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| **OFFICIAL** |

Policy and Procedure Statement 4.01 Conduct and Planning of Courses

Review Cycle: Nov. 1, E4Y(47 paragraphs)

Review Date: November 1, 2020 [Attachment A](http://gato-docs.its.txstate.edu/provost-vpaa/office-pps-files/pps4/PPS4-01AttA.doc)

Reviewer: Associate Provost [Attachment B](http://gato-docs.its.txstate.edu/provost-vpaa/office-pps-files/pps4/PPS4-01AttB.doc)

[Attachment C](http://gato-docs.its.txstate.edu/provost-vpaa/office-pps-files/pps4/PPS4-01AttC.doc)

[Attachment D](http://gato-docs.its.txstate.edu/provost-vpaa/office-pps-files/pps4/PPS4-01AttD.doc)

1. This statement contains information concerning the conduct and planning of courses, using “instructor” and “faculty member” as interchangeable terms.

**ROLE OF THE INSTRUCTOR**

1. The instructor of record is designated by the university as the subject matter expert for the course. As such, the instructor has the right to evaluate student performance and assign grades. Those rights are informed by the rights and obligations described in the policy that follows.
2. Faculty members enjoy full academic freedom, including the right to freely discuss the subject matter of their area of specialization ([Faculty Handbook](http://www.provost.txstate.edu/faculty-handbook.html#ACADEMIC FREEDOM, RESPONSIBILITY, AND TENURE)).
3. Faculty members must assume academic responsibilities, including,
   1. maintaining competence in their fields;
   2. conscientiously executing assigned academic duties;
   3. not allowing the exercise of academic freedom to interfere with the performance of their academic responsibilities; and
   4. avoiding classroom discussion of controversial material not related to their area of specialization ([Faculty Handbook](http://www.provost.txstate.edu/faculty-handbook.html#ACADEMIC FREEDOM, RESPONSIBILITY, AND TENURE)).
4. Faculty members shall not, without approval of the President or designee, collect money from students.
5. Faculty members at the rank of lecturer or above may not accept pay for extra instruction or teaching or tutoring from students registered at the university. With prior written approval of the department chair/school director, teaching assistants and instructional assistants may accept pay from students for extra-class instruction or coaching or tutoring, but only in courses or sections of courses with which they have no instructional connection ([Faculty Handbook](http://www.provost.txstate.edu/faculty-handbook.html#Acceptance of Money from Students)).
6. Faculty members interested in information related to classroom civility or disruption should see [PPS. 4.02](http://www.provost.txstate.edu/pps/policy-and-procedure-statements/4-teaching/pps4-02.html).
7. Faculty members are obligated to maintain confidentiality with regard to students’ educational records (See [UPPS 01.04.31](http://www.txstate.edu/effective/upps/upps-01-04-31.html) and the[Faculty Handbook](http://www.provost.txstate.edu/faculty-handbook.html#Confidentiality)). Faculty members shall reveal information about their students’ education records only to school officials with legitimate educational interests, that is those officials who need the information to fulfill their professional responsibility. Faculty members may reveal student information to parents if
   1. the student has signed a waiver allowing parental viewing of the records (See [Attachment A](http://gato-docs.its.txstate.edu/provost-vpaa/office-pps-files/pps4/PPS4-01AttA.doc) ); or
   2. the parent demonstrates that the child is a dependent for tax purposes (See [Attachment B](http://gato-docs.its.txstate.edu/provost-vpaa/office-pps-files/pps4/PPS4-01AttB.doc) ).
8. Numerous offices offer resources to faculty members for planning and conducting their courses. They include, but are not limited to, Alkek Library, Technology Resources, the Writing Center, the Office of Disability Services, the Testing, Research-Support and Evaluation Center, and the Office of Academic Development and Assessment.

**ATTENDANCE POLICIES**

1. Class attendance is essential to both learning and student performance. The university strongly encourages student attendance. Specific absence policies are generally determined by the academic departments/school or, if no departmental/school policy exists, by the instructor. However, the university recommends that only the following be considered as valid excuses for an absence:
   1. Injury or illness requiring treatment at home or in a hospital including any temporary medical condition, for example, pregnancy
   2. Death of a family member
   3. Required participation in a university-sponsored activity (See [UPPS 02.06.03](http://www.txstate.edu/effective/upps/upps-02-06-03.html))
   4. Field trip or off-campus activity required for a non-elective course essential to the student's degree program
   5. Required participation in active military service( See [UPPS 02.06.03](http://www.txstate.edu/effective/upps/upps-02-06-03.html))
   6. Official religious Holy Days (See [UPPS 02.06.01](http://www.txstate.edu/effective/upps/upps-02-06-01.html))
2. Faculty members are required to certify their census rosters, 4th class day for summer semesters and 12th class day for fall/spring semesters). These records are retained by the Registrar’s Office permanently.
3. Instructors are encouraged to announce their attendance policies early in the semester. Attendance policies should also be specified on each course syllabus.
4. Further information concerning absence policies is included in the [Faculty Handbook](http://www.provost.txstate.edu/faculty-handbook.html#Student Attendance Policy) under the heading of "Student Absence Policy."

**COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

1. The instructor is expected to ensure that the course is in accordance with the description provided in the appropriate catalog. The catalog course description should appear in the course syllabus. (See [PPS 2.01](http://www.provost.txstate.edu/pps/policy-and-procedure-statements/2-curriculum-progs-course-offerings/pps2-01.html) for policies regarding academic courses).
2. If a student refuses to drop a course for which he or she does not have the required prerequisites, the department chair or school director may drop him or her from the course.

**CORE CURRICULUM COURSES**

1. Core curriculum courses are intended to provide general education for undergraduate students. In teaching them, instructors should emphasize information and skills valuable to all students regardless of their majors. The instructor should also emphasize aspects of the course that are related to other core curriculum courses.
2. Instructors in core curriculum courses have an especially strong responsibility to identify academic weaknesses such as deficiencies in writing, critical thinking, or mathematical skills and to refer students to the appropriate agencies for assistance.

**GRADES**

1. Grade symbols are defined in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs under the heading, "Grade Symbols"; and in the [Faculty Handbook](http://www.provost.txstate.edu/faculty-handbook.html#Grades) under the heading of "Grades," in a section entitled "Policies Relating to the Teaching Function." This subheading includes information from those documents as well as other University policies.

19. Instructors are encouraged to frequently inform students of their academic progress during the semester.

GRADE CHANGES

1. Forms for reporting changed grades are available through departmental/school offices. The Registrar is responsible for creating and providing these forms to departments/schools.
2. Grades may be changed for the following reasons:
   1. A grade of "I" or "PR" may be changed upon completion of course requirements.
   2. A grade may be changed if the instructor made a computing or recording error.
   3. A grade may be changed if the instructor acquires information unavailable when the original grade was recorded. Such information may include proof that a student had cheated or valid reasons for the recording of an "I" grade. (See [PPS 4.07](http://www.provost.txstate.edu/pps/policy-and-procedure-statements/4-teaching/pps4-07.html))
3. Students who wish to protest a grade earned in a course should first discuss the grade with the instructor. If no resolution is reached, the student may appeal the grade to the department chair. If no satisfactory conclusion is reached at this level, the student may appeal to the college dean, whose decision is final. A student’s appeal for change of grade must be filed not later than two years after the grade is issued.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

(See Also [Attachment C](http://gato-docs.its.txstate.edu/provost-vpaa/office-pps-files/pps4/PPS4-01AttC.doc))

23. In accordance with university policy and federal law, all members of the university community are responsible for ensuring that students are not discriminated against because of a disability. To accomplish this goal, reasonable and appropriate academic accommodations may be necessary for qualified students with disabilities. The Office of Disability Services will coordinate with faculty members to facilitate necessary accommodations for students with disabilities.

**INDEPENDENT STUDY, TOPICS, AND PROBLEMS COURSES**

1. While they are not obligated to do so, instructors may teach independent study, topics, or problems courses to individual students with the permission of the department chair/school director. Such courses need not meet at a regular time and place. They permit a student to pursue an individualized topic under the direct supervision of the instructor.
2. The student and the instructor should agree upon a topic, specify it in writing on a form provided by the department/school, and submit the form to the chair/director for approval. A sample of the form is included in [Attachment D](http://gato-docs.its.txstate.edu/provost-vpaa/office-pps-files/pps4/PPS4-01AttD.doc).
3. The instructor is expected to ensure the quality and rigor of the course. Term papers, creative works, or oral presentation may constitute graded material; tests may be required at the discretion of the instructor.
4. Instructors of such courses may receive workload credit in accordance with departmental/school, college, and University policies.(See [PPS 7.05](http://www.provost.txstate.edu/pps/policy-and-procedure-statements/7-personnel-employ-comp/pps7-05.html))

**CONTACT HOURS OUTSIDE OF CLASS (OFFICE HOURS)**

1. Texas State has a longstanding tradition of faculty being reliably available for out of class instruction and advising of students and continues to affirm the value of these experiences for students and faculty.
2. Departments, schools and programs shall develop and publish policies for faculty expectations to dedicate time to meet, advise, and instruct students outside of class periods based on the considerations stated below.
3. A variety of means may be used to meet with students, including in-person, via telephone, electronic communication, or other means that allow faculty to effectively support students outside of scheduled class periods.
4. The means faculty use should be appropriate to the number of courses they teach, the enrollment in the classes they teach, the student population served, and the instructional delivery mode(s) employed in their classes.
5. The number of hours scheduled per week should reflect the teaching load and class enrollment of the faculty member.
6. Contact hours outside of class should be convenient to students and flexible enough to provide reasonable access for students who may have class conflicts. For example, contact hours outside of class scheduled at the same time on M/W would restrict access for students who have class at that time.
7. Instructors should announce in class how and when they will be accessible outside of class, include this information on syllabi, and have their contact hours and means on file in their department/school offices.

**RETENTION OF RECORDS**

1. Grade records are the property of the university. Instructors should retain them for protection against legal action by students. Instructors of record who supervise instructional assistants are responsible for the collection and retention of grade records maintained by their instructional assistants. To avoid waste of storage space, instructors should consider retention of records electronically.

1. When faculty members leave the university, they should submit their grade records in to their department chairs/school directors. At all times, faculty members should maintain grade records in such a way as to make them readily accessible to the department chairs/school directors in the event of unexpected death, incapacitation, or departure.
2. A faculty member must keep some written, formal record of student grades during the semester.  The grade book either in paper copy or electronic form, or collected student work in lieu of a grade book must be retained according to the university Records Retention Schedule (RRS), which is two years dated from the end of the semester.

a. If a faculty member maintains a grade book as a record of student progress throughout the semester, then that grade book is the official university record that must be retained according to the RRS.  (i.e. student work is returned to the student.) A submitted final grade roster represents the official record for the final grade awarded in the course.  In this situation, the retention category is SAD300 – Faculty Grade Books.

b. If a faculty member does not maintain a grade book and retains all student work (exams, quizzes, term papers, projects, etc.) as a record of student progress throughout the semester, then the collected student work is the official university record that must be retained according to the RRS.  (i.e. student work is held by the faculty member.  However, following the expiration of the retention period, work may either be returned to the student or shredded.) Submitting a final grade roster is still required and represents the official record for the final grade awarded in the course.  In this situation, the retention category is SAD200 - Examinations, Tests, Term Papers, and Homework Records.

**STUDENT EVALUATIONS**

1. Instructors should be routinely evaluated by their students. An anonymous student evaluation of the teaching of all faculty should be done at least once every fall and spring semester. The method and frequency of evaluation are determined by the instructor's department/school. Student evaluation records should be retained in accordance with the Records Retention schedule. The instructor’s department/school is responsible for the retention of student evaluation records in accordance with the Records Retention schedule.

**SYLLABI**

1. Instructors are expected to provide students with printed or electronic course syllabi as early as possible in each semester, in either electronic or paper version, or both. Faculty members should consult with their chairs/directors about format expectations in their departments/schools. The following information should be included in all syllabi:
   1. The purposes and objectives of the course
   2. Objectives related to departmentally/school-generated student learning outcomes
   3. A list of required and recommended readings
   4. Policies concerning grading, examinations, term papers, and other required assignments
   5. Contact Information, including
      1. Name
      2. Office address
      3. Email address
      4. Telephone number (either instructor’s office or departmental/school office)
      5. Contact hours outside of class (office hours)
   6. Due date for major exams and other assignments
   7. Policies regarding student absences from classes and from examinations, including final examinations
   8. Course description consistent with the catalog (See paragraph 14 in this PPS.)
   9. Disability statement (see paragraph 22 in this PPS)
   10. Honor Code or statement (See [UPPS 07.10.01](http://www.txstate.edu/effective/upps/upps-07-10-01.html).)

1. Faculty members teaching core courses are expected to provide printed or electronic syllabi that follow the guidelines established by the General Education Council. These guidelines can be found in “The Minimal Expectations for All Course and Section Syllabi in General Education Core Curriculum Courses,” and are as follows:
   1. Semester (i.e., Fall, Spring, Summer I, or Summer II)
   2. Instructor’s name, office number, office telephone number and email address
   3. Names and email addresses of teaching assistants, laboratory assistants, graders or supplemental instructors as appropriate
   4. Contact hours outside of class (office hours)
   5. Course prefix/number and title
   6. Course description and objectives
   7. General Education Learning Outcomes for designated courses
   8. Required textbook(s) and materials (authors, title, publication date and/or edition, etc.)
   9. Brief course outline and schedule for semester
   10. Any special requirements (especially those introducing students to the library as a resource for research or those which make use of computer applications)
   11. Instructor’s grading policy
   12. Instructor’s attendance policy
   13. A statement describing Texas State’s honors code policy and a web reference (currently, Attachment I of [UPPS 07.10.01](http://www.txstate.edu/effective/upps/upps-07-10-01.html))
   14. Texas State University Honor Code
   15. Date/time for final examination
   16. A statement for students with special needs that might read: “If you are a student with a disability who will require an accommodation(s) to participate in this course, please contact me as soon as possible. You will be asked to provide documentation from the Office of Disability Services. Failure to contact me in a timely manner may delay your accommodations.”

# EXAMS, PAPERS, ESSAYS AND OTHER GRADED ASSIGNMENTS

**FINAL EXAMINATIONS**

1. Final examinations will be given by all faculty members and taken by all students; however, when subject matter dictates inappropriateness, the chair/director and the faculty member must concur on an alternate method of evaluation.
2. Finals will be administered according to the published schedule. Individual students with conflicts or serious problems may take a final at an alternative time if they secure permission from the instructor.
3. Faculty members who wish to change the time of a final for an entire class may do so with permission from their chair/director and college dean.
4. Instructors should retain final examinations according to the Records Retention schedule, so that students may profit by reviewing them and so that grading errors may be corrected.

PUNCTUAL RETURN

1. Instructors are obligated to allow students to review all graded work received from students as soon as possible so that students are aware of their performance in the course.

**TEXTBOOKS**

1. The choice of course instructional material, including textbooks, is a departmental/school responsibility. Departments/schools may specify a required text, allow the instructor a choice of several options, or allow the instructor to choose without restriction.
2. Instructors must observe deadlines established by the bookstore to ensure that texts are available at the appropriate time.

WRITING

1. The university encourages the use of written assignments in as many courses as possible.
2. Students’ written work must conform to the policies and procedures regarding cheating and dishonesty, as described in Texas State [UPPS 07.10.01](http://www.txstate.edu/effective/upps/upps-07-10-01.html).
3. Criteria and guidelines for identifying courses as Writing Intensive are listed in [PPS 2.01](http://www.provost.txstate.edu/pps/policy-and-procedure-statements/2-curriculum-progs-course-offerings/pps2-01.html).

**Public Access to Course Information**

1. Each institution of higher education in the State of Texas, other than a medical and dental unit, is required to make available certain course information to the public on the institution's homepage. In addition, the university must post information about work-study opportunities and departmental budgets. This is commonly referred to as the HB 2504 requirement.

Relative to the conduct and planning of courses, Texas State provides:

* + - 1. for each undergraduate lecture or seminar course offered for credit by the institution, a syllabus and a curriculum vita for the instructor of record;
      2. summarized end-of-course student evaluations of faculty for each undergraduate lecture or seminar course.

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

1. This PPS has been approved by the reviewer listed below and represents Texas State's Division of Academic Affairs policy and procedure from the date of this document until superseded.

Review Cycle: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Review Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Last Updated: November 9, 2016

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