational development.

Appendix 1, “Student Success Equals Faculty Success,” covers tips in a variety of areas for faculty to use to help students become more motivated.

## Positive Reinforcement

Perhaps the most important means of maintaining an open and lively classroom atmosphere is positive reinforcement—for example, acknowledging students who answer questions correctly. This encourages them to continue participating actively in class or lab.

When summing up information presented in class, another tactic for motivating students is to refer by name to students who made good comments—e.g., “As Joe pointed out . . .” or “As Jane said. . .”

It is very important not to embarrass students who volunteer incorrect answers to questions during class. The instructor should try as diplomatically as possible to show that the student’s error is not totally unreasonable, that it is a good guess, but that it is not right.

## Grading

Instructors also should be aware that grading policies might affect the motivation of students in class. If it does not conflict with departmental policy, an instructor might want to factor attendance and class participation into the final grade. This helps promote class discussion.

Another possibility is to consider allowing students to revise their work for credit. This may help students who do poorly on the first class assignments to learn from feedback. Extra credit options can be motivational to students and can enhance their engagement in the course.

Grades are not a measure of innate intelligence but simply a gauge of students’ educational progress. Instructors should emphasize this aspect of grades and should let students know that with hard work there is always room for improvement. Strive to convince students to divorce their egos from their grades. When appropriate, an instructor may point out that even though the student ended with a grade of, say, a low B, this may actually be a sign of substantial improvement if the student began the class getting grades in the D range.

Even the best students should be reminded that there is always room for improvement. Even an “A” exam or assignment may be improved upon. They should be encouraged to strive for excellence and self-improvement.

## Classroom Management

As with most things, the key to successful classroom management is preparation. Each instructor should think in advance about **what** he or she will need to accomplish in class.

- Is it necessary to take attendance? If so, what is the most efficient manner?
- Are A/V materials needed? If so, how can the material be set up quickly?

Perhaps the most important bit of preparation is to prepare instructional materials for the class to determine what is to be covered class period by class period.

- What topics will be covered?
- What are the most important pieces of information and concepts to cover?
- What is a realistic amount of material to cover, to avoid being rushed? Secondly deciding exactly **how** to cover the material is another important aspect of preparation. When using a class activity, the instructor must consider how much time the activity will take (remember: organizing lots of people always takes more time than expected).
- What kind of preparation can be done to make the activity go faster?
- Are there ways to streamline the activity so it is easier to manage?
- If both lecture and discussion are to be conducted, how much time should be devoted to each?

Often new instructors are underprepared and do not have enough material to fill the class time. A good practice is to over-prepare, but to have a strategy for prioritizing the material so that it is not necessary to rush to get through it all.

Finally, the presentation should be organized so that the most important material is covered and the class progresses through the material in a way that makes sense to students.

## Providing an Outline

Even the best students will occasionally lose the thread of a lesson or forget the original objective of a discussion. An outline on the dry erase board, chalk board, or projected on a screen, can help students keep up with the lesson. Here are some hints for using outlines in class:

- Use headings that list the major points to be covered in the class. This is an invaluable aid to students in putting their notes in perspective and providing better sets of notes for study.
- Use underlining, capitals, and boxes to emphasize key statements, ideas, terms, or formulas.
- Be selective and stick to the basic ideas. Writing down everything usually obscures rather than clarifies.
- Project an outline with an overhead projector or data projector and reveal the points as you progress through the class, so that students will listen to the discussion instead of simply copying the whole outline.
- Ensure that the outline is visible to all in the room.

## Office Hours

Every instructor is required to identify, post, and maintain office hours so that students can have access to their instructors. Policies regarding the amount of time and location of office hours are developed by departments, schools, and colleges and may reflect unique programs and conditions. Specific requirements for office hours are available from the department. Policies on office hours may also reflect differences between levels and types of classes. However, assurances must be made that all faculty make themselves available on an appropriate, regular, student-convenient basis.

During the first week of the semester, students should be told the location of the instructor's office and the times the instructor will be available for consultation. Office hour information should be included in each course syllabus, along with a note that students may make appointments outside of office hours. Instructors of record who have TAs should consider coordinating hours with the TAs to provide maximum "coverage."

In addition to being published in the course syllabus and announced in class, office hours should be posted on an instructor's office door and posted on Blackboard if appropriate. It is advisable as well to announce any change in consultation hours or any emergency cancellation. Finally, the administrative staff of the department should have each instructor's office hours.

Consultation hours can be an important part of the learning process or a completely wasted opportunity. The difference depends on an instructor's ability to encourage students to come to the office to clarify material presented in class, ask questions about assignments, or get suggestions for further readings.

In smaller courses an instructor can encourage the habit of using consultation hours by scheduling a short interview with each student in the class. In this interview the instructor can find out the reasons students are taking the course, any particular problems they anticipate, and generally develop rapport. This can be accomplished in large classes by having students answer similar questions on an index card to be turned in at the end of the first day of class.

## Virtual Office Hours

If students are not actually coming to the office, an instructor also might consider adding virtual office hours using various tools in Blackboard. An instructor may host live chat sessions (with video/audio or just via text) or schedule specific times when he or she will be available to answer questions on a class discussion board. Students who live far away or who are particularly shy may be better able to participate in virtual office hours. An added advantage of these sessions is that an instructor can create a record of the interaction so that other students can review the information on their own time. More information about options for virtual office hours is available from the Center for Learning Enhancement, Assessment, and Redesign (CLEAR). (See Chapter Ten: CLEAR.)

***Helpful Hint 7:** Almost every semester you will teach a few reserved students who consistently do well on written assignments but who are initially reticent in class discussions. During office hours you can meet individually with these students and encourage them to participate in class by expressing your enthusiasm for their work and urging them to share their good ideas with other class members. Small groups allow many of these students to participate more actively.*

*In addition to advising and answering questions from individual students, office hours can also be used in a number of ways to supplement lectures and discussions. For example, special time can be scheduled to deal with particularly difficult material, or issues related to accommodating students with disabilities. Group consultation hours can also be held for review sessions at the end of the semester.*

## Using E-Mail to Communicate With Students

All students are expected to activate their EagleConnect account provided by the university. EagleConnect is the official e-mail account and e-mail contact for all students at UNT. An EagleConnect account can be activated on the web at [eagleconnect.unt.edu](http://eagleconnect.unt.edu) by clicking on [Sign in to EagleConnect]. Instructors may send e-mail to students' EagleConnect accounts via the official class roster generated in EIS.

Finally, Blackboard offers an e-mail feature that allows instructors to send e-mail to specific students, all students, TAs, etc. Students can set up their Blackboard accounts to forward Blackboard e-mail to any account they wish to use, or they can read and respond to the messages through the Blackboard system. These widely available resources offer two important means of communicating with students.

First, e-mail opens up the possibility for individual communication with students. Students can use e-mail to pose questions to an instructor, and the instructor can provide quick feedback. **Using this approach requires that the instructor make a commitment to reading e-mail regularly and responding quickly to students.** This opportunity for communication may be especially valuable to the shy or reticent student who would be hesitant to ask a question in class. Such students can use e-mail to ask the questions they would not ask otherwise.

A second resource e-mail offers instructors is the opportunity to send bulk e-mail. Through this service an instructor can send a message to all the students in a class by sending only one message. This makes it easy to send assignments, study sheets, or reminders to all members

of the class. It is important to tell students ahead of time if important class information is to be distributed this way.

Three caveats about using e-mail to reach students:

1. You should remind students that you will not get e-mail the instant they send it (and remember that yourself). A student may e-mail you with a question at midnight, but that student cannot reasonably expect a response at that time. Be sure to advise students about how long they may expect to wait for a response from you and how often you expect they will be checking their accounts.
2. Remember that e-mail communications are not particularly nuanced. E-mail communications can seem brusque and impersonal, and the tone of the person writing the message is not always clear.
3. Do not communicate with a student about his grades via e-mail, unless you are using the student's official UNT e-mail address. You have no way of verifying that other e-mail accounts are private or even that they belong to your student. If you use anything other than the student's official e-mail address, you run the risk of disclosing confidential student information to a third party in violation of state and federal educational privacy laws.
4. Ask students to put their name and course number in the subject line. This practice alerts faculty that the e-mail is from a student. Therefore, faculty can make responding to study email a priority.

## Choosing Teaching Techniques

Instructors may choose from a variety of teaching techniques and methods. The approach used will depend, to some extent, on the nature of the course and topics to be covered and the level and type of learning desired. The approach may be dictated by the nature of the section, if it is a lab or a discussion section. In other cases, instructors may be free to choose the approach that seems most appropriate to the subject matter and works best for them.

Varying the methods of instruction is often desirable, because different students learn in different ways and some material is more amenable to one approach than another.

### Lecturing

One venerable form of instruction in universities is the lecture. While it is still one of the most widely used teaching techniques, many experts doubt that lecturing is the most effective technique. It can be a useful way of conveying new information or of explaining difficult concepts and analytical techniques. Successful lecturing depends on good organizational and public speaking skills. It may even demand an amount of showmanship to be effective. Online, lecture materials can be required readings and/or presentations conveyed in an engaging manner.

### Leading Discussion

Discussion can be an effective technique of instruction when students need opportunities to apply concepts that they have learned from reading or lecture or when they need practice

in critically evaluating arguments made in reading or other material. The important skill developed in this teaching technique is the art of asking good questions. It is important to ask questions that will get students to think, analyze, and apply. Students should not be put in the position of trying to guess what the instructor is thinking. It is also important to create an environment in which students feel free to participate without fear of ridicule.

### Problem-Solving Activities

Sometimes it may be appropriate to divide the class into groups and let each group work on solving a problem or question that is posed for them. By listening to the solutions devised by various groups, students can learn more about thinking critically and how to synthesize material.

### Media

It is also appropriate to use audio or video recordings as a part of instruction, so long as they are not depended upon excessively to avoid preparation for class. The Media Library (Chilton Hall) has a large collection of materials. (see Chapter 11: Other Helpful Facilities and Services). The catalog of these materials can be searched online. Viewing a relevant segment of a video followed by probing discussion can be a very effective teaching technique.

### Writing Assignments

Writing assignments are an important means of determining whether students understand material and can practice critical thinking. Understanding is demonstrated when students can explain things in their own words. Critical thinking is demonstrated when they can evaluate alternative arguments effectively. Instructors who use writing assignments must be willing to make the commitment to effective grading. **These assignments will not have much value to the student unless instructors provide meaningful feedback that can lead to improvement.**

### Choosing a Teaching Style

All teachers have been students at some point, and they likely have had a variety of different types of instructors. Some are funny, and some are passionate. Some are formal, and some are informal. Some are stern, and some are nurturing. Many teaching styles can be effective. The key is identifying a style that is natural to the individual instructor. Instructors who are nervous about speaking in front of large groups probably should not rely on extemporaneous lectures or force themselves to be more gregarious than they actually are. Similarly, if an instructor is naturally very relaxed, adopting a more formal tone may mask the instructor's passion for the subject.

### Gauging Teaching Effectiveness

Reappointment to most teaching positions requires demonstrated teaching effectiveness. To demonstrate (and improve) skill in the classroom, an instructor might consider inviting an established member of the regular faculty to observe a class. Rather than waiting until the end of the semester, an instructor might give students the opportunity to provide feedback at the midpoint in the semester by conducting a "mini" teaching evaluation. Giving feedback to students and, where possible, incorporating their good ideas is good practice.

New instructors should not be afraid to ask experienced faculty members about issues that

arise. Questions show a commitment to teaching, and a willingness to change will help instructors achieve higher evaluations and greater student success. Keeping student evaluations and other proof of skill in the classroom (such as notes or e-mails from class observers) in a file is a good way to build a teaching portfolio.

## **Student Evaluation of Teaching (SETE)**

The Student Evaluation of Teaching (SETE) is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. This short survey is made available in the final weeks of the semester to provide students an opportunity to comment on how a particular class is taught. It is a good idea to include information in the course syllabus about when the SETE will be open for student feedback. To increase student response rate of the SETE, here are few helpful tips to consider:

- Tell students why this is important and giving specific examples of how student feedback is used to improve teaching from semester to semester.
- Personally e-mail students and ask them to complete the SETE.
- Provide SETE participation updates at each class meeting.
- Offer bonus questions on the final exam) or other types of departmental-approved incentives) if the class achieves 100 percent participation on the SETE (or other types of departmental-approved incentives).
- Schedule lab time for the class to complete survey (monitored by another faculty member).

# Chapter 7: Evaluating Students

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## Introduction to Testing and Grading

One of the principal duties of an instructor or TA is to assign grades in accordance with UNT regulations. Grading is often complex and time-consuming. The following points are designed to help the instructor avoid common grading problems. Hard work, enthusiasm, and politeness count but do not substitute for the quality of a student's work. A UNT degree certifies competency. Our responsibility is to uphold this goal.

### Setting Expectations

Two of the most important steps in evaluating students—and avoiding student complaints—are (1) identifying objectives for both the instructor and the students and (2) making the instructor's expectations clear. The course syllabus should specify how students will be evaluated: What percentage of their grade will be based on tests? Will the exams be comprehensive?

Moreover, for longer written assignments (projects and papers), instructors should be clear about what skills and content students should demonstrate: Should students demonstrate creativity? Should they demonstrate knowledge of a specific subject before providing their own analysis?

Setting expectations will help the instructor evaluate student work as well. When the objectives are known (clearly stated), the instructor can create a rubric that matches those objectives. A rubric is a clear statement of the objectives of an assignment and an allocation of points to each objective.

For example, if an instructor has specified that a paper should connect a concept to course readings, 10 points might be assigned on the rubric to "tying concepts to course readings." As the assignment is graded, the instructor can evaluate how the paper performed on that particular objective and can give it a score of 1-10 for how successfully it achieved that objective. Point values may be assigned for following formatting requirements, abiding by length guidelines, being on time, etc. After each element of the rubric has been evaluated, the instructor simply adds the elements and has a total score.

Using a rubric helps students identify exactly where they went wrong (and where they went right). It also helps to establish credibility for grading and to ensure that the instructor's grading is consistent across students and across all graders for the course.

### Providing Feedback

The job of an instructor is to help students improve; as a result, instructors tend to focus exclusively on students' weaknesses. Providing only negative feedback, however, does little to motivate students to improve. Feedback provided to students should always start with identifying one positive feature of a paper or assignment. Sometimes this is challenging, but it increases the likelihood the student will construe the negative feedback as constructive.

When weaknesses are discussed, comments should be specific. “This is terrible” and “You’ve missed the mark” are not constructive remarks. The following methods are more constructive:

- Specifying the problem (“Your thesis statement is not clear”).
- Explaining why it’s a problem (“It’s not clear which position you support until the last paragraph; as a result, readers are not sure how to evaluate the information you provide in the body paragraphs”).
- Providing information that will help the student do better next time (“A reader should always know what position you are taking by the end of the first paragraph”).

It is also wise to keep remarks impersonal. That is, instead of saying, “You misinterpret the problem here” or “You have not analyzed the question very thoroughly,” it is better to write that “The paper misinterprets. . . .” This will help ensure that students do not feel personally attacked by written comments.

With exams—especially multiple-choice exams—detailed comments may not be appropriate or feasible. Instead, students can be given a summary of their performance: identifying questions that large groups of students struggled with and explaining why students might have answered incorrectly (or, at a minimum, why the correct answer was correct).

Students’ work should be evaluated and returned promptly. It is important that students have information about their progress in a class and feedback that will allow them to improve their work.

Appendix 1, “Succeed at UNT Campaign: Tips for Faculty in the Classroom.”

## **Exams and Tests**

The purpose of exams is to assess student learning. Exams are not meant to trick students or confuse them. Exam questions should be related to important learning objectives (rather than asking about insignificant details in the text). If objectives have clearly been stated to students, those objectives should actually guide in the creation of exam questions. For multiple-choice questions, there must be one (and only one) correct answer to the question. Short answer questions should reflect the information to be included in a good answer (for example, if three examples of a concept are desired, the question should specify that detail).

It is always a good idea to have someone else read exams. Not only can another instructor identify typographical errors (which can confuse students and cost them valuable time during the test), but they can also catch questions that are confusing. It is wise to draft exams far enough in advance that someone can proofread the exam and that there is time to revise and print the exam before the exam takes place. The administrative staff in the department can answer questions about copying services and the availability of Scantron sheets (computer-readable answer sheets).

## **Tips on Administering Tests**

- The testing environment should be quiet and free of distractions.

- Interruptions should be minimized. It is good to tell students before the exam that announcements, instructions, or corrections will be written on the board. Giving a warning (e.g., 10 minutes) before collecting tests is a good practice.
- Rules about test taking should be specified in advance. For example, the syllabus should state that picture identification will be required on test days. Students should be told in advance if they will not be allowed to wear hats with brims when taking exams.
- As a courtesy to students, instructors should consider bringing extra exams, pencils, Scantron sheets, and answer sheets/blue books to each exam, to be prepared for students' emergencies (such as a student filling in a Scantron with an ink pen or another student spilling coffee on their test).
- Students with disabilities may need accommodations on tests. Visit <http://disability.unt.edu> for additional information.
- If testing is administered online, the instructor must be prepared to handle situations that arise when the online system is down. For example, if the system goes down while a student is taking a test, how will the student be given time to finish?
- Testing scheduled online or in the testing center should not be scheduled outside of the regularly scheduled class time in order to avoid creating conflicts with students' class schedules.

## Academic Dishonesty

It is an unfortunate fact that some students will engage in cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic misconduct. Each instructor must be prepared to deal with those occasions.

### Plagiarism

In grading term papers or other written assignments, instructors will need to be on guard against plagiarism. Since students often claim that they do not understand this form of academic dishonesty, instructors must be prepared to explain what plagiarism is and what punishment is appropriate when it is detected.

The Student Standards of Academic Integrity policy states that the term “**plagiarism**” includes, but is not limited to

- (a) The knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement or citation and
- (b) The knowing or negligent use of materials prepared by another person or by an agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

It is also important that instructors ensure that students know the consequences of academic dishonesty from the beginning of the course. The actual consequence for plagiarism will likely depend on departmental policy, the course syllabus, and the gravity of the offense. In explaining the consequences, instructors should simply repeat and interpret the policy given in the course syllabus.

When an instructor suspects plagiarism, the student should be confronted in private and given an opportunity to dispute the allegations. The instructor of record should discuss the matter with the student, make a judgment as to whether the student is responsible for plagiarism, and assess penalties if convinced that the student is responsible. TAs should turn over cases of suspected plagiarism to the supervising instructor.

Further information on student standards of academic integrity academic dishonesty and integrity can be found on the Office for Faculty Success website (<http://facultysuccess.unt.edu/academic-integrity>). For additional information, refer to UNT Policy 18.1.16.

## **Preventing Academic Dishonesty**

The best way to deal with academic dishonesty is to prevent it. The following are good practices:

- Be sure your syllabus addresses academic misconduct and the possible penalties you will impose (failure of an assignment, failure of the course, referral to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities).
- Be clear about what you consider to be academic misconduct. Specify which sources students may and may not use in completing assignments and papers. Refer students to the website for the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities (<https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>) for information about plagiarism and proper citations.
- Reduce the pressure. Provide a number of opportunities for students to demonstrate achievement of course goals, rather than relying upon a single examination.
- Make reasonable demands and write a reasonable test. Some academic dishonesty is simply the result of frustration and desperation arising from assignments too long to be covered adequately or tests requiring memorization of trivial details.
- Show that you are concerned about academic dishonesty. Move around the room during the test. Avoid a tense atmosphere but convey a sense of alert helpfulness while strolling down the aisles or watching for questions.
- Ask students to raise their hands if they have questions so that they don't have to move around the room.
- Make different versions of a single test to keep students from looking at their neighbor's test. For example, if you are administering a multiple-choice test, you can randomize the question order or the answer order (or both). Print one version of the exam on a different colored paper (blue, pink, etc.) or put a notation on the exam itself. Alternate the versions of the exam. If you do this, make sure that you use the proper key for each exam you will be scoring.
- Restrict the use of cell phones in class during testing. Prohibit students from wearing headphones or hats with brims during exams.
- Be sure students know that they cannot leave the room during the test (they need to attend to personal needs before the exam period begins).
- Consider a policy of not handing out blank exams after the first completed test is turned in.
- Create novel paper assignments to reduce the ability of students to find pre-written essays that they can adopt wholesale. Require them to utilize a specific set of sources (in addition to others) to make it more difficult to purchase or steal an essay from an online source.

- Notify students in advance that you will be searching for plagiarism using Turnitin.com or a similar plagiarism detection program; if students know they are likely to get caught, they are less likely to cheat.
- Instructors should discuss expectations for student conduct and appropriate responses to misconduct with TAs before a situation arises. This will ensure that issues are handled properly and consistently.

## Handling Academic Dishonesty

No matter how many steps are taken to prevent academic dishonesty, it may still occur. When an instructor suspects academic dishonesty, he or she should do the following:

- Follow department and university procedures.
  - Meet privately with the student to give the student an opportunity to refute your allegations.
  - If the student admits to wrong-doing, assess your grade penalty and inform the student of that penalty and of the fact that you will be referring the matter to the Office of Academic Integrity. Inform the student of the appeal process.
  - Follow up the meeting with a written summary of what transpired, including the penalty you plan to assess. Make sure you provide this information to the student, your department chair, and Office of Academic Integrity.
  - Advice about how to proceed along with the forms to use in reporting incidents to the Office of Academic Integrity are located at <http://facultysuccess.unt.edu/academic-integrity>
- If you have time to think about the suspected academic dishonesty, consult an experienced faculty member before taking any action.
- Know in advance how to handle a student looking on another's paper during a test. Will you take the exam away from the student, ask the student to move to another seat, or take some other action?
- Have a written policy in your syllabus that prescribes what will happen if academic dishonesty is discovered. Be sure your policy conforms to departmental or university rules.
- Follow your own written policy; you need to be fair and consistent in your enforcement of your own rules.
- Where appropriate, require students to use pen rather than pencil to complete a test. Students may correct their answers after grading in an attempt to get more points on exams. If you are using a computer-graded answer sheet that must be completed in pencil, make a copy of all answer sheets before you hand them back. This will allow you to spot student efforts to revise their answers.
- Even when confronting a student about misconduct, it is important to be respectful. Be calm, professional, and matter-of-fact. Explain that you understand that students make mistakes but that you have an obligation to impose rules fairly and consistently. Your own demeanor can defuse a potentially emotional situation and ease the process in the long run.

- Teaching assistants should always consult the instructor of record before approaching a student about academic misconduct.

## **Favoritism, Fairness, and Consistency**

Despite an instructor's best attempts to keep grading objective, grading often contains an element of subjective judgment. The best way to avoid any appearance of arbitrariness is to spell out the grading policy as clearly as possible and to have a reasonable number of assignments throughout the semester. The student should know how he or she is doing in the class throughout the semester so that the final grade will not be a surprise.

## **Graphing Grades**

Graphing the distribution of grades provides another means of checking grading fairness. A fair scale reflects the entire range of grades with the bulk of students doing average work. If all of the students fail or if most students make A's, the evaluative process or course content may need re-evaluation.

## **Grade Conflicts**

Nearly every instructor at one time or another will have to deal with students who are extremely dissatisfied with the grade assigned to their work. It is important to explain to students that the instructor's role is to evaluate their ability to learn and apply course material to assessments. Make it clear that the assigning of grades is not a judgment of them as human beings and that the same standards apply to everyone in the class.

When graded work is returned to students, the instructor should explain the procedure for appealing a grade and should treat any such complaints with an open mind.

## **Emotional Students**

Grade disputes are sometimes charged with emotion. In a few cases, students may become distraught and begin to cry when they come to discuss their grades. It is important to explain that the grade assigned their work, though perhaps lower than they hoped for, should in no way be interpreted as a sign that they are incapable of learning. The instructor should try to convince such students to strive for improvement and reassure them that they are intelligent and capable.

## **Belligerent Students**

In a few cases, students may be belligerent in grade disputes. Students who approach an instructor with grade disputes but who are unwilling to accept explanation of their grades should be advised of their right to appeal grades.

## **Assessing Student Learning**

UNT is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). This process takes an active commitment from every member of our community, and each instructor plays a critical role in our ability to maintain this designation. One major element of impact is the instructor's ability to help demonstrate that our students are meeting learning objectives for the class. In order to do this, an instructor may find it helpful to get a refresher of sound assessment practice and how it is different from traditional

test administration.

**We recommend using multiple methods of assessment. Note that grades are not a legitimate form of evidence to demonstrate student learning for SACS.** Instead, instructors may be asked to provide other forms of evidence. The Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness is a partner in this process. It is the role of IRE to provide faculty with expertise and assistance in this area. Additional content can be found on their website (<http://institutionalresearch.unt.edu/>).

## Advice for Constructing Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

As part of their role in the classroom, instructors are sometimes asked to develop or revise student learning outcomes. Creating a strong learning outcome is made easier by keeping in mind some basics of SLOs writing:

- Identify the elements that the students should know, think, or do as a result of attending the classes offered through the program.
- Clearly articulate and state the criterion for success. Being intentionally vague or lumping multiple outcomes into one statement will not be effective.
- Students often perform best when Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning Domains (1956) are applied to understand and develop appropriate SLOs.
- SLOs require the use of direct assessment methods.
- SLOs may not be perfect. Don't expect perfection; rather look for improvement.
- SLOs work best when the evidence gathered to demonstrate achievement is directly related to the SLO.

By way of example, the following format is typically adopted as a template by educators:

*Students who (define activity) → \_\_\_\_\_ will (include an illustrative verb)  
→ \_\_\_\_\_ (include a singular objective) → \_\_\_\_\_ at a (select a percentage for  
successful achievement) → \_\_\_\_\_.*

An easy acronym to help measure SLOs is the SMART model. In essence, do the outcomes meet the following criteria?

- **Specific.** Is the outcome singular? Is it understandable to anyone with a basic knowledge of the office/program?
- **Measurable.** Is this something that can be measured? Are resources in place to accomplish this?
- **Aligned.** Is the outcome linked to the larger mission of your department?
- **Relevant.** Does the result matter to the program? Can improvements in instruction be made based on the results?
- **Time-framed.** Is there a time frame for data collection? Is a plan in place to ensure data is collected in a timely manner and shared appropriately?

Additional resources on SLO creation, review, and editing are offered by Institutional Research and Effectiveness and CLEAR.

## Forms of Evidence to Help Assess Student Performance

Assessment methods fall broadly within two categories: direct and indirect (Maki, 2004).

**Direct.** Assessment methods can prompt students to show or model their learning or produce work products so that faculty or other observers can ascertain how well the students' work fit into the larger class or program outcomes. These may include (but are not limited to):

- Course-embedded assessments (assignments, lab reports, etc.)
- Performances (documented)
- Rubrics
- Portfolios or creations (catalogued or captured digital)
- Results of research or exploration
- Locally or commercially developed tests
- Interactions within groups (problem solving or demonstrating team work)
- Responses to questions and/or prompts

**Indirect.** Assessment methods that collect student opinions or perceptions of their learning and the educational environment where this learning takes place can also show faculty how the students are learning. These may include (but are not limited to):

- Surveys and questionnaires
- Student satisfaction surveys
- Alumni and employer surveys
- Exit interviews or focus groups
- Transcript analysis

The Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness and the Center for Learning Enhancement, Assessment and Redesign (CLEAR) can also provide additional support and consultation on assessment strategies and forms of evidence.

## Interpreting and Sharing Assessment Results

When thinking about how to interpret assessment results, an instructor should remember that this process works best when applying data to the learning outcomes they are supposed to measure, drawing inferences and conclusions, and evaluating the results. The following strategies may help when interpreting assessment results.

- Ask yourself why the assessment was conducted in the first place and what learning outcomes you wanted to assess.
- If you already established a benchmark or criterion for success, summarize results in a way that reflects that goal. For example, if the criterion for success is that at least 85% of students should reach a certain performance level, summarize your findings as the percentage of students reaching the 85% threshold/level.
- Scan the results for elements that jump off the page—significant successes or failures relevant to the given learning outcome. Try to identify patterns within these sub-groups and consider impacts on your future practice.

- Assessment works best when it can improve future student experiences at UNT. Consider sharing assessment results with faculty members within your program. Do you see trends that cut across individual courses? How might these trends inform curriculum decisions? How could you and your colleagues use your data to close the loops between assessment and action?
- Depending on your assessment needs, additional audiences could be involved (e.g., students within the department, alumni, etc).
- Keep a record of assessment results. Such a record will be useful for doing longitudinal studies of assessment projects, which can reveal trends and patterns in student learning. SACS wants to see evidence of how individual programs utilize assessment to make data-based decisions and how these assessment efforts are ongoing and consistent across time.
- Consider working with your department chair and the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness to ensure assessment work is properly captured in campus-wide accrediting systems.

# Chapter 8: Tips for Teaching Assistants

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## Responsibilities

It is important for a teaching assistant and the instructor of record to come to a clear understanding of the TA's responsibilities. This chapter provides a list of duties for which TAs might be held responsible. It is important for TAs to understand which duties they are personally responsible for in the classes in which they assist. The best way to achieve that understanding is for the TA to schedule a meeting with the supervising instructor of record as soon as possible—preferably before classes begin.

The instructor of record should be informed as soon as possible about schedule conflicts, including such things as taking comprehensive exams during the semester or traveling to events such as family weddings or professional conferences.

## Class Objectives

A TA must understand the objectives of the class in which he or she is assisting. This understanding can be achieved in two ways: (1) getting a copy of the class syllabus and reading it carefully and (2) talking to the supervising instructor about the class and getting him or her to explain the objectives of the class more fully.

## Contact Information

The supervisor should have several forms of contact information for each TA, preferably a telephone number and an e-mail address that is checked regularly. If the instructor uses Blackboard, he or she will need each teaching assistant's EUID (initials + four digits) so that he or she can grant access to the course shell.

## Course Materials

The department will usually supply the textbooks that will be used in courses. TAs can usually get textbooks from the supervisory instructor or from the department's supervisor of TAs and TFs. Each TA should check with his or her supervisor to see if there are other materials needed and how to acquire them. At the end of the semester, departmental policy may require that textbooks and other course materials be returned to the department.

## Class Meetings

Each TA or TF should understand the expectations of the instructor of record regarding attendance in the class with which the TA/TF is assisting. Some instructors will want to have a TA/TF to attend every class period; others may not. Expectations of responsibilities when attending class must also be clear. They may include

such things as taking roll, taking notes, and setting up audiovisual equipment. A TA/TF should communicate with the supervising instructor to get a clear understanding of these responsibilities.

A TA/TF who has a particular interest in the subject of a course should consider asking the instructor of record about the possibility of delivering a lecture. Some instructors are reluctant, but others will welcome the opportunity to mentor TAs or TFs in their own teaching. When presiding over a class meeting, it is important first to obtain clear information about what should be covered during the session and then to prepare teaching strategies with the instructor of record. Asking for and responding to feedback from the instructor can improve the quality of a TA or TF's teaching.

## Office Hours

In most cases, TAs are expected to hold regular office hours. Each instructor must be sure to understand department policy and the supervising instructor's expectations about the number of office hours and the kinds of tasks done during those office hours, such as answering questions about lectures and explaining grades and grading policy.

It is critical to be in the office during office hours. When it is necessary to step away from the office, it is best to tell an office mate or to leave a note on the door. Failure to keep office hours may compromise the ability to obtain future TA assignments.

## Professionalism

A TA or TF is a representative of the university and department and should conduct themselves as professionals.

Cues regarding professional attire may be taken from the instructor of record (some faculty are more formal than others). Regardless of how casual a class may be, an instructor (of any level) should always dress neatly and should avoid controversial T-shirts or overly revealing clothes.

Likewise, it is important to treat students with respect and to avoid undue familiarity with them. Instructors and TAs are likely to run into students outside of the campus environment; public behavior should not undermine your credibility in the classroom.

When a TA assists a TF, the TA may be in the awkward position of working for a fellow student who is very close in age and "class rank." In this situation, it is important to remember that this "classmate" is still the supervisor and should be treated accordingly. The TA may express concerns and opinions, but ultimately it is up to the instructor of record (in this case, the TF) to make decisions about class policies.

## Examinations and Grading

Ask your supervising instructor what your responsibilities will be with regard to grading and examinations.

- Will you be expected to help construct exams?
- Will you need to make copies of the exams?
- Will you be grading written assignments?
- Will you be grading examinations?
- What will your role be in administering exams?

## Record Keeping

TAs often have some responsibility for record keeping and may be expected to take roll and keep a record of each student's number of absences or to keep the records of grades for the class. A TA must be sure to understand the supervising instructor's expectations about their role in record keeping.

All records pertaining to students should be carefully guarded and kept in a secure place in a locked office or on a password-protected computer. It is recommended to maintain backups of files if at all possible. No TA should disclose student records to anyone other than the specific student and the instructor of record. For example, a TA should not share grade information with a student's parents without gaining explicit permission from the instructor of record.

## Laboratories or Recitation Sections

In some departments, a TA's principal responsibilities may involve teaching a lab or recitation/discussion section that is associated with the course taught by the supervising instructor. In such cases, it is important that TAs get a clear understanding of what is expected of them. They must know what material is to be covered, what techniques they should use, and what part they will play in grading. The most important thing is that the TA and the supervising instructor share a common understanding of the TA's responsibilities.

## Time Management

A TA must balance his or her responsibilities as an employee of the university and his or her responsibilities as a graduate student. The department has the right to expect a TA to work the number of hours appropriate for the appointment. For a half-time appointment, the department can expect an average of twenty hours of work per week. For a quarter-time appointment, an average of ten hours per week can be expected. The exact number of hours worked per week may vary, but the average workload should equal the number of hours expected.

It is essential to prepare in advance for major assignments, both you as a student and as an instructor (TA/TF) and to communicate with the instructor of record. For example, if a TA has a major research paper due the Monday after an exam is administered in the class for

which he or she is assisting, the TA should tell the instructor of record ahead of time that it may not be possible to get exams graded over the weekend.

Ultimately, balancing commitments requires communication.

- Tell the instructor you are accommodating about your conflicts.
- Similarly, let the instructor know if you are feeling overextended.
- The instructor may not realize how long it takes to grade each individual assignment and thus may not realize how many hours you are putting into your work. If you notify the instructor that a particular grading assignment is consuming too much of your time, the instructor may spread that work out to other helpers or may have advice on how to complete the task in a quicker, more efficient way.

# Chapter 9: Advice for International Personnel

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## Language Difficulties

The trials and tribulations of international instructors do not differ substantially from those of their American counterparts. Yet in one crucial area, that of student-teacher communication, they can experience difficulties.

The best possible practice is to communicate openly with students immediately concerning problems arising from language barriers. For example, it may help to request that students speak clearly and avoid excessive or incomprehensible slang, and ask them never to ignore things said by the instructor that they do not comprehend.

It may help to encourage students not to be shy about pointing out when they are having trouble understanding the instructor. This point is best conveyed to students in a humorous, light-hearted fashion to encourage them to request language clarification freely (“Oh, I realize that sometimes I’m difficult to understand!”).

No matter how hard an instructor tries, there will always be a small group of students who will attempt to blame the instructor’s language difficulties for their own problems in the class (“I didn’t understand you correctly. I thought you said NEXT week.”) The following points will help avoid this problem:

- Provide your students with ample written instruction. All course requirements, the method used in computing the final grade, exam dates, and a thorough reading list should be presented in writing at the first possible opportunity.
- During the first few weeks, hand out written study questions to familiarize students with the mode of questioning that will be used during the semester.
- Be attentive to students’ facial expressions. Facial expressions are highly individual. If students seem to look confused, you could request that students talk together in small groups to review essential concepts. You could also use a formative assessment tool such as polling to determine the level of understanding among your students.
- Use audiovisual material. Slides, photographs, movies, or music are often extremely effective ways to illustrate hard-to-explain points.
- Make personal use of audiovisual techniques to improve communication skills. Many problems can be identified by carefully watching or listening to a recording of oneself.

## Cultural Problems

Communication is not always a language problem—it has definite cultural dimensions. One common solution lies in the realm of intensive observation. Try observing a few undergraduate classes before taking on the burden of serving as an instructor of record. Doing so will familiarize you with the interaction between student and instructor. When possible, it is good to be a grader or TA for at least one semester prior to becoming an instructor of record, especially to become familiar with the level of instructor preparation expected from the average student.

The most fruitful way of overcoming the cultural barrier is for the instructor to show students that he or she cares. At the earliest possible opportunity, an instructor should get to know students' names, where they come from, and the subjects that interest them. A few minutes of conversation before each class can make a world of difference.

Being flexible with office hours is especially helpful to students who cannot make the set times. Requiring a mandatory one-on-one meeting with each student can be beneficial, if the class is not large. It goes without saying that being willing to accommodate students should not compromise the instructor's firm demands for punctual assignments, nor should it erode the instructor's strict, but fair, grading standards.

Cultural obstacles may be overcome by showing your enthusiasm and by being attentive to the actions and reactions of students.

## Body Language

Body language differs from culture to culture. American students expect their instructors to look them straight in the eye when addressing them. Facial expressions convey a sense of receptiveness, while a moderate use of hands and arms serves to emphasize crucial features of discourse. Touching, a common feature in many cultures, should be avoided.

## University International Teaching Assistant/Teaching Fellow Program

The International TA/TF Program at the University of North Texas trains, evaluates, and assists current and prospective international teaching assistants or teaching fellows (ITAs).

The program consists of three phases:

1. An initial English language competency screening
2. A formal course designed to improve the international TA's communication skills (if necessary)
3. An extensive evaluation of the course participants that includes recommendations for future teaching responsibilities

The communication skills course is a free, non-credit course offered for a ten-week period during each long semester. It includes guidance in preparing a weekly lecture, peer and instructor feedback in a weekly workshop session, and recommended work in the Intensive

English Language Institute (IELI) laboratory. The objectives of the course are as follows:

- To improve language skills, such as pronunciation, intonation, and grammatical accuracy.
- To improve non-verbal skills, such as eye contact, gestures and cross-cultural awareness.
- To improve basic teaching skills, such as lecturing, answering questions, and using visual aids effectively.

**All international TFs and TAs must be reviewed by the ITA program before any UNT department can hire them.**

The final evaluation for TFs who will be instructor of record is based on a short (ten- to fifteen-minute) lecture. A panel evaluates this presentation, and recommendations are made in the following categories:

- **Certified** - The ITA demonstrates teaching and language skills adequate for full teaching responsibility in the classroom.
- **Conditionally Certified** - The ITA exhibits some problems in speaking skills, non-verbal skills, or basic teaching skills and should be given teaching responsibility only in a class or lab where a senior teacher is present. An ITA in this category should work closely with the departmental TA supervisor, observe experienced teachers' classes, and/or take the communication skills course again. This ITA could, at the department's discretion, assume tutorial, research, or grading responsibilities.
- **Not Certified** - The ITA exhibits serious problems in communication and should be given no speaking responsibility in class or lab. An ITA in this category could, at the department's discretion, assume research or grading responsibilities, take the communication skills course again, and/or enroll in an optional communication course at IELI. The final evaluation for teaching assistants is based on an oral interview with the ITA Program Coordinator and a departmental representative at the department's request.

# Chapter 10: Center for Learning Enhancement, Assessment and Redesign (CLEAR)

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UNT's Center for Learning Enhancement, Assessment, and Redesign (CLEAR) supports the university's goal of enhancing learning-centered environments, thereby helping students get the most from their academic experience. They assist faculty in the creation, design, implementation, and assessment of courses, and also serve as the liaison for various administrative and technical support functions, thereby saving faculty's time, talent, and creative energies for their students.

CLEAR supports faculty, adjuncts, and teaching fellows/assistants to facilitate teaching and measure learning at the class, department, and college level. Examples of services include:

- **Consultation** - The center consults with faculty members regarding course design and effective teaching practices.
- **Online Course and Program Approval** – The center manages the approval of all courses delivered at least 50% online as well as online programs. (See <http://clear.unt.edu/approval> for detailed information.)
- **Production** - The center provides assistance on all aspects of production, including media design, production schedules and cost analysis.
- **Marketing** - The center's marketing specialist is available to assist departments in promoting their distributed programs and courses in a variety of media.
- **Copyright** - The center provides information on copyright issues such as fair use and faculty and student rights.
- **Administrative Guidance for Departments** - CLEAR provides guidance to department chairs and program coordinators whose departments are currently offering or are interested in implementing distributed learning courses or programs.
- **Assessment** - The development of high quality assessments is part of the next generation of course redesign for large classes facilitated by CLEAR. This course redesign is the major focus of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), for which CLEAR is responsible. A comprehensive assessment plan is in place to address QEP support and training for faculty, development of a community of practice, program evaluation, and reporting.
- **Faculty Development** - The center offers a variety of services to enhance teaching and learning throughout the university for both face-to-face and online classes. The center is available for one-on-one consultations as well as custom workshops for individual departments. Topics can include a broad range of subjects in teaching, learning and assessment techniques. Competitive grants are available for course redesign and course enhancement.

CLEAR also provides support for a variety of technology tools for teaching.

- Blackboard (learn.unt.edu)
- GoToTraining and GoToMeeting
- iTunes U
- Panopto lecture capture
- PBWorks wiki
- Respondus test building suite, including Lockdown Browser, and StudyMate
- Turning Point - student response systems (clickers)
- Turnitin/Peermark/Grademark

CLEAR delivers content through the use of the University of North Texas Videoconferencing Network (UNTVN). UNTVN is a video network connecting several videoconferencing classrooms in the Dallas–Fort Worth region. CLEAR facilitates the delivery of videoconference-based courses every semester and also schedules many non-class related videoconferences.

Faculty may obtain assistance by contacting the CLEAR helpdesk.

**Location:** Chilton Hall, Room 112C

**Telephone:** (940) 369-7394

**E-mail:** [clearhelp@unt.edu](mailto:clearhelp@unt.edu)

**CLEAR website:** <http://clear.unt.edu>

# Chapter 11: Other Helpful Facilities and Services

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## CARE Team

The CARE Team is a collaborative group of officials from various UNT offices who meet weekly to discuss solutions for students exhibiting at-risk behaviors. The CARE Team website offers tips for identifying students who are in distress, a flow chart analysis for how to respond when a student seems to be at-risk, and information about how to report a student to the CARE Team for further consideration. Visit the CARE Team website (<http://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care>).

## Classroom Support Services

Classroom Support Services (CSS) is funded by the student Technology Use Fee to provide and maintain audiovisual equipment in UNT's general-use classrooms. Instructors who have difficulty operating any A/V equipment in a classroom (including difficulty in the middle of a class) or who need to request special equipment that is not regularly available in the classroom should contact CSS directly by phone or online.

**Location:** Chilton Hall, Room 243

**Telephone:** (940) 565-2691

## University Information Technology (UIT)

Central computing services in support of instruction and research are provided through Academic Computer Services. UIT oversees a number of programs that may be of assistance to instructors:

- **General Access Labs:** General access computer labs, located throughout the Denton campus, provide access to hundreds of computers for use by UNT students. The general access labs contain both Windows and Macintosh personal computers with laser printing capabilities. A special adaptive computing lab is available for persons with disabilities.
- **Internet Services Academic:** Computing Services provides a suite of Internet Services available to all students. Eagle Mail is the official student e-mail system of the University of North Texas and university policy requires that students activate and read their Eagle Mail. A bulk mail service allows faculty to send Eagle Mail to their students simply by entering their course and section number. In addition to e-

- mail services, personal web publishing and dialup Internet access are available as part of UNT Internet Services. For more information see: <http://eagleconnect.unt.edu> and <http://bulkmail.unt.edu>.
- **Help Desk:** The Computing Center Support Services Information Desk provides a centralized referral service to advise students on a wide variety of computing subjects and assist them in trouble-shooting problems. The helpdesk can be contacted by phone at (940) 565-2324 or via e-mail at [helpdesk@unt.edu](mailto:helpdesk@unt.edu). For more information see: <http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk>.
- **Training:** A series of short courses on effective use of campus computing technology is available each semester. Computer-based training on a number of computing resources is also available. To see course offerings visit: <http://www.unt.edu/training>.
- **Test Grading:** The Data Entry Office of the Computing Center provides test-grading services for tests using the appropriate optical scanner answer sheets. Check with Data Entry to determine the correct type of answer sheet. A test analysis can also be run that provides such useful statistics as the mean test score, the standard deviation, and the percent getting each question correct.

**Location:** Sage Hall, Room 336

**Telephone:** (940) 369-6029

**Website:** <http://it.unt.edu>

## Counseling and Testing

The Counseling and Testing Services (CTS) provides a wide range of psychological services to assist students with social/family/relationship difficulties; psychological problems such as loneliness or depression; crisis counseling and referral; and career counseling and testing. Consultation and outreach programming are also available for faculty, staff, and students.

CTS administers computer-based testing for GRE, GMAT, TOEFL and CLEP. CTS also administer most national tests including THEA, MCAT, SAT and ACT. Information and application forms are available at the center.

**CTS Location:** Chestnut Hall, Room 311

**Telephone:** (940) 565-2741

**Website:** <http://counselingandtesting.unt.edu>

**Computer Based Testing:** Gateway Center, Room 140

**Telephone:** (940) 369-7617

## Division of Institutional Equity and Diversity

The Division of Institutional Equity and Diversity is committed to executing the mission of the university as it relates to the recruitment and retention of faculty staff and students. The primary goal of this office is to develop a supportive environment for a culturally diverse faculty, staff and student body. The Division of Equity and Diversity provides a safe zone for all. Please refer to the university policy on diversity, (see Policy 10.15, (<http://policy.unt.edu/policydesc/university-policy-statement-diversity-10-15>)).

**Location:** Hurley Administration Building, Room 210

**Telephone:** (940) 565-2711

## Multicultural Center

The Multicultural Center, a student services department of the Division of Institutional Equity and Diversity, was established to address the needs of the diverse campus population with the goal that it would be a place where the entire community and region could experience the cultural wealth of the university. Its central purpose is to “teach the culture” by increasing the involvement and knowledge base of all members of the university community through communication across cultures. Programs and activities sponsored by the Multicultural Center are developed with the intention of increasing the level of awareness, understanding and consciousness regarding the underrepresented cultures and histories of people of African, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, and Native American/American Indian descent.

The Multicultural Center is responsible for planning university-wide activities during Hispanic Heritage Month, Native American Month, Black History Month and Asian History Month, and it assists in the planning of Women’s History Month and International Week, as well as other cultural programs.

In addition to working with a number of organizations geared towards students of color in advisory roles, the Multicultural Center also has established the Alton and Renay Scales Ethnic Studies Library, which maintains a basic collection of works relevant to the experiences of African, Hispanic/Latino, Asian and Native American people. These resources are available to all university students, faculty and staff for research or general information purposes.

**Location:** Stovall Hall, Room 126

**Telephone:** (940) 565-3424

**Fax:** (940) 369-7262

**Website:** <http://edo.unt.edu/content/multicultural-center>

## UNT-International

UNT-International assists all students, faculty, staff and all departments and colleges in administering, participating and developing programs with an international emphasis. UNT-International is committed to fostering an international perspective that amplifies the University's mission of excellence in teaching and the discovery and application of knowledge through research and creative activities.

- **Welcome Center and Programs Office:** The International Welcome Center provides year-round orientation for international students. It is a place for students to meet, to relax and to feel at home.
- **Intensive English Language Institute (IELI):** IELI provides seven levels of English language academic preparatory classes for international students, from beginning to advanced levels. A "gateway to the university, IELI provides conditional admission (NO TOEFL required) for international students who successfully complete the IELI. The institute offers specialized courses, including the Graduate Preparation Course (GPC), which, upon successful completion, waives the GRE verbal requirement for many graduate degree programs, pre-MBA/MS Program in collaboration with the College of Business, and GRE/GMAT and TOEFL preparatory courses.
- **International Teaching Assistant (ITA) Training Program:** IELI conducts the ITA program, which provides training for teaching/research assistants and fellows at UNT. This program offers workshops for developing language and teaching skills, as well as an awareness of the roles and expectation of international TAs and TFS in the classroom environment.
- **International Advising:** The International Advising office assists international students and scholars at UNT, UNT Dallas, and the Health Sciences Center at Fort Worth in the process of obtaining visas, maintaining status, extending stays in the U.S., authorizing employment, and all other immigration matters.
- **Sponsored and Special Programs Center (SSPC):** SSPC offers specialized services to students who are sponsored by their government or other sponsoring agency. SSPC offers tailor-made academic programs for special groups, orientation, academic advising, personal counseling, cultural excursions and other services. SSPC also provides third-party billing and timely reporting to sponsors.

- **Study Abroad Office:** All students at UNT, including international students, who meet academic requirements are eligible to study abroad in many countries. Study Abroad advisors help plan appropriate semester or year exchange programs and short-term or summer programs led by UNT faculty. Scholarships and financial aid, if applicable, are available to all students who participate in Study Abroad programs.

**Location:** Sycamore Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

**Website:** <http://www.international.unt.edu>

## Learning Center

The Learning Center (LC) was created to support academic success for all UNT students, both undergraduate and graduate. Programs within the LC include: the Texas Success Initiative, Supplemental Instruction, one-on-one tutoring, online tutoring, the Early Alert Referral System, and a wide range of workshops to support student specific needs.

- **Academic Coaching** is a program in which individual students can connect with a LC staff member in order to collaboratively develop an individualized academic success plan, which is determined by exploring each student's unique needs.
- The **Academic Success Program** is offered to students to assist with gaining academic skills to regain good academic status at the university.
- The **Early Alert Referral Program** provides assistance to faculty and staff who have identified struggling students and would like the students to be further assisted. The LC staff evaluates alerts daily, and will personally reach out to students by phone or email or make appropriate campus referrals.
- **Graduate Student Services** assist students interested in pursuing graduate level education and supporting students working to complete graduate level coursework. Support is provided through one-on-one guidance and various workshops and programs.
- **Learning 101** is a series skills based workshops for student seeking to improve their academic performance. Topics include, but are not limited to, time management, note taking, and test taking.
- **Online Tutoring** provides UNT students with access to qualified tutors from any computer and is a great option for distance learners.
- **Speed Reading** is a five week, non-credit workshop to help students improve their reading rate while maintaining or improving their comprehension.
- **Study Skills Lab** is a five -week, non-credit lab aimed to develop academic skills in areas such as textbook reading, studying, note taking, test taking, goal setting, and time management.
- **Supplemental Instruction (SI)** places peer tutors in difficult courses. SI Leaders meet with students in small groups to discuss and clarify class material.
- **Texas Success Initiative (TSI)** specific advising is offered to assist students with meeting requirements, selecting TSI specific courses, and progression to TSI completion.

**Office Location:** Sage Hall, Room 315  
**Telephone:** (940) 369-7006  
**Website:** <http://learningcenter.unt.edu/>

## Libraries

The University Libraries are the heart of teaching and academic research at UNT, offering access to more than 7 million catalogued print and digital holdings and expert personnel to assist patrons in achieving their scholarly goals. Areas of excellence include the Music Library, the Digital Libraries, Special Collections, and Government Documents. The Libraries operate six facilities, four on campus and two off campus.

- On-campus libraries:

**Willis Library** - The main library on campus, Willis houses the arts, education, humanities, and social sciences collections along with the Music Library, microforms, and special collections, including the University Archives. Willis is open 24 hours a day seven days a week during long semesters and during summer sessions.

**Eagle Commons Library** - Located in Sycamore Hall, Eagle Commons Library contains Government Documents and business, political science, law, and geography collections. It also houses the Collaboration and Learning Commons, a unique and technology-rich group study space.

**Media Library** - Located in Chilton Hall, the Media Library houses audiovisual materials, including films, audiobooks and video games. Video recording equipment and gaming consoles are available for checkout.

**Discovery Park Library** - Serving Discovery Park, this library covers multiple areas of engineering, library and information science, and learning technology.

- Off-campus facilities:

**Library Annex** - The Annex houses remote storage and the Collection Management Division. Requests for remote materials can be made by logging into your UNT Libraries catalog account at [www.library.unt.edu/accounts-login](http://www.library.unt.edu/accounts-login).

**Research Collections Library** - The Research Collections Library is a newly renovated remote storage facility used to house special collections materials.

## Reference and Library Services

Key reference and library services are available to support student and faculty success:

- **Ask Us** - Reach a reference librarian by calling (940) 565-3245 [toll-free (877) 872-0264] or visiting the Ask Us web page at [library.unt.edu/ask-us](http://library.unt.edu/ask-us).
- **Faculty Delivery Service** - Designed to provide faculty easier access to library materials and to accommodate research needs, books are delivered within 48 hours Monday

through Friday to departmental offices via UNT campus mail. Visit [www.library.unt.edu/services/circulation/faculty-delivery-service](http://www.library.unt.edu/services/circulation/faculty-delivery-service) for details.

- **Class Pages** - These resource guides are developed for specific classes and fields of study by a librarian with the involvement of the course instructor.
- **Library Instruction** - Workshops are offered throughout long semesters to teach students how to locate, evaluate and use information relevant to their research. An update schedule may be found at <http://www.library.unt.edu/services/library-instruction>.
- **Subject Guides** - These guides are prepared by librarians with special knowledge in the subject area and can be found at <http://guides.library.unt.edu/home>.
- **Tutorials** - Tutorials are a great introduction to the diversity of research materials available on the libraries' website.
- **Distance Learning Students** - Students enrolled in a distance learning class may request that regular, circulating books and journal articles available at UNT Libraries be sent to them. UNT- owned materials are generally sent within 48 hours; articles will be delivered electronically to requestor's ILLiad account. Books are sent via Express Mail.

## Office of Disability Accommodation

The Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) exists to prevent discrimination on the basis of disability as mandated by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) as amended. Eligibility for qualified students is determined by reviewing disability-related medical and psychological documentation along with the student's individual experiences in order to determine appropriate, reasonable accommodations, which are recommended to the campus. As part of this process the office strives to facilitate the development of students through independence and autonomy. UNT is a student-centered research institution; the ODA compliments this mission by providing leadership in the areas of equal access and advocacy for students with disabilities. In turn, campus diversity will be richer, and UNT will be more accessible to everyone.

The ODA provides a wide variety of services and resources spanning the full range of disabilities including, but not limited to, dyslexia, hearing loss, vision loss, mobility impairment, brain injury, learning disabilities, ADHD, mood disorders, chronic diseases and injuries, and other conditions that meet ADA definitional criteria. In addition, the ODA provides testing facilities for administration of classroom exams when faculty are not able to provide these accommodations. Students with impairment(s) lasting less than six months, such as a broken bone or brief illness, may receive assistance through the Dean of Students office.

**Office Location:** Sage Hall, Suite 167

**Website:** <http://disability.unt.edu>

## Toulouse Graduate School

The Graduate School leads graduate education at the University of North Texas through a variety of services and programs designed to enhance the educational experience of graduate students. These programs include:

- Professional development workshops
- Milestone management
- Thesis/dissertation fellowships
- Assistantships and scholarships
- Travel grants

The Center for Interdisciplinary Graduate Studies sponsors and develops interdisciplinary courses and a master's degree program with majors in interdisciplinary studies.

Telephone: (940) 565-2383

Website: <http://tsgs.unt.edu>

## University Police

The mission of the UNT Police Department is to protect life, property and individual rights and freedoms. The department's purpose is to provide an environment that will aid the learning process. University police officers are commissioned and licensed by the State of Texas. They have the same police powers as municipal law enforcement officers and enforce state statutes. The UNT Police Department has jurisdiction and authority that extends throughout Denton County, and it works closely with local, state and federal law enforcement agencies.

The department provides a full range of police services and programs on a routine or emergency basis for the university, including an emergency telephone system located throughout the campus, a security escort service and various crime prevention programs.

**Emergency number:** 911

**Non-emergency number:** (940) 565-3000

**Website:** [www.unt.edu/police/](http://www.unt.edu/police/)

## Writing Lab

UNT's Writing Lab offers free face-to-face and online tutoring to all UNT students (from incoming first-year students to graduate students). The Writing Lab website offers schedules of workshops; information about tutoring services; and games and other resources for grammar, punctuation and more.

**Location:** Auditorium Building, Room 105

**Telephone:** (940) 565-2563

**E-mail:** [writinglab@unt.edu](mailto:writinglab@unt.edu)

**Website:** <https://lrc.unt.edu/labs/unt-writing-lab-home>

# Appendix 1: Succeed at UNT Campaign: Tips for Faculty in the Classroom

UNT's top priority is student success. The Succeed at UNT campaign was launched in 2013-2014 ([Succeed at UNT](#)) to help students learn valuable skills that they can use to be academically successful during their tenure at the university. The following six tips are listed in this appendix with suggestions of how faculty can help support student success in the classroom and beyond.

## “Succeed at UNT” Tips for Faculty

**Student Tip #1:** Show up.

**Faculty Tip #1:** Create an expectation that class attendance is important and matters to you as a faculty member. Make class time meaningful so that students want to show up.

**Faculty words of wisdom:** *“Go to class. Attend class. At UNT, we expect you to attend class.”*

### Possible ways faculty could encourage this:

- Incentivize attendance. Perhaps require attendance, make a small percentage of the course grade based upon attendance or provide extra credit points on assignments for those who are showing up. For large size classes, use card scanners to check attendance.
- Include important intellectual, scientific, and/or artistic developments within the field, the history, controversy, and epistemological discussions.
- Encourage relevant input from students—bring up current events relevant to the discussion and/or invite students to do so as informal in-class discussion or low-stakes assignment.
- Create a learning environment that values and respects intellectual diversity and stimulates intellectual inquiry.
- Use hands on/engagement activities.
- Provide references/resources of examples.
- Have students work in groups to answer questions (such as, think, pair, share).

- Use Clickers or other classroom response systems (one free tool is, Polleverywhere).
- Use TAs and SIs to facilitate interactive assignments.
- Ask questions and expect responses (give credit via clickers or otherwise).
- Ask for student input and suggestions.
- Point to relationships between and among the disciplines and/or other courses students might be taking currently or in the future.
- Allow student questions to drive content when appropriate.
- Encourage responsibility for attendance. If the class, even a large class, could be split into small groups, even for brief moments of discussion/problem solving during classes, sometimes this group identity aids in boosting accountability (i.e., having some knowledge about the course material, showing up).
- Get to class a few minutes early. Spend these extra minutes interacting with the students, migrating from group to group. Some students are less likely to miss courses if they know that someone is aware of their presence.
- During class, share valuable information with the students, perhaps outside the direct purview of class, but related to career opportunities that they might otherwise miss if they are not in class (e.g., internship opportunities).

**Student Tip #2:** Find support. (Ask for help.)

**Faculty Tip #2:** Know where students can find help.

**Let students know that you are a valuable resource for them throughout the semester and beyond (i.e., career advice, extracurricular organizations, and other course work).**

**Faculty words of wisdom:** *“I’m here to help you find the support you need. How may I help you? I’m available. Please stop by during my office hours, I would like to get to know you better.”*

**Possible ways faculty could encourage this:**

- Learn about campus resources for students.
- Have information about resources on hand to share/explain.

- Post expectations (syllabus) and information about campus resources (list with contact numbers or links to relevant help centers) on your course website or Blackboard page.
- Treat all students with respect and model respect for cultural differences. Be consistent.
- Reference your office hours and office telephone and address often—even if students don't show, they will feel certain that there was the option to have done so.
- Ask students to tell you their names as they approach you for questions—even if you don't remember it, they feel cared for and worthwhile.
- Become familiar with the campus services available and know where to refer students for support needs. Identify where students can get tutoring appropriate for the specific level of course and include this information in your course syllabus, talking points, and lectures.
- Set fair guidelines in regards to your availability. With the increasingly online world, it is easy for students to expect around-the-clock availability. It is important to help students in understanding availability, particularly availability prior to an exam (e.g., "I am readily available during office hours, and via appointment, however; I will not be available to address last minute, middle of the night questions about your exam.")
- Tailor specific help references for classes (i.e., Writing Center for English courses).

**Student Tip #3:**                      **Get advised.**

**Faculty Tip #3**                      **Encourage students to meet with their academic advisor.**

**Faculty words of wisdom:**    *"Keep track of course ordering, prerequisites, and do your best to do well in course the first time around. Be sure to meet with your advisors to get into your needed courses. Registration for the next semester begins today."*

**Possible ways faculty could encourage this:**

- Include registration dates on your course syllabus.
- Contact students prior to the semester start to remind them of the required and encouraged prerequisites.
- Mention possibilities in the field in earlier courses, in particular, when students are exploring their options.

- When students are in advanced courses, mention advanced course options to them.
- Arrive to class a few minutes early and encourage discussion about course and career pathways.

**Possible ways departments could help encourage this:**

- Provide clear guidelines about required and recommended prerequisites for courses.
- Provide typical timelines and suggested or needed order of class completion.
- Post reminders about advisor scheduling and registration periods so students get into needed classes in a timely manner.
- Create an electronic newsletter reminding students about course prerequisites, course timing, and dates for advisor scheduling and registration.
- Reserve spots in required courses for majors to ensure timely completion.
- Provide a session, career fair, or lecture about career options in the major.

**Student Tip #4:**                      **Be prepared.**

**Faculty Tip #4:**                      **Give assignments that matter**

**Faculty words of wisdom:**    *“I promise to be prepared to when I come to class and I expect you to do the same. We can accomplish more together, if you are prepared.”*

**Possible ways faculty could help encourage this:**

- Provide students with the realities of preparation time.
- Hold students accountable.
- At the beginning of class, give students a low-stakes quiz or group assignment that is dependent upon them having prepared for class.
- Provide students with a variety of strategies that will aid them in the class (beyond “study, read, practice”).
- Use mastery quizzes (using Blackboard).
- Connect assignments to assessments.
- Be explicit about the value of assignments within and beyond the course (connect it to

professional requirements for similar content or products, etc.)—this demonstrates the being prepared here is helping them be prepared for the next assignment or for life.

- Organize course content appropriate to the level of instruction and the nature of the subject matter.
- Evaluate students based on clear learning standards and measurable outcomes.

**Student Tip #5:**                    **Get involved.**

**Faculty Tip #5:**                    **Connect with students beyond the classroom.**

**Faculty words of wisdom:**    *“Get involved with meaningful activities that will support your career goals. Get to know at least five classmates, exchange contact information, go to lunch together, attend a study session.”*

**Possible ways faculty could help encourage this:**

- Let students know about professional/field-specific organizations at UNT, in the region, and nationally.
- Be available to students as appropriate.
- From time to time, some students need to be reminded of the importance of supplementing/supporting their academics with some form of outside activity.
- Attend and suggest events relevant to your discipline/courses to your students.
- Mention appropriate professional engagements/activities of your own or of your colleagues with an explicit suggestion that getting involved early is important.
- Keep a calendar of such events and offer extra credit for attendance when appropriate.
- Engage students by relating concepts to student's personal experiences and community, and/or global challenges.
- Remind students that while involvement in meaningful activities is encouraged, course work comes first.

**Possible ways departments could help encourage this:**

- Use social media to keep students alerted to opportunities.
- Create an electronic newsletter detailing career tips, internship/scholarship

opportunities, activities, course announcements, etc. Highlight students, alumni, staff, and/or faculty.

- Hold a talk and/or Q&A session for any interested students about careers, internship opportunities, career advice, what employers/internship providers may look for in a letter of reference, etc.
- Make students aware of different “levels” of letters of recommendation. If they are provided with several examples of letters of recommendation early on at UNT (perhaps even at an orientation session?), this might provide a lasting impression about the importance of early success. The letters could represent a high GPA student, a high GPA student with activities, a mid-range student, a student who did poorly and did not know an instructor outside of class, and a student who rarely showed up for class. The letters could be accompanied by a question: “Which student would you hire?”

**Student Tip #6:**                      **Stay focused. (Keep your eye on the prize.)**

**Faculty Tip #6:**                      **Give constructive advice.  
Give positive feedback.**

**Faculty words of wisdom:**      *“Thanks for doing your best on these assignments. You are a great role model for others in the class. Every assignment you complete and every class session you attend is a step closer to doing well in this class and reaching your goals. Keep your eyes on the prize.”*

**Possible ways faculty could help encourage this:**

- Ask students to write down/share educational and career goals.
- Explain how to use the syllabus to stay focused and on track.
- Encourage students with examples of how prior students/classes did well in the course.
- Give regular feedback, so students can know whether or not they are on the right track in meeting course goals.
- Help students draw connections between course goals and their overall goals.
- Put sticky notes on exams that simply say, “Keep up the good work, I’m proud of your progress.”

## Appendix 2: Standard Syllabus Language

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*Instructors of record are responsible for developing course syllabi. The university requires consistent elements in each syllabus, which mirrors the legislatively mandated information, including a brief description of each major course requirement, including each major assignment and examination, learning objectives, required/recommended reading, and a general description of the subject matter of each lecture or discussion.*

*The course syllabus for each undergraduate classroom course is posted online each semester by the seventh class day of the term.*

The following provisions are standard language for syllabi at UNT. Include them (modified to fit your particular department, college, school, or circumstances) on your syllabus as a way of effectively and consistently communicating important university policies to your students.

### **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive a "0" for that particular assignment or exam [or specify alternative sanction, such as course failure]. Additionally, the incident will be reported to the Dean of Students, who may impose further penalty. According to the UNT catalog, the term "cheating" includes, but is not limited to: a. use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; b. dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; c. the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty or staff member of the university; d. dual submission of a paper or project, or resubmission of a paper or project to a different class without express permission from the instructor(s); or e. any other act designed to give a student an unfair advantage. The term "plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to: a. the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment; and b. the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

### **ACCEPTABLE STUDENT BEHAVIOR**

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at <http://deanofstudents.unt.edu>.

### **ACCESS TO INFORMATION – EAGLE CONNECT**

Your access point for business and academic services at UNT occurs at <http://www.my.unt.edu>. All official communication from the university will be delivered to your Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward your e-mail: <http://eagleconnect.unt.edu/>

## **ADA STATEMENT**

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://disability.unt.edu>. You may also contact them by phone at (940) 565-4323.

## **COURSE SAFETY STATEMENT (For Laboratory Courses)**

Students in the \_\_\_\_\_ are urged to use proper safety procedures and guidelines. While working in laboratory sessions, students are expected and required to identify and use proper safety guidelines in all activities requiring lifting, climbing, walking on slippery surfaces, using equipment and tools, handling chemical solutions and hot and cold products. Students should be aware that the University of North Texas is not liable for injuries incurred while students are participating in class activities. All students are encouraged to secure adequate insurance coverage in the event of accidental injury. Students who do not have insurance coverage should consider obtaining Student Health Insurance for this insurance program. Brochures for this insurance are available in the UNT Student Health and Wellness Center on campus. Students who are injured during class activities may seek medical attention at the Student Health and Wellness Center at rates that are reduced compared to other medical facilities. If you have an insurance plan other than Student Health Insurance at UNT, please be sure that your plan covers treatment at this facility. If you choose not to go to the UNT Student Health and Wellness Center, you may be transported to an emergency room at a local hospital. You are responsible for expenses incurred there.

## **EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION & PROCEDURES**

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify you with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). The system sends voice messages (and text messages upon permission) to the phones of all active faculty staff, and students. Please make certain to update your phone numbers at <http://www.my.unt.edu>. Some helpful emergency preparedness actions include: 1) know the evacuation routes and severe weather shelter areas in the buildings where your classes are held, 2) determine how you will contact family and friends if phones are temporarily unavailable, and 3) identify where you will go if you need to evacuate the Denton area

suddenly. In the event of a university closure, please refer to Blackboard for contingency plans for covering course materials.

### **RETENTION OF STUDENT RECORDS**

Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Blackboard online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. You have a right to view your individual record; however, information about your records will not be divulged to other individuals without the proper written consent. You are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the university's policy in accordance with those mandates at the following link: <http://essc.unt.edu/registrar/ferpa.html>

### **STUDENT EVALUATION OF TEACHING (SETE)**

Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The Student Evaluation of Teaching (SETE) is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. This short survey will be made available at the end of the semester to provide you with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught.

### **SUCCEED AT UNT**

UNT endeavors to offer you a high-quality education and to provide a supportive environment to help you learn and grown. And, as a faculty member, I am committed to helping you be successful as a student. Here's how to succeed at UNT: Show up. Find Support. Get advised. Be prepared. Get involved. Stay focused.

To learn more about campus resources and information on how you can achieve success, go <http://success.unt.edu/>.

## Appendix 3: Instructor Checklists

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The checklists on the following pages will help you prepare for the start of your term and guide you through some of the difficulties you may face during the first two weeks and beyond. The checklists include:

- Before the Semester Begins
- First Day of Class
- First Two Weeks
- For TAs
- Large Classes
- Final Weeks of the Semester

## Checklist: Before the Semester Begins

- Order books (contact department admin for information).
- Consult with TAs about their office hours, contact info, and duties.
- Consult with CLEAR about use of Blackboard and classroom technology.
- Prepare syllabus:
  - Office hours, location, contact information
  - Learning objectives
  - Required materials
  - Basis for evaluating students
  - Class, departmental, college and university policies
  - Class schedule (including dates of assignments and exams)
- Post syllabus and curriculum vita to Faculty Profile System (<https://faculty.unt.edu>).
- Provide syllabus, office hours, and contact information to department administrative assistant.
- Arrange to have syllabus copied (if distributing in paper format).
- Create filing system (electronic and/or paper) for course materials.
- Develop system for taking attendance (to verify audit rolls).
- Visit classroom to identify media availability and layout.

## Checklist: First Day of Class

- Arrive early to assess the room and further plan teaching strategies.
- Set up A/V equipment and talk with TAs.
- Introduce yourself and TAs and identify class title and number.
- Take attendance.
- Distribute syllabus and go over key points (readings and course requirements).
- Advise students of class policies including:
  - How you will contact them
  - Attendance policy
  - Late policy, and
  - Use of Blackboard and other technology
- Provide some content or ice-breaker activity to engage students. Your first class day sets the tone for the rest of the semester.
- Provide an overview of concepts important for the course. Use an engaging teaching strategy for this, such as a video, game, relevant real world examples, etc.
- Use one-minute paper or notecard activity to assess concerns the students may have about the course or their level of understanding of relevant concepts.
- Advise students about expectations for next class period.

## Checklist: First Two Weeks

- Keep track of attendance, verifying that each student has attended once.
- Complete audit roster through your faculty center at <https://my.unt.edu> before the deadline (usually the 12<sup>th</sup> class day for long terms).
- Identify students who may be having difficulty with the course by:
  - Providing a few low-stakes grading opportunities.
  - Keeping track of student use of Blackboard.
  - Contacting students who are not keeping up.
  - Following up with Early Alert system (in my.unt.edu grade roster).
- Meet with students who require disability accommodations to ensure they are receiving the necessary accommodations.
- Meet with TAs to make sure they are comfortable with their responsibilities and to clarify roles.

## Checklist for TAs

- Meet with instructor before classes begin to cover expectations and responsibilities:
  - Office hours
  - Attendance / class facilitation
  - Writing exams and assessments
  - Grading exams and assessments
  - Potential scheduling conflicts
  
- In consultation with instructor and other TAs, set office hours.
  
- Provide instructor, fellow TAs, and department administrative assistant with your office location, office hours, phone, and e-mail contact information.
  
- Attend first day of class (and afterwards, as instructor requests).
  
- Keep office hours.
  
- Document interaction with students (keep log, e-mails, and responses).
  
- Meet with instructor every 2 weeks (or so) to make sure you are meeting expectations and to voice any concerns.
  
- Grade assignments fairly and quickly.

### **Checklist: Large Classes**

- Take attendance with a checklist or sign-in sheet (or via clickers).
- Have students turn in work electronically to minimize loss of papers and facilitate return of work.
- Consider a seating chart to facilitate group work; Use a folder for each row of students to facilitate taking up assignments or distributing graded assignments. A cover page or placing the grade on the last page can maintain grade confidentiality.
- Reduce the opportunity to cheat on exams by:
  - Using multiple forms of an exam, alternating forms by seat
  - Having students (or a random selection of students) show ID at the beginning or end of exam
  - Forbidding hats with brims, headphones/earbuds, trips to the bathroom, and all cell phones (if they ring, they ring – don't touch them to turn them off)
- Use the grade book feature in Blackboard so students can keep track of their own grades and identify grade entry errors sooner (place a limit on appeals).
- Use the discussion board and/or announcement features of Blackboard to convey student questions and their answers to reduce repetition.
- Build in extra points or “drop the lowest” one or two scores on small assignments so that you can implement a zero-tolerance late policy (which reduces administrative headaches).
- Critically evaluate how you will divide TA work, and provide each TA with clearly defined roles.

## Checklist: Final Weeks of the Semester

- Administer final exam or similar assessment during the time period assigned by the Office of the Registrar (<http://essc.unt.edu/registrar/schedule/scheduleclass.html>).
- Encourage students to complete the Student Evaluation of Teaching (SETE) survey.
- Submit grades through your faculty center at <https://my.unt.edu> before the deadline (consult with your department about any internal deadlines).
- Determine method for retaining important student records (such as exams, answer sheets, papers, and calculations of student grades). Discuss with your department chair where and how records will be retained.
- Organize your own class files (lecture notes, exams, quizzes, handouts, etc.) to save time and energy in future semesters.
- Update your curriculum vita and teaching portfolio to reflect your experiences and student evaluations.