

FACULTY RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Purpose

This policy sets forth the rights and responsibilities of faculty members at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV).

B. Persons Affected

This policy applies to faculty of UTRGV.

C. Policy

Faculty members at UTRGV are entitled to rights, with associated responsibilities, related to their research and teaching. They must use those rights and responsibilities in a professional manner.

1. *Freedom in Research:*

Faculty members are entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results.

2. *Freedom in the Classroom:*

A faculty member is entitled to freedom in the classroom, physical or virtual, in discussing his or her subject, but is expected not to introduce into his or her teaching controversial matter that has no relation to his or her subject.

3. *Clarification of Role:*

Faculty members are citizens, members of learned professions, and officers of an educational institution supported by the State of Texas. When a faculty member speaks or writes as a citizen, he or she should be free from UTRGV censorship or discipline, but should make it plain that the faculty member is not a UTRGV spokesperson.

4. *Professional conduct:*

Faculty members are expected to adhere to the professional standards and [guidelines in the AAUP Statement on Professional Ethics](#).

5. *Primary Duties:*

The primary duties of a member of the faculty are to perform the following:

a. *Teaching:*

Teach online or in the classroom, laboratory, seminar, or clinical setting, and provide mentoring and instructional innovation, development, and improvement. Policies regarding specific teaching-related activities include the following:

i. Syllabus:

The faculty member shall issue a syllabus to students and post it online via UTRGV's Faculty Portfolio Tool (FPT) within the first seven days of the first class of the semester. The syllabus shall at minimum contain:

1. The faculty member's office number and office hours, email, and other contact information;
2. A complete list of required and recommended texts, readings, and other course materials;
3. A brief description of each major component of the course, including examinations and major assignments;
4. The tentative course subject outline in chronological order;
5. Grading system in course;
6. The faculty member's policy in regard to absences and make-up work;
7. Student Learning Objectives (SLOs);
8. Any other information that satisfies the syllabus standards adopted by UTRGV or the faculty member's college or department.

ii. Final Examinations:

1. Faculty members and students are expected to adhere to the published examination schedules.
2. Permission to change the scheduled time of an examination must be secured from the appropriate Dean.
3. Final examinations material will be filed for at least one semester. Students will be permitted to examine their own work.

iii. Office Hours or Times Accessible to Students:

1. Faculty are expected to be accessible to their students outside the classroom (physical or virtual) via email, telephone and office hours.
2. The teaching schedule and office hours shall be posted outside each faculty office or in the Learning Management System and be available in the department office. Faculty members are to be available to students during the posted office hours.

iv. Advisement Duties:

Faculty members are required to be available for advisement. Each department will devise a system for distributing advising responsibilities among faculty.

v. Textbook and Course Material:

Faculty members shall submit their textbook adoptions during the preceding semester, by the beginning of the registration period. Individual faculty members or the department should have discretion in the choice of materials to be used in the courses offered by the department. See HOP ADM 6-204 Textbooks and Other Materials for more information.

b. *Research:*

Study, investigate, discover, create, and develop professionally.

c. *Administration or Service to UTRGV:*

Perform curricular tasks auxiliary to teaching and research for the department, college, UTRGV or other organizational unit (e.g., serving on faculty committees, attending to administrative and disciplinary tasks, fostering intellectual curiosity and integrity in the student body).

i. Committees:

As part of their service responsibilities, faculty members are expected to accept and participate when elected or appointed to college, schools, departments, or UTRGV committees or councils.

ii. Faculty Meetings:

School or departmental meetings shall be scheduled by directors or chairs as needed to handle such matters as curriculum, budget, recruitment, etc. Faculty are expected to participate in all department and college meetings.

iii. Commencement:

Commencement ceremonies will be held twice each academic year, once each at the end of the fall and spring semesters. Faculty members are expected to participate in at least one commencement ceremony each academic year.

d. *Contribution to Society and the Professional Discipline:*

Faculty will use their professional expertise to benefit society, such as engaging in professional organizations and community projects to help solve local, state, national, and global problems. Faculty members are encouraged to take part and be engaged in professional and community activities.

6. *Outside activities:*

Faculty may be permitted to engage in certain outside activities, compensated or uncompensated, during regular semesters as well as in the summer, provided that these activities are approved and disclosed as required by HOP ADM 3-600, Conflict of Interest, Conflict of Commitment, and Outside Activities. Such activities, however, should not interfere with a faculty member's primary duties.

7. *Nonsectarian:*

In accordance with Texas Education Code Section 65.38, no course of instruction of a sectarian character shall be taught in The University of Texas System.

8. *Fees for Instructional Purposes:*

Faculty members, without previous and special approval of The University of Texas System Board of Regents, shall not collect from students any fees or charges to be expended for UTRGV purposes, and shall not sell to students books, notes, or similar student supplies.

a. *Prohibited Fees:*

A member of the faculty may not accept pay for extra instruction or teaching of students registered in UTRGV where he or she is employed. (HOP ADM 06-110)

b. *Allowed Fees:*

With the written approval of the department chair or school director, teaching assistants and other like instructional employees below the rank of an instructor may accept pay from students for extra-class instruction or coaching, but only in courses or sections of courses with which they have no instructional connection. See Section E.3 for the approval procedure.

9. *Absences from Duties:*

Various types of faculty leaves can be approved via the appropriate leave policy (see ADM 4-600 Series), including emergency, sick, and military leaves. Other than that, authorization for any faculty member to be absent from his or her usual and regular duties will be granted only under the following conditions:

a. When such absence is on state business, and

- b. When appropriate provisions are made to carry on the duties of the absent person without additional expense to the institution.

See Section D. 1 for procedures on faculty absences from assigned duties.

D. Procedures

1. Faculty Absences from Assigned Duties

a. Authorization for Faculty Absences from Assigned Classes:

- i. A faculty member who is unable to meet his or her classes on the day and hour scheduled for reasons other than illness, conferences or professional meetings, must secure prior authorization from the department chair or school director.
- ii. When advance notice is not possible, it is the responsibility of the faculty member to inform the department chair or school director immediately of his or her impending absence. The department chair or school director, in consultation with the faculty member, shall have the responsibility to make arrangements for the assigned classes and other duties.

b. Authorization for Absences from Regular Duties other than Assigned Classes:

For absences from regular duties other than assigned classes, see the appropriate leave policy (ADM 4-600 Series) or department or unit procedures.

2. Outside activities

Procedure for disclosing or obtaining approval of outside activities should follow HOP ADM 3-600, Conflict of Interest, Conflict of Commitment, and Outside Activities.

E. Definitions

1. College – An academic unit organized within the university, which is usually comprised of many departments or provides programs in multiple academic specialties/professional instruction. This academic unit may be referred to as a college or school, and is led by a dean reporting to a designated Executive Vice President (EVP).
2. Department – An academic unit organized within a college, usually devoted to a particular academic discipline. This academic unit may be referred to as a department, school, or center, and the unit's head (usually a chair or director) reports to the dean of the college.

F. Related Statutes or Regulations, Rules, Policies, or Standards

[University of Texas System Board of Regents' Rules and Regulations Rule 31004](#), Rights and Responsibilities of Faculty Members

Texas Education Code Section 65.38, Nonsectarian

Handbook of Operating Procedures, ADM 03-600, Conflict of Interest, Conflict of Commitment, and Outside Activities

Handbook of Operating Procedures, ADM 04-600 Series

Handbook of Operating Procedures, ADM 06-204 Textbooks and Other Materials

Handbook of Operating Procedures, ADM 06-110 Acceptance of Money from Students

AAUP Statement on Professional Ethics

G. Dates Reviewed or Amended

Amended on July 15, 2019