

College of Liberal Arts

Department of Psychological Science

Policies & Procedures Manual



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# **Preamble**

This manual outlines policies and procedures adopted by the UTRGV Department of Psychological Science faculty and serve as guidelines to help ensure students and faculty are treated fairly and equitably. UTRGV has university-wide policies and procedures that are listed in the Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP). If any policy in this manual is found to be in conflict with the HOP, the HOP policy takes precedence.

The Department of Psychological Science embraces fully the principle of collegial faculty self-governance and the necessity and desirability of collaborative and transparent decision making. Every member of the department has both the right and responsibility to participate in this process and to assist in shaping and advancing the department’s goals and mission. Executive power in the department shall be vested in the Department Chair, who is appointed by the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts with the advice and consent of the Department of Psychological Science Faculty.

# **Organizational Chart**

# **Missions of the Department**

## Undergraduate education missions

The Department of Psychological Science offers a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in psychology. The curriculum is designed to assure that the student acquires the basic skills needed to achieve a sophisticated understanding of the field, a broad grasp of the varied areas of inquiry that comprise psychology, and an opportunity to develop an advanced understanding of particular areas of interest.  By the end of their degree, it is expected that Psychology students will be able to:

* Demonstrate familiarity with the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology.
* Understand and apply basic research methods in psychology, including research design, data analysis, and interpretation.
* Respect and use critical and creative thinking, skeptical inquiry, and, when possible, the scientific approach to solve problems related to behavior and mental processes.

## Master’s level missions

**Clinical Psychology MA Mission Statement:**

Currently under development

**Experimental Psychology MA Mission Statement:**

Currently under development

## Ph.D. level missions

The Department of Psychological Science offers the PhD program in Clinical Psychology through integrated academic, scientific, and professional training. The program provides students with intensive instruction in the theoretical framework of psychology and broad experience in methods of practice in clinical psychology. Our program follows the scientist-practitioner model to develop bilingual clinical psychologists with expertise in mental health assessment and treatment within Hispanic/Mexican American populations.

## Missions of the Psychology Training Clinic

# Currently under development

# **GENERAL GOVERNANCE GUIDELINES**

## Faculty Voting

All full-time faculty members (3Y Lecturers, TT, T, clinical faculty) will have voting rights as permitted by UTRGV or as restricted below.

* Faculty are ineligible to vote on issues related to promotion that affect those above their rank. For example, lecturers cannot vote on tenure-track promotion decisions and associate professors cannot vote on full professor decisions.

All full-time lecturers can vote on policy and curriculum issues relevant to their positions. If questions of relevance arise, the matter shall be settled by a vote of the tenured and tenure-track faculty.

All full-time clinical faculty can vote on policy and curriculum issues relevant to their positions. If questions of relevance arise, the matter shall be settled by a vote of the tenured and tenure-track faculty and clinical faculty.

A motion will be considered as passed if it receives fifty percent plus one vote of the enfranchised faculty members.

## Department Chair

The Chair is responsible for stewarding the day-to-day operations of the department, serving as the department’s liaison with, and advocate to, the dean’s office, for promoting a collegial workplace environment, and for working with department members to set goals and monitor progress in achieving them. The Chair is also responsible for conducting annual reviews of all faculty, overseeing scheduling, the budget, curriculum, and setting workload requirements in consultation with each faculty member. The Chair shall be evaluated by the department annual review committee and dean as part of the annual evaluation process according to the criteria established by the College (exceeds, meets, does not meet expectations, or unsatisfactory). That review shall be conducted after the chair has completed his/her annual review of the department annual review committee members. At the beginning of the final year of their term, the chair shall undergo an in-depth review process, including input from department faculty and staff (UTRGV HOP ADM 06-303).

## Graduate Program Coordinator

**The Graduate Program Coordinator** serves as the chair of the Graduate Program Committee and oversees graduate program assessment for the M.A. degree. Candidates for these positions should be tenure-track or tenured faculty, clinical faculty, or 3-year appointment lecturers in the department. Coordinators shall serve three-year terms that are renewable. It is the desire of the Department that these individuals receive compensation in the form of workload adjustment or other equivalent from the Office of the Dean.

## Director of Clinical Training (Ph.D. program)

Currently under development

## Clinic Director

Currently under development

# **DEPARTMENT STANDING COMMITTEES**

The ability of the UTRGV Department of Psychological Science to fulfill its mission is predicated on the talents, experiences, and professionalism of its members. The active participation and collaboration of all department members in the decision-making process, therefore, is essential. To that end, the department shall establish various standing and special purpose committees to review/oversee specific department activities and to make recommendations to the department for improvement.

All full-time faculty members with the exception of the Department Chair and any members of the faculty who hold administrative assignments (faculty with over fifty percent or more administrative assignment) at the College and/or University level may serve as members of departmental standing committees. Tenured or tenure-track faculty members, clinical faculty members, and 3-year appointment lecturers may serve as the Chair of a standing committee. All standing committee members will be appointed by the Department Chair. In selecting committee members, the Chair will follow as closely as possible the guidelines below:

* Appointments should reflect the individual preferences of faculty regarding which committee(s) they prefer
* when possible, committee membership should reflect an equitable balance of ranks;
* to ensure that ongoing projects within particular committees can be effectively completed, where possible,
  + At least one member of the committee should remain on the committee from one year to the next
* when necessary, any given faculty member may be requested to serve on more than one standing committee, although multiple standing committee membership should be avoided whenever possible;

Every Spring Semester by **May 15** faculty will submit their committee membership preferences for the following academic year to the department chair. The chair should announce committee memberships for the following academic year at the last regularly scheduled department meeting of the Spring Semester. The slate of committee appointments will be submitted to the full faculty for approval on that occasion. If approved by a majority vote, the committee appointments will stand. If not approved, the Department Chair will solicit advice from the faculty to revise the appointments.

Except for the Graduate Programs Committee and the Undergraduate Assessment Committee, the position of committee chair will be determined by a majority vote of all committee members from among the qualified candidates. The position of committee chair should rotate annually.

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES COMMITTEE

The Policies and Procedures Committee is responsible for:

* review and revision of the department’s Policies and Procedures Manual (P&P Manual) to ensure that it is accurate and up to date;
* development/review/revision to department policy documents, and supporting guidance documents, for annual evaluation, tenure, promotion, and comprehensive periodic evaluation;
* recommending revisions to policies to improve department efficiency and fairness;
* making recommendations to departmental faculty and the department Chair concerning new policies that may be required to advance the department’s mission;
* regular auditing of departmental policies to ensure compatibility with UTRGV policies and guidelines.

## UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

The committee is charged with tasks of:

* reviewing the undergraduate Psychology curriculum to see that courses are added, altered, or deleted as necessary to serve student needs, keep up with changes in the field of study as well as providing service courses required by other Colleges, Departments, and Programs;
* solicit and review recommendations from Psychology faculty members for alteration of catalog inclusions;
* ensure the completeness and correctness of the department material to be submitted for catalog copy to the administration;
* develop guidelines for the acceptance of experiential and/or service learning for psychological science course credit;
* consult with the Department Chair and the Office of Admissions and Records to accredit Psychology transfer credits from other educational institutions or programs;
* recommending general guidelines for 1000-2000-3000-4000 level courses to promote equity and to advance student success.

## M.A. PROGRAMS COMMITTEE.

This committee is charged with the tasks of:

* regularly reviewing the graduate curriculum to see that courses are added, altered, or deleted as necessary to keep up with changes in the field of study as well as providing service courses required by other Colleges, Departments, and Programs;
* solicit and review recommendations from faculty members for alteration of catalog inclusions;
* ensure the completeness and correctness of the material to be submitted for catalog copy to the administration;
* creating assessment criteria for ensuring that course offerings meet state, university, and departmental criteria for educational content mastery;
* develop guidelines for the acceptance of experiential and/or service learning for course credit if such situations should occur;
* consult with the Department Chair and the Office of Admissions and Records to accredit transfer credits from other educational institutions or programs
* review conditional applications and program status appeals from students;
* oversight of expenditures from the Graduate Student Instructional Account

In addition, this committee may assist the Graduate Program Coordinator in completing assessment requirements, constructing graduate course schedules, and reviewing the credentials of part time faculty seeking to teach graduate courses.

## UNDERGRADUATE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

This committee is charged with the tasks of completing General Education and Program Assessment requirements.

## COLLOQUIUM COMMITTEE

Currently under development

## SOCIAL MEDIA COMMITTEE

This committee is charged with the tasks of:

* Increasing the department's online visibility and reach;
* Sharing valuable psychological insights with the public and the academic community;
* Fostering a sense of community and engagement among students, faculty, alumni, and the public.

# **AD HOC AND OTHER SPECIAL PURPOSE COMMITTEES**

Each academic year full-time faculty members will elect several committees for the purpose of evaluating each full-time faculty member’s performance for the previous academic year.

## Annual Evaluation Committees

Annual evaluations must be done by committee members at an equivalent or higher rank than the faculty being reviewed. Members of the following five Annual Evaluation Committees will be elected by **April 15th** of the previous academic year. Committee membership will be confirmed in a vote of full-time department faculty at the department meeting held prior to the deadline. Self-nomination are accepted for forming an initial pool of potential members of each committee. Each committee must have at least three (3) members. Committee members shall not review their own personnel action during that year and will recuse themselves from all deliberations regarding their evaluation. Membership on each committee should rotate each year although re-electing one or two people from the previous year is permissible to ensure continuity and efficiency. Each Annual Evaluation Committee will elect its own chair from among its members. The chair of the committee will be responsible for overseeing the communication of committee recommendations and faculty responses via the designated online platform.

In years where there are applications for tenure and promotion, the Chair of the Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor Committee or the Chair of the Promotion to Full Professor Committee will serve on the College’s Evaluation Committee (please see the Action Review Committee section below). In years where there is no application for tenure and promotion, the Chair of the AE Committee for Tenured Faculty or the Chair of the AE Committee for Full Professors will service on the College's Evaluation Committee.

NOTE: In years where there are applications for tenure and/or promotion or comprehensive periodic evaluation, the applicant’s annual evaluation will be performed by the action (ad hoc) review committee that will perform tenure and/or promotion or comprehensive periodic evaluation for the faculty (please see below)

1. **AE Committee for Lecturers**

* Eligible Members: Senior Lecturers, Lecturer IIIs, professors (at any rank), and Clinical Faculty who have recently taught undergraduate courses.
* Recommended Members: Lecturer IIIs, Senior Lecturers, and Assistant Professors.

1. **AE Committee for Clinical Faculty**

* Eligible Members: Clinical Faculty, and Assistant/Associate/Full Professors from the core faculty in the Clinical Psychology PhD program with recent clinical work experience and faculty in the Master’s Program who have recent clinical work experience.
* Recommended Members: Clinical Faculty, and Assistant/Associate/Full Professors from the core faculty in the Clinical Psychology PhD program with recent clinical work experience *and/or* faculty in the Master’s Program who have recent clinical work experience.

1. **AE Committee for Tenure-Track Assistant Professors**

* Eligible Members: Assistant Professors, Associate Professors, and Full Professors.
* Recommended Members: Associate Professors and Full Professors.

1. **AE Committee for Tenured Associate Professors**

* Eligible Members: Associate Professors and Full Professors.
* Recommended Members: Full Professors.

1. **AE Committee for Full Professors**

* Eligible Members: Full Professors.
* Recommended Members: Full Professors.

## Action Review Committees

In years where there are applications for tenure and promotion, the following committees will be established per the department’s tenure and promotion policies. Each committee must have a minimum of three (3) members. These committees will perform both tenure and promotion, promotion, or comprehensive periodic reviews and AE within each committee. Review must be performed by committee members at a higher rank than the faculty being reviewed except comprehensive periodic reviews for full professors which are performed by full professors.

1. **Promotion Committee for Clinical Faculty**

* Eligible Members: Clinical Associate Professors, Clinical Professors, Associate Professors, and Full Professors, with recent clinical expertise.
* Recommended Members: Dependent on the rank of the faculty member(s) applying for promotion.
  + If reviewing clinical faculty members applying for promotion to Clinical Associate Professor, the committee can include Clinical Associate Professors and Clinical Professors, Associate/Full Professors from the core faculty in the Clinical Psychology PhD program with recent clinical work expertise *and/or* faculty in the Master’s Program who have recent clinical work experience.
  + For applicants to Clinical Professor, the committee should be limited to Clinical Professors and Full Professors who are core faculty in the Clinical Psychology PhD program and who have recent clinical work experience.

1. **Promotion Committee for Lecturers**

* Eligible members: Lecturers II, Lecturers III, Senior Lecturers, Professors at any rank, and Clinical Faculty who have recently taught undergraduate courses.
* Recommended members: Depends on the rank of the lecturer. Review must be performed by committee members at a higher rank than the lecturer being reviewed.

1. **Tenure-Track 3rd-Year Review Committee**

* Eligible Members: Associate Professors and Full Professors.

1. **Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor Committee (Committee of the Whole)**

* Eligible Members: Associate Professors and Full Professors.

1. **Promotion to Full Professor Committee (Committee of the Whole)**

* Eligible Members: Full Professors.

1. **Comprehensive Periodic Evaluation Committee for Tenured Faculty**

* Eligible Members: Full Professors.

## Employment Search Committee(s)

1. **Tenure-Track and Tenured Faculty**

When hiring tenure-track and tenured faculty for the department becomes necessary, the department will follow the University Search Committee guidelines provided by the administration of UTRGV. Search committees will be appointed by the chair after soliciting faculty interested and willing to serve. In addition, each search committee should consist of at least three members and there should be an odd number of faculty members on each committee. Committee members for TT and T positions should be tenure-track or tenured faculty although every committee must have at least one tenured faculty member, and each committee will elect its own chair. Professional expertise in the area(s) for which the hire is being made should be considered when creating each search committee. Each committee shall draft the job ad in consultation with the department faculty and Chair. The ad will then be submitted to the CLA Dean’s office. The committee will comply with UTRGV faculty hiring guidelines and conduct itself with maximum transparency and due respect for the interests of the broader department faculty. All full-time faculty should have an opportunity to express an opinion about which candidate will be recommended for hire by emailing the search committee or participating in a poll vote. A meeting of the department must be held to discuss candidate credentials and faculty preferences following on campus interviews.

After the department meets to discuss the candidate(s), the search committee will develop a written summary for each candidate in which the candidate’s strengths and weaknesses are summarized and a committee recommendation is made for or against hiring the candidate. Summaries/recommendations will be submitted to the Chair for consideration.

In cases where a search is conducted for candidates at the associate or professor ranks, the tenured members of the department will vote on whether the candidate’s prior teaching, research, and service record meet or exceed the requirements for those ranks as specified in the department’s tenure and promotion policy. The results of that vote will be submitted to the department Chair and forwarded to the CLA Dean.

1. **Lecturers**

Lecturer search committees may include any full-time faculty member although each Lecturer search committee must contain at least one tenured or tenure track faculty member. A 3-year-appointment faculty member may chair this committee. The hiring of Lecturers shall follow UTRGV guidelines and be conducted in an open and transparent manner. Search committees will vet candidates, conduct interviews, and make a recommendation to the Department Chair regarding the candidate(s) they believe best meet the job description and address department need. The Chair will evaluate the recommendation and forward it to the CLA Dean with their endorsement.

1. **Clinical Faculty**

Currently Under Development

## Special Purpose Committees

The chair may, at any time, form a committee for any task which will be of benefit to the department. The formation of these committees should follow the same basic procedures outlined for the formation of standing committees as should the operating procedures for the conduct of the special purpose committees themselves.

# **GENERAL EXPECTATIONS OF FACULTY MEETINGS**

## Faculty Meetings

At the start of each school year, the department chair will schedule a faculty meeting that will serve as an orientation session for the upcoming academic year. During this meeting, a strategy for scheduling monthly faculty meetings will be determined. One faculty meeting will be held each month from September through November and from February through April with additional meetings being called at the discretion of the Department Chair or by petition by fifty percent plus one faculty member. All full-time faculty members are expected to attend the monthly meetings either virtually or in person. Quorum will consist of fifty percent plus one of faculty members who are eligible to vote. Minutes of these meetings must be kept and submitted for review and approval at the beginning of the subsequent meeting by majority vote of those who were in attendance. These minutes shall become a permanent part of the Department’s official records and all policies and/or procedures noted as having been adopted in them shall be binding unless specifically amended or replaced by positive action on the part of the department faculty. All approved minutes will be posted online and remain there for at least two years.

Department meetings will adhere to an approved agenda and shall be conducted in general accordance with Robert’s Rules of Order to ensure efficiency, professional conduct, and collegiality.

## Committee Meetings

All standing committees will meet either virtually or in person at least once during each semester of the regular school year. Participation in these meetings is required for member faculty on these committees. Each committee will report its activities in a formal report at each monthly meeting of the full faculty.

# **Miscellaneous Department Policies**

## Peer-Teaching-Observation Policy

Peer observation of teaching must follow the department’s approved [Peer Observation of Teaching Policy and Procedure document](https://www.utrgv.edu/psychology/_files/policy/peer-observation.docx).

## Adjunct Lecturer Pool

To be considered for a part time position, an applicant must complete the formal application required by UTRGV. At a minimum an adjunct who wishes to teach at the undergraduate level must hold a Master’s degree with at least 18 credit hours of postgraduate instruction related to the course s/he wishes to teach. Teaching at the graduate level requires a doctoral degree under normal circumstances. However, the department chair can approve a faculty member without a doctoral degree for teaching graduate courses when no faculty with a doctoral degree can be found to teach the courses.

The Chair will select adjunct lecturers to cover courses, by giving preference to applicants who have the most experience in teaching the specific course available (assuming that the applicant has previously received positive departmental evaluations and is available to teach at the time the course is offered). Applicants who have no prior teaching experience will be given a choice of courses they feel most confident in teaching that address department need. No adjunct lecturer will be allowed to teach more than two courses per semester.

The Chair is responsible for ensuring that adjuncts are evaluated.

## Communicating by students via email

All communications with students must be via the student’s UTRGV address, using your own UTRGV email account.

## Research Subject Pool / SONA Policies

To introduce students to the research methodology of psychology, all students enrolled in General Psychology (Psychology 2301) courses must accumulate research credit during the semester. The research credit may be obtained by participating in psychology studies and/or writing research reports or other alternative research-based activities approved by the department’s SONA Committee.

The participation in research and the granting of research credit are managed through a cloud-based software system called SONA (sona-systems.com). SONA must be used for research studies in which students taking UTRGV psychology courses are targeted for participation. SONA is not used for studies that do not involve the participation of students in psychology courses. SONA is available for use by departmental faculty and student researchers who are under the supervision of departmental faculty.

1. General Psychology students are typically required to complete 4 hours of research participation during the course. The required research component of the course is worth 10% of the possible points in the course and these points are awarded to students on a prorated basis. The details on the implementation of this policy are sent to General Psychology instructors at the beginning of the semester.
2. A graduate student is hired each semester to serve as the manager of the SONA system. The SONA manager is supervised by the chair of the subject-pool committee.
3. Psychology students have the option of doing alternative tasks (e.g., reading journal articles related to research and writing a report on or answering questions from the article) to fulfill any number of required research participation hours.
4. Before the beginning of the semester, the SONA manager should conduct a survey to estimate the total number of hours the whole body of researchers in the department may need and the total number of subject hours available.
5. Research credits are awarded on the basis of study duration, with one credit for one hour of participation time (awarded in increments of .5 credits). To account for the added time and effort required of participants for attending lab-based studies, participants are awarded with an extra hour of credit for participation in lab studies (i.e., in-person studies). This general policy may be adapted by majority vote of the SONA committee.
6. In general, there is a limit to the number of credits one can earn through participation in online studies. The cap will be established by the SONA Committee on a semester-by-semester basis. A re-assessment of the demand-supply concerning lab studies will be conducted two weeks before the end of the semester to determine whether demand and supply are balanced. If there are not enough lab studies to meet the demand of the General Psychology students, the online-study cap can be altered during the last two weeks of the semester.
7. All subject recruitments conducted in any psychology courses (including courses other than General Psychology) by offering students extra credit must be carried out through the SONA system. General Psychology course instructors have the option of offering extra credit to students who complete more than the required number of participation hours.
8. Alternative research options must be approved by the SONA Committee
9. Instructors offering research participation credit to their own students through SONA need to be mindful of reducing undue influence.
10. SONA can also be used for studies in which students in psychology courses are compensated monetarily (e.g., through cash or gift cards). In such a situation, students cannot receive monetary compensation *and* research credit/extra credit. Rather, each student participant shall choose whether to receive the monetary compensation or the research/extra credit.

## Summer teaching

Faculty who are on 9-month appointments can choose to teach a maximum of two courses over the summer semesters unless granted special permission by the dean of CLA. In the event that there are more faculty willing to teach than there are course sections available, the seniority system will prevail.

## Travel funds

Every academic year the Dean allots a certain amount of money to the Department to fund faculty travel. At the first Department meeting of the academic year the Chair will solicit a list of faculty members who intend to use their portion of these travel funds during the academic year (including the summer). Only tenure-track, tenured, or clinical faculty are eligible to receive travel funds (lecturers can apply for University Faculty Development Travel Funds). To apply for travel funds, a faculty member must intend to either: (a) present a paper or poster at a state/regional/national/or international psychological conference; or (b) provide professional or scholarly service to a state/regional/national/or international organization whose focus is primarily psychological in nature; or to conduct research or obtain training.

The amount of funds available to each faculty member will be the same and is equal to the total travel funds allotted by the Dean divided by the number of eligible faculty members who apply. If faculty members subsequently do not use their allotted funds over the course of the year for which they were designated, the funds will be returned to the Departmental operating budget and be available for a second round of travel assistance.

# **REVIEW/REVISION OF THIS DOCUMENT**

As specified above, it is the responsibility of the Policies and Procedures Committee to keep the departmental handbook accurate and up to date so that it serves as a guide to faculty and staff and helps the Department to maintain both stability and flexibility in operating. In addition, that committee may review this document at the beginning of every academic year and submit a draft for formal ratification by a majority vote of the full faculty. The date of that ratification shall be appended at the end of the document with the signatures of the Department Chair.

Approved by the Department on April 29, 2022

Revised and approved by the Department on May 8, 2024