

Handbook of Operating Procedures

KEYS/ACCESS CONTROL

A. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to promote a secure working, research, educational, and healthcare environment through the assignment of electronic access control devices or keys for all University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) owned or leased buildings based on what is appropriate and necessary for completing assigned duties and functions, taking into account applicable federal and state laws or individual program requirements.

B. Persons Affected

This policy applies to all UTRGV employees, students, visiting scholars, POIs, contractors and anyone doing business with the University.

C. Policy

1. Routine access to UTRGV facilities or areas within the facilities that is required for the performance of assigned duties will be provided through the issuance of an appropriate key or electronic access control device to allow entry. Key access to UTRGV facilities is controlled by Facilities Planning and Operations Locksmiths and electronic access to UTRGV facilities is controlled by the UTRGV Police Department. Key or electronic access will be granted to an individual with proper approvals in place, based on the security levels of the area for which access is being requested.
2. Where electronic access is available and provided, a key will not be issued to any entry door for that building or area.
3. Keys or electronic access-control devices are considered UTRGV property. Each individual issued a key or electronic access-control device (e.g., electronic identification cards, FOBs, proximity cards, etc.), is responsible for using utmost care in securing and safeguarding them at all times, and will not permit the key or device to be duplicated by any person or entity.
4. Each individual issued a key or an electronic access-control device may not loan, exchange, or otherwise provide to any other individual for regular use.
5. Each individual issued a key or an electronic access-control device is responsible for using the issued key or device to gain access only to authorized area(s) to conduct UTRGV business, and for ensuring the door(s) to the area(s) are properly locked or otherwise secured at the conclusion of business or work or in accordance with the specific security requirements of a particular area.

6. When an individual no longer needs an electronic-access control device (e.g., due to the end of a research project, relocation, reassignment, or separation of employment), the department may retain the electronic access-control device and may reassign the device to another individual within the department as long as applicable procedures in this policy are followed.
7. The Director for Residence Life manages the granting of access to living spaces such as dorms or apartments and manages the storage and issuance of suite and room keys to UTRGV students, faculty, staff, and unaffiliated guests assigned living spaces in on-campus housing properties, unless otherwise noted in this policy. The Director will coordinate with the electronic access-control supervisor to grant or remove access to entrance gates or building entrances. It is the Director's responsibility to maintain who has access each semester.
8. The UTRGV Police Department is responsible for the purchase, installation, maintenance and administration of campus-wide electronic access-control systems and devices. All electronic access-control hardware and devices must be approved by the UTRGV Police Department, and installation must be conducted in coordination with the electronic access-control supervisor.
9. Campus Facilities Operations is responsible for the UTRGV's keying system. This responsibility includes controlling the production, storage, and issuance of keys; the replacement of, or rekeying of lock cylinders; the acquisition of new keying systems; the maintenance of accurate records; and the cataloging of and adherence to key system authorizations. All hardware locks and keys must be approved by Campus Facilities Operations and installations must go through the Locksmiths.
10. All student employees must have a valid employee ID card in their possession for granting electronic access to areas related to employment. Employment access is separate from student access and employee access will not be granted via a student ID. Proximity cards will only be issued to active/current employees or students who have their employee ID in possession.
11. Faculty and staff (teaching assistants, graduate assistants, non-paid employees) must have a valid active employee ID and must have the card in their possession before any electronic access can be granted, regardless of media type.
12. For purposes of health, safety, and security, UTRGV will designate certain individuals in the UTRGV Police Department, Department of Environmental Health, Safety & Risk Management, and Facilities maintenance personnel to have unrestricted access to UTRGV-owned or leased facilities. In the event of an emergency, when a notice to lockdown has been issued, personnel from the UTRGV Police Department and the Department of Environmental Health, Safety & Risk Management will be the only ones allowed access into buildings/areas. The UTRGV Police Department will notify occupants of cleared lockdowns. The UTRGV Police Department maintains control over all electronic access control devices during lockdowns.
13. Lost or stolen keys or electronic access-control devices must be promptly reported to the administrative official(s) who approved issuance of the key or access-control device, the UTRGV Police Department, and Facilities Planning and Operations.

14. Tampering with or disabling a lock or security device may be cause for arrest or disciplinary action, as appropriate.

D. Procedures

1. Designations of Security Levels in UTRGV Facilities and Approval Requirements

- a. General access
This is the basic access level for areas such as classrooms, corridors and building entrances for non-sensitive areas. This access must be approved by an immediate supervisor for a key or electronic-access device request to be granted. Time schedules for access restrictions may be applied based on supervisor approval.
- b. Limited access
This is higher level access for areas such as specialty labs, medical labs, chemical storage areas, research areas, networking rooms (IDF/MDF), mechanical/electrical rooms, and any other security-designated area. Access requests for these areas require approval from the immediate supervisor, the department head, and appropriate central administrative personnel before access can be granted.
- c. High-security access
This is the highest access level associated with high-security laboratories such as animal containment, vivarium areas, BSL (biohazard safety level) areas, high-level chemical storage, or any other high-security designated area. Access to these areas requires proper training and requires approval from the immediate supervisor, department head, and appropriate central administrative personnel before access can be granted.

2. Electronic Access-Control Devices

- a. Electronic access-control requests must be submitted via an iShop work order for students or via the HR Portal for faculty and staff and must be approved in accordance with this policy. Text, instant messaging, or email requests will not be accepted. Shared OneDrive files are accepted for electronic access-control requests, but must first be approved by the electronic access-control supervisor and must still be followed by an iShop work order.
- b. Requests for access for contractors (e.g., construction, food services, and campus stores, etc.) or anyone doing business with UTRGV must be submitted via an iShop work order. Requests must be submitted by the department or project manager and must have an expiration date. Access will only be granted for the duration of the project or assignment.
- c. Requests for area reservations, to unlock/lock areas for events, must be submitted through Ad Astra and sent to the electronic access control supervisor with at least two (2) weeks advance notice of the event.

- d. Upon separation from UTRGV or transfer to another area of responsibility within the university, persons issued electronic access devices are responsible for returning proximity or FOB devices to the department if devices are no longer needed. If the person's assigned devices will continue the use of device in their new area of employment or work, it is their responsibility to notify the electronic access control supervisor via an iShop work order, to remove previous areas of access. The new department supervisor must request access for employee for areas within that new department.
- e. Students who need after-hours access to lab areas, may be granted electronic access control media (where available) upon the approval of the appropriate faculty member. Access will only be granted for the duration of the project or assignment. The individuals are responsible for the access control issued and cannot be transferred or used by anyone other than the person issued the device.
- f. Part-Time Faculty or Staff, and Teaching Assistants (TAs)/Graduate Assistants (GAs) may be provided electronic access-control devices to fulfill job duties upon request and approval by their immediate supervisor and department chair. Upon separation, the individual is responsible for returning the device to the department, and the administrative official who approved issuance of the electronic access-control device must notify the electronic access-control supervisor that access shall be discontinued.
- g. Upon separation from UTRGV or transfer to another area or responsibility within the university, persons issued electronic access-control devices are responsible notifying that there has been a change within five (5) business days of such relocation, reassignment, retirement, or separation of employment. The individual is responsible for notifying the Electronic Access Control Supervisor to remove electronic access from previous assignment or terminate all-together in the case of separation or retirement.

3. Keys

- a. All key requests must be submitted via an iShop work order request and must go through the appropriate approval process before issuance. The individual receiving a key must be active with Human Resources and must have a valid UTRGV ID card.
 - i. Sub-Master or Master Key Requests – These requests require the appropriate executive-level approval in addition to the approval of the immediate supervisor or dean or unit head prior to issuance. Students may not be issued these types of keys.
 - ii. Students - Keys will not be issued to non-employee students.
 - iii. Part-Time Faculty or Staff, Teaching Assistants (TAs)/Graduate Assistants (GAs) – Upon request and approval by their immediate supervisor and department chair, keys may be provided to persons in these positions to fulfill their job duties. Upon separation, the individual is responsible for returning the key(s) to the Facilities Department.

- iv. Residence Life (Staff, resident assistants, students, staff, faculty and guests) - Residence Life is responsible for all access for on-campus housing students, staff, faculty and guests. Residence Life engages UTRGV Locksmiths to key all non-residential rooms within UTRGV residential housing facilities, which include exterior building doors, offices, study rooms, and mechanical rooms. UTRGV Locksmiths also repair and rekey residential rooms upon request by Residence Life following its established procedures. Residence Life issues and collects residential keys to students, staff, faculty, and guests as per policies in student housing contracts, guest housing contract, summer camp/conference contracts and the Resident Handbook.
- b. Each UTRGV key will be stamped with a “DO NOT DUPLICATE” label, file number, and uniquely assigned employee ID code for the person to whom the key is issued. When a key is picked up from the UTRGV Locksmiths, the recipient must acknowledge receipt by signing the Key Request Form that pertains to the individual key and includes the employee’s ID code.
- c. Upon separation from UTRGV or transfer to another area or responsibility within the university, persons issued keys are responsible for returning all keys to the UTRGV Locksmiths (at respective campus) and notify that there has been a change within five (5) business days of such relocation, reassignment, retirement, or separation of employment.

4. *Lost or Stolen Keys or Electronic Access-Control Devices*

- a. Lost or stolen keys or electronic access control should be promptly reported to the administrative official(s) who approved issuance of the key or access device, the UTRGV Police Department, and Facilities Planning and Operations. The individual issued the key must file a police report with the UTRGV Police Department.
- b. If the lost/stolen key opens a single door or multiple doors, then re-keying must be performed on that/those doors. The department should note that this could be a substantial cost if the lost key opens multiple locks. Lock change requests must be submitted via iShop.
- c. Any unauthorized duplication of keys shall be reported to the UTRGV Locksmiths and will be referred to the UTRGV Police Department for investigation and a report will be submitted to the Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration and Deputy President. Replacement of lost electronic access devices must be submitted via an iShop work order and might result in a cost to the department.
- d. Master Keys and Grand Master Key lists will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Campus Facilities Operations Director to assure the owners of such keys still have relevant use for this level of access on UTRGV campuses. The electronic access devices list will be reviewed on an annual basis by the UTRGV Police Department to assure the owners of such devices still have relevant use for the respective areas.

E. Definitions

1. Access Control – Control of entry or exit to an area by any means (mechanical or electronic).
2. Electronic Access Control – Control of entry or exit to an area by electronic hardware or credential.
3. Electronic Access Control Supervisor – Designated individual(s) within the UTRGV Police Department who maintain electronic access control. This person oversees granting access via the Electronic Access Control System.
4. Electronic Access Control System – A computerized hardware/software system that manages electronic or electro-mechanical devices. The system provides access to various doors and enables automatic locking and unlocking of specific doors or groups of doors at prearranged times.
5. Electronic Identification Card – An identification card distributed by Campus Auxiliary Services that can be programmed to gain access into electronic access-controlled areas.
6. Frequency Offline Button (FOB) – Device that is programmed for the sole purpose of gaining access into electronic button-controlled areas. This device is distributed by the Electronic Access Control Supervisor.
7. Key – Typically, a metal instrument specially cut to fit into a lock and move its bolt. Keys may provide access to a single, limited space (e.g., an individual or designated office, classroom or other general use space), or multiple spaces or buildings.
 - a. Building Master Key – A key that provides full access to all doors in a building or several buildings that generally may be issued to designated executive administrators, UTRGV police, Environmental Health, Safety & Risk Management, and Facilities Maintenance personnel and custodial staff only.
 - b. Grand Master Key – A key that provides full access to doors for all buildings on a campus that may be issued only to designated executive administrators, UTRGV police, and Environmental Health, Safety & Risk Management, and Facilities Maintenance personnel.
 - c. Sub-Master Key – A key that allows a significant level of access to space in an individual building (e.g. an office suite).
8. Lockdown – The action of securing building entrances or areas within, during an emergency. This is controlled by the UTRGV Police Department.
9. Locksmith – Designated individual(s) within Campus Facilities Operations who maintain physical key access control. This person oversees cutting and assigning keys based upon requests.

10. Mechanical Key System – Any mechanical device used to operate a mechanically controlled mechanism for entry/exit to a controlled area.
11. Person of Interest (POI) – A designation for an individual who has been authorized to conduct special assignments on behalf of UTRGV. The POI designation is authorized by a University administrator and certified by Human Resources. By means of this special assignment, the POI is issued special credentials that are used to register keys and electronic access control for a building and spaces within a building during special assignment.
12. Proximity Card – This is a UTRGV card issued to students, faculty, staff, contractors, POIs, and any person working on the UTRGV campus, that is programmed for the sole purpose of gaining access into electronic proximity-controlled areas. This card is distributed by the Electronic Access Control Supervisor.

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

Not applicable.

G. Dates Reviewed or Amended

Amended June 13, 2018.

Amended March 4, 2022.

Reviewed and amended (non-substantive) August 27, 2024.