# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**WELCOME!**  
Graduate Education at UNC Charlotte ................................................................. 3  
Teaching Assistant Duties and Responsibilities ..................................................... 4  
FERPA .................................................................................................................. 6

**TEACHING: TOOLS, TIPS, & RESOURCES**  
Quick Tips for the First Day .................................................................................. 14  
The Syllabus ......................................................................................................... 15  
Interactive Lecturing .......................................................................................... 17  
Active Student Involvement ............................................................................... 19  
Grading ............................................................................................................... 21  
Proctoring ........................................................................................................... 24  
e-Learning at UNC Charlotte ............................................................................. 25  
Use of University Laboratory Facilities .............................................................. 26  
UNC Charlotte Lab Safety Rules ........................................................................ 27  
Lab Safety Tips and Resources .......................................................................... 28  
The Juggling Act: The TA as Student, Researcher and Teacher ......................... 30  
The TA Top Ten: What I Wish I Had Known ....................................................... 31

**INTERACTING WITH STUDENTS**  
UNC Charlotte Diversity ..................................................................................... 33  
Creating Inclusive College Classrooms ............................................................... 34  
A Positive Classroom Climate ........................................................................... 41  
Reference Guide for Working with Students with Disabilities ......................... 43  
Addressing Request for Personal Advice / Distressed Students ......................... 46  
When a Student Stops Attending Class ............................................................... 48  
Handling Disruptive Classroom Behavior ......................................................... 49  
Civility in the Classroom .................................................................................... 52  
Policy on Workplace Violence ........................................................................... 53  
Sexual Harassment Policy and Grievance Procedures ....................................... 56

**APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND INFORMATION**  
University History ............................................................................................... 62  
The Noble Niner Code ......................................................................................... 63  
Center for Teaching & Learning ........................................................................ 64  
Writing Resource Center .................................................................................... 65  
Counseling Center ............................................................................................... 65  
University Center for Academic Excellence ..................................................... 66  
UNC Charlotte Web Links .................................................................................. 67  
Teaching Assistant Resources on the Internet .................................................... 68  
Teaching Tips for International Teaching Assistants ....................................... 69  
Campus Phone Numbers ..................................................................................... 71
Welcome to the Graduate School at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte!

Our Mission
The Graduate School’s role is to foster excellence in all dimensions of post-baccalaureate studies and is the primary advocate for graduate education and for graduate students at the University. Graduate education functions to explore and advance the limits of knowledge and define the state of the art in an academic discipline. Our purpose is to serve society’s needs in specific technical and professional ways as well as the need for intellectual expansion. In accomplishing this mission, the Graduate School values integrity, collaboration, efficiency, innovation, and inclusiveness in all that it does.

Academic Programs
Established in 1985 with the appointment of the first dean, the Graduate School offers 22 doctoral, 74 master’s degree programs, 47 certificate programs and 6 post-master’s degree programs in a wide variety of fields and specialties ranging from architecture, biomedical engineering, computing, engineering, and health administration, to history, teacher education, creative writing, business, nursing, and social work.

Graduate students enrolled in the University come from nearly every state in the union. International students come from a variety of countries in Europe, Asia, Africa, and Central and South America.

The Graduate School has nearly 750 members of the Regular Graduate Faculty teaching and mentoring graduate students.

Dr. Thomas Reynolds, Dean of the Graduate School
Graduate teaching assistants (TAs) are essential members of the University’s academic community. TAs enhance student understanding of the content and pedagogy of the discipline and extend faculty resources and their contribution to the teaching mission of the University. TAs work under faculty guidance and are assigned a variety of instructional responsibilities depending upon their educational background and experience. These responsibilities are included in three major categories:

- Grading papers, setting up laboratory experiences, keeping class records, preparing instructional materials, and/or other instructional duties
- Teaching a laboratory or recitation section of a course
- Teaching an independent section of a course

The assignment to TAs of full responsibility for teaching courses in a classroom is subject to the Criteria for Accreditation of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and UNC Policy Manual section 400.3.6: Training, Monitoring and Evaluation of Graduate Teaching Assistants.

- TAs who have primary responsibility for teaching a course for credit and/or for assigning final grades for such a course must have earned at least 18 graduate semester hours in their teaching discipline, be under the direct supervision of a faculty member experienced in the teaching discipline, receive regular in-service training and be evaluated regularly. (Comprehensive Standard 3.7.1.f)
- Students for whom English is a second language may be appointed as TAs only when the English Language Training Institute certifies that the applicant's proficiency in oral and written communication indicates that the appointment is appropriate. (UNC Policy Manual section 400.3.6)
- TAs must possess a demonstrated competence in the subject matter that they will be teaching as determined by experts in the field. They should have an appreciation for the theory and practice of the subject matter as well as a developing understanding of the major themes and divisions of their field. (UNC Policy Manual section 400.3.6)
- TAs should have an appreciation for the teaching and learning enterprise acquired from their own undergraduate and graduate academic programs, as well as by means of both required and optional teacher training seminars, symposia, workshops, publications, and university staff resources. Competency to teach includes an effective command of the language of instruction, usually American English, and an appreciation for the culture of the American university classroom. (UNC Policy Manual section 400.3.6)
- TAs must be graduate students in good standing in their programs. (UNC Policy Manual section 400.3.6)

Adapted from http://www.provost.uncc.edu/epa/handbook/chapter_IX.htm#A
Because of the importance of the teaching responsibilities assigned to graduate students at UNC Charlotte, serious consideration must be given to how we develop and evaluate teaching in the contexts of both undergraduate instruction and graduate education.

In order to prepare graduate students for their responsibilities as TAs, program departments, along with the ongoing support of the Center for Graduate Life (http://gradlife.uncc.edu/) and the Center for Teaching and Learning (http://teaching.uncc.edu/), are expected to initiate and maintain professional development programs that reflect the unique educational goals, circumstances and culture of each degree-granting department or program.

TAs perform a variety of roles related to teaching that represent different levels of independence and direct contact with undergraduate students. TAs should progress from assignments closely supervised by faculty to less closely supervised assignments. Advanced students may assume advanced responsibilities, such as coordinating the activities of beginning TAs.

Departments are strongly encouraged to provide graduate students with rationalized and incremental experiences in teaching as they progress through their graduate programs. Departments are also encouraged to create assignments which contribute to the intellectual and professional development of TAs and not ones that represent menial or highly repetitive tasks.

All TAs at UNC Charlotte are expected to maintain the highest levels of professional and ethical standards. These standards include, but are not limited to:

- A respect for honest and responsible exchange of intellectual ideas
- Fair and equal treatment of all students
- Respect for individual differences
- Avoidance of any interactions that could jeopardize the objective assessment of student efforts

Adapted from Duke University Graduate School
THE FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) was enacted in 1974. The primary purpose of FERPA is to protect the privacy of student information, and this protection is achieved by controlling access to and disclosure of students' "education records," as that term is defined in FERPA. Faculty, staff, and administrative officers at UNC Charlotte are required by FERPA to treat education records confidentially, unless a legal exception applies, or the student provides written consent to disclose. Students also have the right to inspect and review their education records and to request that their records be amended.

UNIVERSITY POLICY #402: STUDENT RECORDS

UNC Charlotte adheres to a policy of compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, also known as the Buckley Amendment or FERPA, a federal law that affords students the following rights with respect to their education records:

1. to inspect and review the student's education records;

2. to consent to disclosure of the student's education records to third parties, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent;

3. to request amendment of the student's education records to ensure that they are not inaccurate or misleading;

4. to be notified of the student's privacy rights under FERPA;

5. to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the University to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

The University has designated the University Registrar to coordinate the inspection and review procedures for student education records.

I. Definitions

"Directory Information" means information in a student's education record that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. At UNC Charlotte, directory information consists of the student's name, local and permanent address, email address, telephone number, date and place of birth, class, major field of study, dates of attendance, enrollment status, degrees and awards (including scholarships) received, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, and the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended. Directory information does not include a student's Social Security Number or student identification number.

"Education Records" include records directly related to a student that are maintained by UNC Charlotte. Education records do not include:

   a. Records of instructional, administrative, and educational personnel that are in the sole possession of the maker (i.e., file notes of conversations), are used only as a personal memory aid, and are not accessible or revealed to any individual except a temporary substitute;
   b. Records of the UNC Charlotte campus police;
   c. Student medical and counseling records created, maintained, and used only in connection with provision of medical treatment or counseling to the student, that are not disclosed to anyone other than the
individuals providing the treatment. (While a student may not inspect his or her medical records, these records may be reviewed by a physician of the student's choice);

d. Employment records unrelated to the student's status as a student;

e. Records created or received by an educational agency or institution after an individual is no longer a student in attendance, and that are not directly related to the individual's attendance as a student;

f. Grades on peer-graded papers before they are collected and recorded by a teacher.

"Personally Identifiable Information" includes, but is not limited to

a. The student’s name;

b. The name of the student's parent or other family members;

c. The address of the student or student's family;

d. A personal identifier, such as the student's social security number, student identification number, or biometric record;

e. Other indirect identifiers, such as the student's date of birth, place of birth, and mother's maiden name;

f. Other information that, alone or in combination, is linked or linkable to a specific student that would allow a reasonable person in the school community, who does not have personal knowledge of the relevant circumstances, to identify the student with reasonable certainty; or

g. Information requested by a person who the University reasonably believes knows the identity of the student to whom the education record relates.

"Student" means an individual who is or who has been in attendance at UNC Charlotte. It does not include persons who have been admitted but did not attend at the University. For the purposes of this policy, "attendance" includes attendance in person or by paper correspondence, videoconference, satellite, Internet, or other electronic information and telecommunications technologies for students who are not physically present in the classroom; and the period during which a person is working under a UNC Charlotte work-study program.

II. Disclosure of Education Records

A. Disclosure to the Student

The student has the right, on request to the appropriate University official, to review all materials that are in the student's education records, except:

1. Financial information submitted by the student's parents;

2. Confidential letters and recommendations associated with admissions, employment or job placement, or honors, to which the student has waived rights of inspection and review (the University is not required to permit students to inspect and review confidential letters and recommendations placed in their files prior to January 1, 1975, provided those letters were collected under established policies of confidentiality and were used only for the purposes for which they were collected);

3. Education records containing information about more than one student, in which case the University will permit access only to that part of the record that pertains to the inquiring student.

B. Disclosure without Prior Consent of the Student

The University will not disclose any information from a student's education records without prior written consent of the student, except as follows:

1. Directory Information. Directory information (as defined in Section I above) may appear in public documents and may otherwise be disclosed without student consent unless a student submits a written request to the Registrar to withhold such information from disclosure. A request for non-disclosure will be honored by the University indefinitely, unless the student submits to the Registrar a written revocation of such request for non-disclosure.
2. University Officials. University officials with legitimate educational interests in the student's education records are allowed access to student education records. A "legitimate educational interest" is defined as an interest that is essential to the general process of higher education, including teaching, research, public service, academic advising, general counseling, discipline, job placement, financial assistance, medical services, and academic assistance activities. University officials who may have access to only those education records in which they have legitimate educational interests include personnel in the following offices:

- Undergraduate Admissions
- Graduate Admissions
- Office of University Registrar
- Academic Services
- Financial Aid
- Financial Services
- Auxiliary Services
- Student Employment Office
- University Center for Academic Excellence
- Career Center
- Center for Counseling and Psychological Services
- Office of Adult Students and Evening Services
- Disability Services
- Information Technology Services, for technical support associated with maintaining student education records only
- Office of Enrollment Management
- Office of Director of Athletics
- Office of Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
- Office of Vice Chancellor for Business Affairs
- Office of Dean of Students
- Office of Dean of Graduate School
- Office of International Programs
- Offices of Chairpersons of Departments
- Offices of Deans of Colleges
- Offices of Directors of Interdisciplinary Units
- Office of Provost
- Office of Chancellor
- Office of Legal Affairs
- Campus Police, for internal law enforcement or health and safety purposes only
- Alumni Affairs
- Development
- Academic counselors and advisors
- Campus Behavioral Intervention Team
- Office of Institutional Research
- Other academic and administrative personnel, as approved by the Chancellor

3. Parents of Dependents. Parents of a student who is a dependent for federal tax purposes, as defined by Section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, may have access to that student's education records without prior consent of the student. Parents may demonstrate the tax dependency of a student only by submitting to the University a copy of their most recently filed federal income tax return. Alternatively, a student may demonstrate tax dependency, and thus allow parental access to the student's records without prior consent of the student, by submitting to the University a signed statement of his or her tax dependency. If a dependent student's parents are divorced, both parents may have access to the student's records, so long as at least one parent claims the student as a dependent.

4. Other Institutions. The University may release a student's education records to officials of another school, school system, or institution of postsecondary education where the student seeks or intends to enroll, or where the student is already enrolled, so long as the disclosure is for purposes related to the student’s enrollment or transfer.

5. Financial Aid. The University may release a student's education records to persons or organizations in connection with that student's application for, or receipt of, financial aid, but only to the extent necessary for such purposes as determining eligibility, amount, conditions, and enforcement of terms or conditions of such financial aid.

6. Accreditation Agencies. The University may release students' education records to accreditation organizations or agencies for purposes necessary to carry out their accreditation functions.

7. Judicial Orders. Information concerning a student shall be released in response to a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena, subject to the conditions set forth in 34 CFR ' 99.31(a)(9). The University will make
reasonable efforts to notify the student of a subpoena before complying with it, except that the University shall not notify a student of a subpoena if it is from a federal grand jury or is for law enforcement purposes, and it provides that the University shall not disclose to any person the existence or contents of the subpoena or any information furnished in response to the subpoena.

8. Litigation. If the University initiates legal action against a parent or student, or if a parent or student initiates legal action against the University, the University may disclose to the court, without a court order or subpoena, the education records of the student that are relevant for the University to proceed with the legal action as plaintiff or to defend itself in such legal action.

9. Health and Safety. The University may, subject to the conditions set forth in 34 CFR ’ 99.36, disclose student information to appropriate persons, including parents of a student, in connection with an emergency if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.

10. Student Conduct Hearing Results.

Disclosure to Victims: The University may disclose to an alleged victim of any crime of violence (as that term is defined in Chapter 1, Section 16 of Title 18, United States Code), or a non-forcible sex offense, the final results of any student conduct proceeding conducted by the University against the alleged perpetrator of such crime or offense with respect to such crime or offense, regardless of whether the alleged perpetrator was found responsible for violating the University’s rules or policies with respect to such crime or offense.

Disclosure to Third Parties: The University may disclose the final results of any student conduct proceeding against a student who is an alleged perpetrator of any crime of violence or non-forcible sex offense (as those terms are defined in 34 C.F.R. 99.39), if the student is found responsible on or after October 7, 1998, for violating the University's rules or policies with respect to such crime or offense. Such disclosure shall include only the name of the student, the violation committed, and any sanction imposed by the University on that student. Such disclosure may include the name of any other student, such as a victim or witness, only with the written consent of that other student.

11. Alcohol and Drug Violations. The University may disclose to a parent or legal guardian of a student, information regarding any violation of any Federal, State, or local law, or of any rule or policy of the University, governing the use or possession of alcohol or a controlled substance, regardless of whether that information is contained in the student's education records, if the student is under the age of 21 at the time of disclosure to the parent, and the University determines that the student is responsible for a student conduct violation with respect to such use or possession.

12. Federal, State, and Local Officials and Educational Authorities. Subject to the requirements of 34 CFR § 99.35, the University may disclose education records to authorized representatives of (i) The Comptroller General of the United States; (ii) The Attorney General of the United States; (iii) The Secretary; or (iv) State and local educational authorities.

13. Institutional Studies. The University may disclose education records, but only under the conditions set forth in 34 CFR § 99.31(a)(6), to organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, educational agencies or institutions to (A) Develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; (B) Administer student aid programs; or (C) Improve instruction.

14. Contractors. The University may disclose education records to a contractor, consultant, volunteer, or other party to whom the University has outsourced institutional services or functions, provided that the outside party:

   a. Performs an institutional service or function for which University would otherwise use employees;
   b. Is under the direct control of the University with respect to the use and maintenance of education records; and
   c. Is subject to the requirements of Section 99.33(a) governing the use and redisclosure of Personally Identifiable Information from education records.
15. Registered Sex Offenders. The University may disclose education records concerning sex offenders and other individuals required to register under Section 170101 of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, 42 U.S.C. 14071, if the information was provided to the University under 42 U.S.C. 14071 and applicable Federal guidelines.

C. Disclosure with Prior Consent of the Student

In all other cases, the University will not release personally identifiable student information in education records or allow access to those records without prior consent of the student. Such consent must be written, signed and dated, and must specify the records to be disclosed, the party to whom the records are to be disclosed, and the purpose of the disclosure.

D. Records of Disclosures

The University will maintain a record of each request for access to and each disclosure of personally identifiable information from the education records of each student, as well as the names of State and local educational authorities and Federal officials and agencies listed in Section 99.31(a)(3) that may make further disclosures of personally identifiable information from the student’s education records without consent under Section 99.33(b), with the education records of the student as long as the records are maintained.

For each such request or disclosure the record must include: (1) The parties who have requested or received Personally Identifiable Information from the education records; and (2) the legitimate interests the parties had in requesting or obtaining the information.

The University will maintain with the student's education records a record for each disclosure request and each disclosure, except disclosures:

1. to the student himself or herself;
2. pursuant to the written consent of the student or the parent of a dependent student;
3. to instructional or administrative officials of the University with a legitimate educational interest;
4. of directory information; or
5. to a party seeking or receiving the records as directed by a Federal grand jury or other law enforcement subpoena when the issuing court or other issuing agency has ordered that the existence or the contents of the subpoena or the information furnished in response to the subpoena not be disclosed.

The University will record the following information when it discloses Personally Identifiable Information from education records under the health or safety emergency exception in 34 CFR Section 99.31(a)(10) and Section 99.36:

1. The articulable and significant threat to the health or safety of a student or other individuals that formed the basis for the disclosure; and
2. The parties to whom the agency or institution disclosed the information.

III. Types and Locations of Education Records

Student education records are maintained at several locations on campus. Principal locations are shown in Attachment A, together with the title of the official to be contacted for access to the records. A written request may be required. Students wishing to review their education records must make written requests to the appropriate administrator shown in Attachment A. If the student is uncertain as to the location of a particular record, a written request should be addressed to the University Registrar, listing the item or items of interest. Only those records covered by FERPA will be made available, within forty-five days of the request. Students may make copies of their records unless a financial, academic, or conduct "hold" has been placed on the record by an appropriate University official. Such copies will be made at the student's expense at the rates shown in
Attachment B to this policy. A student may review his or her student conduct records, and may take notes on their contents, but may not make copies of such records if they contain the name of another student.

IV. Requests to Amend Records
A student who believes that his or her education records are inaccurate or misleading, or that the records violate his or her privacy rights, may seek amendment of the records in accordance with Attachment C. [Note: The substantive judgment of a faculty member about a student's work, expressed in grades and/or evaluations, is not within the purview of this right to seek amendment of education records.]

If the outcome of a request for amendment is unsatisfactory, a student has the right to have a hearing, as set forth in Attachment C. The decision of the hearing panel will be final, will be based solely on the evidence presented at the hearing, and will consist of a written statement summarizing the evidence and stating the reasons for the decision, and will be delivered to all parties concerned. If the decision is in favor of the student, the education records will be corrected or amended in accordance with the decision of the hearing panel. If the decision is unsatisfactory to the student, the student may place with the education records a statement commenting on the information in the records or a statement setting forth any reasons for disagreeing with the decisions of the hearing panel. The statement will be placed in the education records, maintained as part of the student's records, and released whenever the records in question are disclosed.

V. Complaints
A student who believes that the outcome of a hearing to amend his or her education records was unfair or not in keeping with the provisions of FERPA may, in accordance with 34 CFR Section 99.64, file a complaint with The Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20202-5920 (http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html), concerning alleged failures of UNC Charlotte to comply with FERPA. A student may request, in writing, assistance from the Chancellor in filing such a complaint.

VI. Notice
The University provides official notice to students of their rights under FERPA by publishing such notice in the UNC Charlotte Catalog and posting it at the Office of the Registrar.

FERPA GUIDANCE AND RESOURCES

- **FERPA Regulations:** http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/reg/ferpa/index.html
- **FERPA at UNC Charlotte:** http://legal.uncc.edu/legal-topics#ferpa
- **FERPA Tutorial.** Learn about protecting students' privacy rights with this online tutorial for faculty and staff: http://legal.uncc.edu/legal-topics/ferpa/ferpa-tutorial
- **Directory Information Used for Commercial Purposes.** An explanation of why student information can be used for commercial purposes such as telephone solicitations for credit cards, and steps students can take to prevent the release of their personal information: https://legal.uncc.edu/legal-topics/ferpa/directory-information
- **Handling Parent Requests for Confidential Information from Student Records.** Guidelines to assist faculty members on how to handle requests from parents asking for information from student records: http://legal.uncc.edu/parentrequests.html
- **FERPA Technical Assistance Letters.** The Family Policy Compliance Office (FPCO), a division of the U.S. Department of Education, enforces FERPA and provides advice and
assistance in interpreting and complying with FERPA. In response to specific inquiries, the FPCO publishes Technical Assistance Letters providing opinions on how to interpret and apply FERPA: http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/library/index.html
QUICK TIPS FOR THE FIRST DAY
Stepping in front of a classroom full of students on the first day of class can be daunting for even the most seasoned teaching veterans. The following are some survival tips to help you get off to a good start and set the tone for the rest of the semester:

✏️ Get to know one another.

- Introduce yourself (education, background, research, teaching experience).
- Have students introduce themselves.

✏️ Introduce the subject matter and identify its value and importance.

- What is it? Explain why the subject is important.
- What are the parts of the subject?
- How is it connected to other kinds of knowledge?
- Help them understand the significance of the course.
- Identify the payoff to the student.

✏️ Set expectations.

- Recommend appropriate amounts of study and homework time.
- Stress importance of turning homework in on time.
- State your expectations about in-class behavior.
- Explore expectations the students have of the teacher and the class.
- Establish the “climate” for the class (e.g., intense, relaxed, formal, personal, humorous, serious, etc).
- Encourage discussion and active participation.

✏️ Provide administrative information.

- Go over the syllabus (if applicable).
- Identify the reading material the students will need.
- Identify the kind of homework that will be involved.
- Provide your office hours, office location, and contact information.
- Inform them how the class grade will be determined.
- Review policies regarding attendance, late papers, make-up exams, etc.

✏️ Relax and have fun!

- Sometimes students can relate to the teacher more productively if they can see him or her as a human being (i.e., as something more than just an authority figure or subject matter expert). Sharing personal stories and being able to laugh at yourself can help this process.

Adapted from First Day of Class

THE SYLLABUS
A course syllabus can be considered a contract with students. The time and care an instructor spends on syllabus preparation will reap benefits. The following tips can assist you in designing and utilizing an effective syllabus.

Why is the syllabus important?
The syllabus sets a tone for the class and establishes an early point of contact between instructor and student. A detailed course syllabus, handed out on the first day of class, gives students an immediate sense of what the course will cover, what work is expected of them, and how their performance will be evaluated.

An effective syllabus increases the likelihood of student success in your class. The syllabus guides learning in accordance with your expectations and demonstrates that you care about students’ learning. A well-prepared course syllabus shows students that you take your teaching seriously. A well-designed, detailed syllabus serves as a roadmap of the course for both instructor and student and decreases the number of problems that arise.

How should I get started in creating a syllabus?
Anticipate the general questions that will be in the minds of students and provide answers to those questions in your syllabus.

Academic departments generally have a copy of course descriptions available for instructors. In many instances department or school faculty have reached a consensus on course description, rationale, and objectives for all courses and these have been approved by the relevant curriculum committee. If there is no standard syllabus, the department can provide you with one or more course syllabi that can be used as examples of the department’s expectations regarding syllabi format and content.

A typical syllabus includes the sequence of assigned readings and activities by date and topic and provides information on course policies and procedures.

When deciding what to include keep in mind that more, rather than less material is preferred. However, avoid using lengthy prose and stick to bulleted lists or short sentences. You may wish to use outlines, charts, or diagrams to organize the information.

Does your syllabus contain the following?
~ Course number, section, title, meeting days and time, room and building.
~ Your name, title, office number, telephone, email, web address, office hours.
~ Required purchases: texts and supplies.
~ Prerequisites.
~ Course goals or objectives.
~ Schedule of assignments: readings, exams, papers and other required activities.
~ Grading standards and criteria—students should know what elements of the class will determine their final grade and what grading scale you will use in assigning the final grades.
~ Course policies regarding attendance; participation; make-ups; late assignments; tests or exams; extra credit; extensions; illness; cheating and plagiarism; and P/F, I, and W grades.
~ A disclaimer, such as “The above schedule and procedures are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.”
~ Explanation of the conceptual structure used to organize the course.
~ College policies regarding withdrawing, accommodations for students with disabilities, inclement weather, term calendar, and academic dishonesty.
~ Statement that provides an estimate of the student workload. How much time should students plan to spend on reading assignments, problem sets, lab reports or research?
~ Glossary of technical terms used in the course.
~ Statement about civility in the classroom.
~ Bibliographies of supplemental readings at a higher or lower level of difficulty in case students
find the assigned readings too complex or too simple.
~ List of campus resources for tutoring and academic support.
~ List of co-curricular activities relevant to your course (e.g., lectures, plays, events, exhibits).
~ Supplementary material to help students succeed in the course: studying, note taking additional readings or resources.
~ Statement on your beliefs about teaching, learning, and the instructional methods you will use.

Adapted from http://teachpsych.org/Resources/Documents/otrp/syllabi/exemplary_syllabi.pdf

**Syllabus Snapshot: Key Points**

**What is a syllabus?**
~ Means of communication
~ A resource
~ A schedule
~ A contract
~ An invitation
~ A lifeline
~ A map

**What does a syllabus say about its author?**
~ Attitude concerning students
~ Interest in the course/subject matter
~ Personality
~ Expectations
~ Teaching style
~ How much thought was given to the course

**Syllabus Writing Tips**
~ Put everything in writing
~ Be stricter in your syllabus than you might actually plan to be with course policies
~ Make sure instructional goals and assessments are aligned
~ Share it with other teachers and ask for feedback
~ Remember what it was like to be an undergraduate student

**Check that it:**
~ Offers students a clear and concise statement of what the course is about
~ Tells them how you are going to teach the material and why
~ Provides all the logistical information they need to engage with you and the course material
~ Explains exactly what is required of them, when, and why
~ Lays out the key elements of the social contract that you are entering into

**Syllabus Use Tips**
~ Read through all of it on the first day
~ Bring it to class every day
~ Make notes on it
~ Model good syllabus literacy (i.e., let students see you refer to it)

**Syllabus Revision Tips**
~ Review it immediately after the end of the semester
~ Ask students for feedback and suggestions

Adapted from http://www.slideshare.net/blbrunk/ta-workshop-the-syllbus

**INTERACTIVE LECTURING**

Almost all TAs will need to lecture some of the time. An effective lecture can stimulate and involve students; a boring, poorly planned lecture becomes another requirement through which students must suffer. Planning an effective lecture - one that conveys information and captures student interest -
involves analyzing both the subject matter and the learning styles of the students. Because lectures place students in a more active role, informal lectures that assume a conversational tone are often more effective in promoting student learning than formal lectures. The following suggestions work equally well in large and small classrooms:

**LECTURE SKILLS**

- **Plan ahead.**
  - Tell students beforehand to expect a lecture. Students who know what format class will take can mentally prepare for the role appropriate to that format.

- **Decide on three or four key points to cover and organize material around these themes.**
  - Students need a clear framework based on some major themes in order to grasp and retrieve the ideas. Relating points to an outline and summarizing frequently can help students organize their thinking about the topic and see how different parts of the class are connected.

- **Provide a written as well as an oral outline of your lecture.**
  - To insure that your students are paying attention, ask them to summarize the points you have made so far in the lecture. Make sure that you encourage your students to discuss the common thread that runs throughout your lectures. Ask them to determine the relationship between your current lecture and your former lectures.

- **Develop illustrations, stories, examples, and audiovisuals for major learning points.**
  - Use examples to which your students can relate (telling a story about graduate school probably will not appeal to undergraduate students). If you are lecturing on why a certain skill is important, bring in evidence. For example, if you are explaining that most jobs require effective writing skills, bring in a variety of classifieds that emphasize written communication ability. Do not expect your students to rely solely on your word.

- **Capture student interest early in the lecture.**
  - Read a powerful quotation, state a question to be answered in the lecture or a strong generalization which contradicts common thought. Plan to set the stage by telling students what will be covered in that class session (e.g., "How many of you drank a soda this week? What did you do with the can? Today we will be talking about the economic impact of recycling").
  - Prepare several introductory examples in case your students do not seem to relate well to one example. If your students look blank when you use the example, ask them whether they have experienced the situation you are describing.

- **Pace lectures in 15-20 minute segments.**
  - Constant lecturing for more than 20 minutes without a transition causes students to tune out and lose interest. Instructors do not need to be entertainers, but they do need to change their pace at regular intervals.

- **Summarize the lecture and emphasize the take-home message(s).**
  - Develop a good summary of major learning points at the end of the lecture and connect those to what’s coming next.
You can encourage students to participate by asking them to summarize for you (e.g., "Robert, state one of the key points we have been discussing today." “Jennifer, can you add to Robert's thoughts?").

- **Develop additional materials.**
  - Always prepare additional materials and activities in case the lecture ends early.

**PRESENTATION SKILLS**

- **Maintain eye contact with the class.**
  - Eye contact captures student attention. Also, it allows the faculty member to observe student body language so that a sudden increase in doodling or whispering can be used as a signal that the teacher needs to stop and ask for questions.

- **Vary vocal tone, gestures, speed of talking, and position in the room.**
  - Speak clearly and at an appropriate speed and volume.
  - Pauses or changes in voice tone for emphasis keep students involved.
  - Walking around the room also helps to capture their attention.

- **Avoid distracting gestures.**
  - Repetitive throat clearing or jiggling keys or coins in your pocket can be distracting.

- **Be enthusiastic.**
  - Effective teachers consistently show interest in and enthusiasm for both their subject matter and their students.
  - If you come in and say, "Okay, let's get this over with. I know it will be boring, but we have to get this done," your students will live up to the expectations you have set for them. They will be bored. Try to remember what made you like the subject you are teaching and share your interest with your students.

- **Model for students how to behave during a lecture.**
  - Tell students they are encouraged to ask questions either during or after the lecture.
  - Give students adequate time to thoughtfully respond to questions.
  - If you wish students to hold their questions until after you make certain points, tell them to write their questions down as they think of them.

*Adapted from [http://cte.udel.edu/](http://cte.udel.edu/)*

**ACTIVE STUDENT INVOLVEMENT**

In addition to passive student involvement, there are a number of activities that involve students in the class in a substantial and overtly active way. Techniques that teachers can use include:
**Small group discussion.**
One excellent tool to build student involvement in a class is to have students discuss a topic or question with a partner or other students. Always monitor your groups carefully to make sure they are spending time on their tasks. Walk around the room and ask each group questions about their progress. Let your groups know that you are paying attention to their behavior.

**Case studies.**
This method relies on describing a real-life situation. Students must consider the context of the problem in order to make decisions on how to solve it.

**Role playing or skills practice.**
When students need to learn a skill, have them practice it through role playing, either in front of the class or in small groups (e.g., "What would you do if you were owner of this company?").

**Simulations or structured exercises.**
Specially designed games can help students understand particular theoretical concepts. Make sure you carefully think through the mechanics of the games you choose. Consider how long the exercise will last, what problems might arise, how you will ensure students are participating, etc. Practice the game with friends or colleagues to work out the kinks before you use it in the classroom.

**In-class writing.**
Writing during class challenges students to use higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Some possible in-class writing assignments include brainstorming, journal writing, summarizing the main points of a discussion, responding to a particular issue, and writing mock essay exam answers. State how your writing assignments relate to the topics you teach. Never use in-class writing assignments to "fill up" time; students will not take future assignments seriously.

**Cooperative learning.**
In a cooperative learning activity, students work in small groups to solve a clearly-defined task. Each student in the group performs a specified role which is essential for completing the entire project. Since most jobs require employees to work together to complete tasks, the skills students use during cooperative learning activities in an academic setting transfer to real-life situations.

**Debates.**
Debates can be useful in helping students recognize and overcome the biases they bring to certain topics and in affording them opportunities to hone public speaking skills. Debates can be formal, where students present opposing sides and rebuttals, or informal/conversational, where students can interrupt with questions. To guarantee all students participate, require students in the audience to critique debates and vote both before and after the debate. If students will be debating controversial issues that may spark emotional reactions, discuss appropriate classroom behavior well before the debate begins. Remind your students to challenge ideas, rather than the personal integrity or character of their peers.

**Drama.**
Plays can be utilized to communicate much of the information that lectures typically cover. Asking your students to write and perform a play which teaches a certain concept allows students to see how
challenging teaching can be. Plays may help students remember concepts that are coupled with visual and auditory images (their classmates' acting).

**Peer teaching.**
Peer teaching in pairs or in small groups gives students a sense of autonomy and a voice in the classroom. This technique also allows more individual instruction for students who are struggling with material. Through peer teaching activities, students learn to assess their own communication skills as well as those of their peers. In addition, they learn to offer positive criticism and appropriate feedback to their classmates.

**Puzzle classrooms.**
This variant of peer teaching assigns different subject matter to each group and gives them the responsibility of teaching it to the rest of their classmates. Each group has a piece of the puzzle; when the pieces are all put together, everyone should see the whole picture. This technique is a good way to use extra readings that don't fit into the syllabus or to make use of short journal articles and contemporary accounts of the subject.

Assign each group a different article or different parts of the same article. Give them the task of reading and discussing the article together, then writing a summary to present to the whole class. Give each group time to present their summaries and answer questions from the rest of the class.

**Peer editing.**
Another form of peer teaching involves peer editing of student papers. This strategy forces students to assess the needs and biases of different audiences, by emphasizing writing as a process. Peer editing is also a successful time-management strategy for faculty and TAs as it can reduce time spent on evaluating papers. While they still must evaluate final papers, faculty and TAs can teach students how to critique first, second, and third drafts of papers.

Before you allow students to peer edit, discuss the criteria for evaluating student writing. Demonstrate the types of comments you expect students to make on their peers' papers. In addition, give them written examples of positive and negative criticism. After you have demonstrated how to critique writing, provide students with explicit directions for the peer editing process.

*Adapted from* [http://www.cte.udel.edu/](http://www.cte.udel.edu/)

**GRADING**

Grading can be a constructive process both for you and your students. It can give them the opportunity to improve their knowledge and writing skills, and it can give you feedback on your teaching and
evaluation methods. By being consistent and fair, you can minimize the inevitably unpleasant aspects of passing judgment on someone's efforts.

Be fair and reasonable and maintain grading standards which you can defend if challenged. In your syllabus, be very clear about your grading policies and criteria (*note: if you are a TA to faculty, you will likely follow the policies and criteria of their syllabus*). It is also helpful to specify the types of tests, quizzes, and assignments along with point distributions, test dates, and due dates of projects and papers. The more details you give about your grading criteria, the fewer questions you will receive from students throughout the semester.

**TIPS FOR TESTS**

- **Construct the answer key prior to giving the test.**
  - The best way to do this is take the test yourself.
  - Analyze answers to ensure question clarity.

- **Assign points in advance.**
  - Assign points and partial credit based on your key prior to looking at student tests. Include the point value of each question on a test so that students can budget their time accordingly.

**TIPS FOR PAPERS AND ESSAY EXAMS**

- **Papers: Good Feedback Enhances Learning.**
  - **Make written comments.**
    - There is nothing more arbitrary to a student than a paper based back with just a grade on it, and either no comments or just perfunctory ones.
    - Write comments judiciously and legibly.
    - Do not obliterate the text: use the back or append a note.
    - Try to say enough so that the student has a reasonably good chance of doing better next time.
    - If you find that you are saying similar things to several students, prepare a handout on whatever the students are stumbling over (e.g., how to write a review, how to develop an argument, etc).
  
  - **Judge on content, organization, and presentation.**
    - Often it useful to the student if you evaluate the paper in each of these areas and assign a mark on the basis of some combination of these factors. Some teachers find it helpful to ask students to write papers twice.
      - The first draft is submitted and subjected to constructive criticism on both content and style.
      - The second draft is graded and usually shows some kind of improvement that is quite satisfying to student and teacher alike.
  
  - **Work to maintain objectivity.**
    - Both papers and essay exams involve a lot of subjective judgment – strive to maintain consistency.
You are more likely to be stringent with the first few papers you read than with the rest, and less likely to be careful about comments and such when you are tired.

- To avoid such problems, read a few papers before you actually start grading to get an idea of the range of quality, and stop grading when you get tired or distracted due to boredom.
- When you start again, read over the last couple of papers you graded to make sure you were fair.

Essay Exams: One question at a time.

- Plan ways to divide grading with other TAs.
  - Usually the problem here is how to wade through all those essays while remaining both consistent and rational.
  - When there is a number of TAs assigned to a course, the course supervisor can divide the workload.
    - If each TA has had a section and all of you have covered the same basic material, then you may prefer to mark the exams of the students in your own section.
      - The problem here, of course, is that objectivity may be hard to achieve since you may feel close to, or even partial toward, your own students.
      - Grading question-by-question rather than student-by-student may help as it will allow you to give credit for material that you presented in a section and it will give you feedback on whether the ideas you have emphasized have actually registered.
      - At the same time, you should be guided by a grading standard that has been mutually agreed upon by all TAs and the supervising faculty.
  - If each TA has dealt with specialized topics in lecture and a section, then it is probably better to split the exam questions up so that each TA grades questions about what he or she taught.
    - Dividing the exam questions this way ensures that each question will be marked consistently across the class.
    - However, reading 200 answers to the same question one after the other has its drawbacks: it can be very tedious and affect your grading range.
    - This is less likely if you pace yourself, mark questions that you are interested in, and switch questions every once in awhile.

- Get together to resolve difficulties.
  - When the exams have been marked, get together with the other TAs to discuss and resolve any problems you have encountered.
  - Then add up the total scores, check your addition (this saves a lot of trouble later), and plot the distribution. Now you are ready to present the results to the supervising professor or to assign the grades yourself.

Problem Sets, Short Answer Questions, and Multiple Choice.

- Divide exam grading.
  - Although these tests usually take longer to make up than the others, they are easier to grade. But problems can still arise. For the same reasons as those mentioned above, it is
often a good idea to divide the exam questions among the TAs. Consistency is more likely and deviations easier to spot.

- **Be prepared for alternative answers.**
  - You may think that you have written the perfect question with only one correct answer, but you must always be prepared for alternative answers. In the case of multiple choice questions, for example, if the students are doing worse than chance on a particular question, it is likely that the question was poorly worded. In this case you must either give credit for more than one answer or toss the question out (e.g., by giving everyone credit).

 adapted from http://cte.udel.edu/

PROCTORING
A proctor is an individual who is responsible for monitoring students while taking exams and ensuring proper exam protocol and etiquette.

Before Proctoring an Exam:

- Know how long the test will last. Make sure you are available to proctor the entire exam.
- Ask the course instructor what is expected of you and what policies and protocol you will have to enforce.

Before the Exam is Distributed:

- Make sure you have all the necessary exam materials (e.g., test questions, Scantron sheets, extra pencils, etc).
- Some courses might ask you to identify each student by photo ID.
- Make students aware of the test policies and protocol. Verbally restating these policies at the beginning of the exam will help avoid misunderstandings.
- If it is a closed book exam, verify that cell phones, MP3 players, computers, reference books, notes, backpacks, purses, hats, headphones, etc are turned off and put away.
- Affirm that the test environment is a quiet area with adequate space and comfort for taking the exam.
- Try to space students out in an effort to reduce temptation to cheat and to give yourself enough room to move around the class.
- Check with the course instructor to make sure testing accommodations have been made for students with documented disabilities.

During the Exam:

- Try not to have the students leave the room except for emergencies.
- Do not simply read and sit at the front of the classroom. Walk up and down the aisles and scan the room to discourage cheating.
- If you suspect a student is cheating, first watch them closely and take notes. Then hover near them a minute. This discreet gesture may warn the student and discourage this behavior. Try not to publicly embarrass the student.
- Attempt to answer student questions in a minimally disruptive way. In a small or cramped room, having students come to the front of the room to ask the proctor questions may be best.
- Keep students aware of how much time they have left by either keeping a “countdown” on the board or giving verbal warning such as "the exam is about halfway over" or "there are 10 minutes left."
- For large enrollment classes, when the allotted time for the exam has ended, tell students to finish writing their last sentence and pass the exam to one side of the room for collection.

Adapted from http://www.cte.udel.edu/

e-LEARNING AT UNC CHARLOTTE
UNC Charlotte provides a Learning Management System (LMS) that offers electronic methods and e-Learning tools to deliver information, receive feedback, and communicate with students. This includes web-based learning, computer-based learning, virtual classrooms, and digital collaboration. The “tools” listed below can be utilized by TAs to deliver information to, assess progress, communicate with, or receive feedback from their students:

**Canvas**
Canvas is the learning management system (LMS) at UNC Charlotte. A learning management system creates an online presence for each course section in a given academic semester.
http://canvas.uncc.edu/

**MyEvals**
Web-based course evaluations are electronic questionnaires requiring a written answer or selected response to a series of questions in order to evaluate the instruction of a given course. These evaluations are a means to produce useful as well as timely feedback, which instructors and their departments can use to improve quality of instruction. UNC Charlotte has engaged a third party—Campus Labs, formerly StudentVoice—to administer Web-based course evaluations to students. Campus Labs, in partnership with the Center for Teaching and Learning, provides assistance to participating faculty and staff and uses email communications and a persistent series of follow-up reminders to prompt students to respond to their course evaluations.
http://myevals.uncc.edu/

**VeriCite**
VeriCite is plagiarism prevention system that makes it easy to identify students who submit unoriginal work. It acts as a powerful deterrent to stop plagiarism before it starts.
http://teaching.uncc.edu/academic-technologies/vericite

The university’s Center for Teaching and Learning offers a variety of web-conferencing tools. For more information, see http://teaching.uncc.edu/academic-technologies

For additional assistance, please contact the Center for Teaching & Learning (http://teaching.uncc.edu/) or the Information and Technology Services Help Center (http://www.helpcenter.uncc.edu/).

**USE OF UNIVERSITY LABORATORY FACILITIES**
UNIVERSITY POLICY #313

Purpose

University laboratories are provided to serve the instructional and research missions of the University. The purposes of this policy are to assure that University laboratories are used only in services of those missions and to avoid unnecessary loss or injury resulting from use of University laboratories by individuals who do not have appropriate training, supervision, or authorization.

Definition of "University Laboratories"

The laboratories subject to this policy are listed in Attachment A, which also designates the department chair or other official responsible for authorizing access to such laboratories.

Laboratories

The use of University laboratories for any purpose is limited to individuals in one or more of the following categories:

(a) Faculty members and instructors of The University of North Carolina at Charlotte including graduate and undergraduate teaching assistants, using laboratories to carry out their teaching, research, or service obligations.

(b) Permanent and part-time employees, including work study students and part-time student workers, who perform duties in the laboratories related to the University’s mission.

(c) Students currently enrolled in courses at The University of North Carolina at Charlotte who are using laboratories to carry out work which is part of a course in which they are currently enrolled.

(d) Undergraduate or graduate students at The University of North Carolina at Charlotte who have received written authorization to carry out University-related work from the department chair assigned responsibility for such authorization.

(e) Any other person who has received the authorization of a department chair to use a particular laboratory.

The department chair’s written authorization shall specify:

1. the particular laboratory,
2. the duration of the authorization, and
3. any special terms or conditions of use.

Any person who believes that one or more persons is using any University laboratory without appropriate authorization shall report the matter promptly to the chair of the affected department.

Adapted from http://legal.uncc.edu/policies/up-313

UNC CHARLOTTE LAB SAFETY RULES
Check with your specific department to be aware of their lab rules and regulations.

**Smoking**
Smoking is not allowed anywhere in campus buildings.

**Clothing**
Clothing worn in the laboratory should not be loose, skimpy, torn or flammable. Such clothing does not provide adequate protection from chemical, thermal, or mechanical hazards. Laboratory aprons or coats may be worn to protect exposed arms and legs.

**Shoes**
Shoes must be worn at all times in the laboratories. Sandals provide little protection from spills, broken glass, or falling objects. Sandals should **not** be worn.

**Eyewear**
Safety glasses are **MANDATORY** in all labs where material is being mixed, heated, modified, or otherwise manipulated. (Computer “labs” are not considered material labs.) Safety glasses are available in the bookstore. If safety glasses are purchased elsewhere they must conform to Federal Safety Standard ANSI Z87.1. Most prescription glasses **do not** meet this standard.

**Gloves**
While there are many experiments that do not require gloves, it is recommended that all students purchase gloves so that they will be available when safety dictates their use. Students may be required to purchase gloves.

**Insurance**
If an ambulance is used to transport a student to the hospital as a result of an accident which occurs during a period of required instruction the cost will be paid by UNC Charlotte. However, **HOSPITAL COSTS ARE THE SOLE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT**. Students are encouraged to acquire health insurance since these charges are **not** covered in the Student Health Policy. Contact the Student Health Center for additional details (704-687-7400).

**Injuries**
All accidents/injuries must be reported to the Student Health Center. All eye injuries must be treated at the Student Health Center.

**Emergencies**
All emergencies (fires, accidents, spills and medical) should be handled through Campus Police: 911 or 7-2200 (using on campus phones) (704) 687-2200 (using off campus or cellular phones)
LABORATORY SAFETY TIPS AND RESOURCES

ALL students can and should learn science by conducting laboratory investigations. The University of Washington has developed guidelines for making science labs accessible to students with disabilities:

For information on the proper disposal of laboratory materials, please refer to the UNC Charlotte Environmental Health & Safety website: http://safety.uncc.edu/.

ALL students should learn to PROCEED with CAUTION!

Teach your students how to be responsible. Then, give your students the opportunity to be responsible. Before the lab, provide time and guidance for students to practice the safety precautions you expect them to follow during the lab.

Devise a fun creative activity so students can practice and remember. For instance, YOU can demonstrate the procedure using both good and bad practices and have each student remark on one good or bad practice.

A Baker's Dozen Safety Rules

1. **No eating or drinking in the lab.** This means no gum, cough drops, applying lip balm, chewing hair ends, holding a pencil in your mouth, nail-biting, etc.

2. **Handle everything as if it's pathogenic.** Use good microbiological practice. Soil and water samples that students try to culture in class or for a science project should be handled with standard microbiological practice under adult supervision. Autoclave sterilize for 0.5 hr or flood with freshly prepared 10% bleach for 0.5 hr and rinse before disposing in the regular trash.

3. **Keep flame and flammable solutions far apart.** Set up your classroom so that if a flame is to be used, it is located far from the exit, so most students are closer to the exit. Have any open alcohol beakers far from the flame --- for instance on another workbench --- so some of the alcohol evaporates while the tool is brought to the flame.

4. **Keep electrical equipment far from water.** Keep areas around electrical equipment dry (aquaria excluded, of course!).

28
5. **Clean spills from the outside in.** Apply paper towels over the spill, then, carefully starting from the outside, wipe in.

6. **Use proper safety protection --- fume hood, goggles, gloves.** NOTE that latex allergies can develop!

7. **Always clean glassware before you use it** to be sure that residues are cleaned away. Add at least some water first, before adding any liquid or solid solutes.

8. Be careful weighing out chemicals and reagents. **Do NOT return excess materials to the stock container.**

9. **Check all waterbaths with a thermometer before** putting your hand into the water.

10. **All sharps (needles, razors, pins, toothpicks) should be discarded in a sturdy container.** A coffee can with plastic lid works well. Cut a small slit in the lid and make a bright clear label for the can.

11. **Science and writing go hand-in-hand;** have students keep a proper laboratory notebook or write Standard Operating Procedures.

12. **Be prepared.** Wash your hands before AND after lab work.

13. **Learn how the professionals learn about safety.** For more safety tips, please visit the [Lab Safety Institute](http://carnegiescience.edu/first_light_case/horn/labsafety.html).

*Adapted from: [http://carnegiescience.edu/first_light_case/horn/labsafety.html](http://carnegiescience.edu/first_light_case/horn/labsafety.html)*
THE JUGGLING ACT:
THE TA AS STUDENT, RESEARCHER, AND TEACHER

Striking and maintaining a balance between these demands probably remains the most difficult aspect of a graduate student's life. Each requires different skills and frames of mind. In addition, you must attend to your domestic necessities and locate in all this, the time for some semblance of an adequate (if not “normal”) social existence.

This is in many respects a juggling act -- and you cannot afford to neglect or drop anything. You obviously cannot ignore or discount the importance of your assistantship. It is the source of your financial support, as well as a commitment to your students. On the other hand, it's entirely possible to become so absorbed in your teaching that it becomes an excuse not to study or progress toward working as a researcher. Both extremes can seriously jeopardize your position, as well as your personal and psychological well-being.

You are first and foremost a student, and you should not lose sight of this fact. Your graduate school career must remain a priority. This can be more difficult than it sounds as class preparations, meeting with students, grading, and simply leading your classes several times each week all occur with unfailing regularity.

You must learn to budget your time between teaching obligations and your own work. You may have periods during the semester when sleeping, eating, personal relationships, and your own work all seem impossible to fit into one day. There may be scheduling conflicts between your teaching times and the time scheduled for a course you want to take for your graduate program. Proper planning and budgeting of time can alleviate all these problems; for extra help, get to know older TAs in your department and ask them for advice on how to prioritize tasks and time.

Many TAs have a tendency to become overly serious about their teaching and devote too much time to the process. Often, because it is enjoyable, it becomes easier to devote time and energy to teaching than to the demands of a thesis or dissertation.

Establish a "time-log" with deadlines for the week, month, and semester. Being able to keep ahead of deadlines and plan your time both for your own graduate student work as well as your teaching, is the first step toward success and peace of mind. Don't procrastinate and let work pile up; don't get yourself into an either/or situation (do I grade these 40 compositions or finish my own paper for tomorrow?).

The demands of the multiple roles of graduate student, teaching assistant, and novice researcher are many, and the rewards may seem too few and far between. It all reduces to a reasonably simple suggestion: be patient with yourself and realize that you can't master it all perfectly the first time. The passage of time and the accumulation of experience will make it all seem much less awesome! If this Handbook has contributed toward that end, we will be gratified.

Adapted from http://www.cs.umd.edu/Grad/ta.handbook.shtml
THE TA TOP TEN: WHAT I WISH I HAD KNOWN

1. Practice presenting course content to the students.
   Practicing will increase your confidence in front of the classroom.

2. Keep in mind that not all students may be really interested in the course content and care about the course.
   Try to make the course interesting by engaging students actively and relating the content to their daily lives, but also remember: you cannot please everyone.

3. Recognize that you will make mistakes.
   Be the first person to laugh at yourself when you make a mistake and then try to correct it in the next class period.

4. Maintain some professional distance in your relationships with students.
   When you encounter your students socially, be friendly yet professional. Keep in mind you are their TA.

5. Clarify your instructional roles and responsibilities so you know what you are accountable for.
   Many times course policies are designed by faculty and you will need to reinforce those policies, not defend them.

6. Talk with your supervising faculty on a regular basis about the course so students receive the same, consistent message.
   Students become concerned when they perceive that the faculty and the TA do not communicate with each other.

7. Get faculty advice when you are having difficulties with students or when you are observing problematic student behavior.

8. Take time to listen to the students and their concerns.
   Students appreciate your caring about them. Familiarize yourself with various support services on campus in order to refer students to for help.

9. Take your TA responsibilities seriously.
   Initially, you may underestimate the amount of time it takes you to get everything accomplished. Take the time necessary to prepare and fulfill your role. Seek other TAs' advice on how they handle the workload.

10. Try to balance your time between your teaching life, your course work, and your personal life.
    Teaching is not 100% of your life. Remember you are a student too, so pay attention to your personal life.

Adapted from http://cte.udel.edu/
INTERACTING WITH STUDENTS
UNC CHAPEL HILL DIVERSITY

UNC Chapel Hill is committed to equality of educational opportunity and does not discriminate against applicants, students, or employees based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, or disability. In keeping with this commitment, UNC Chapel Hill actively seeks to promote diversity in its educational environment through its recruitment, enrollment, and hiring practices.

It is our obligation at UNC Chapel Hill to provide meaningful inclusion and equality of all groups representing the diversity of contemporary society. This is necessary in order to better serve our mission as a publicly supported institution with a responsibility to provide access to higher education for all who seek it. This commitment includes valuing the presence of students, faculty, and support personnel who come from diverse groups. Factors that contribute to diversity include without limitation: age, economic circumstances, ethnic identification, family educational attainment, disability, gender, geographic origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, social position, and veteran status.

In order to do this, we are dedicated to a policy of recruiting and maintaining a diverse population that is representative of the community we serve. Research has shown that diversity in a university student body provides the following educational benefits:

- Students learn better when their learning takes place in a setting where they interact with other students who are different than themselves.
- In environments that provide diverse points of view, students develop the ability to understand ideas and feelings about others that lead to creative solutions to societal problems.
- Students develop a greater understanding that group differences are compatible with societal unity leading to higher levels of citizenship.
- “Being with others of different races actually seems to make people more receptive to new knowledge.”
- Desegregated learning environments are more resource rich.

By encouraging interaction among a diverse university populace and interweaving them into the fabric of UNC Chapel Hill, we can provide richer educational experiences and intellectual challenges to better serve a diverse, multicultural society. Only in this way, can UNC Chapel Hill educate and influence students who live and work in the twenty-first century.

For more information http://diversity.uncc.edu/
CREATING INCLUSIVE COLLEGE CLASSROOMS

Inclusive classrooms are classrooms in which instructors and students work together to create and sustain an environment in which everyone feels safe, supported, and encouraged to express her or his views and concerns. In these classrooms, the content is explicitly viewed from the multiple perspectives and varied experiences of a range of groups. Content is presented in a manner that reduces all students’ experiences of marginalization and, wherever possible, helps students understand individuals’ experiences, values, and perspectives influence how they construct knowledge in any field or discipline.

Instructors in inclusive classrooms use a variety of teaching methods in order to facilitate the academic achievement of all students. Inclusive classrooms are places in which thoughtfulness, mutual respect, and academic excellence are valued and promoted. When TAs are successful in creating inclusive classrooms, this makes great strides towards realizing UNC Charlotte’s commitment to teaching and to diversity and excellence in practice.

In an inclusive classroom, TAs attempt to be responsive to students on both an individual and a cultural level. The inclusiveness of a classroom will depend upon the kinds of interactions that occur between and among you and the students. These interactions are influenced by:

- the course content;
- your assumptions and awareness of potential multicultural issues in classroom situations;
- your planning of class sessions, including the ways students are grouped for learning;
- your knowledge about the diverse backgrounds of your students; and
- your decisions, comments, and behaviors during the process of teaching.

Choosing Course Content

Some TAs have a great deal of control over the content of a course, especially the content of their section, while others do not. It is helpful for students to know the extent to which you, as a TA, have control. If students criticize or make suggestions about course content, texts, material, etc., over which you do not have control, you should convey their comments to the faculty member in charge of the course and encourage them to do the same.

When you have some control over the content (including books, coursepacks, and other materials), the following two questions and their related suggestions should be considered:

**Whose voices, perspectives, and scholarship are being represented?**

- Include multiple perspectives on each topic of the course rather than focusing solely on a single perspective.
- Include, as much as possible, materials written or created by people of different backgrounds and/or perspectives.

**How are the perspectives and experiences of various groups being represented?**
- Include materials (readings, videotapes, etc.) that address underrepresented groups' experiences in ways that do not trivialize or marginalize these groups' experiences.
- Be aware of and responsive to the portrayal of certain groups in course content.
- Avoid dichotomizing issues of race into black and white. It is essential to recognize and acknowledge that there are other groups for whom racial issues are relevant (Arab Americans, Asians Americans, Latinos/as, Native Americans, etc.).

**Increasing Awareness of Problematic Assumptions**

An important early step in developing competencies to address multicultural issues in the classroom is to raise your awareness of those issues and how they might manifest in classrooms. In this process, it is useful to give consideration to assumptions that you may hold about the learning behaviors and capacities of your students. You may also hold assumptions that are tied to students' social identity characteristics (gender, race, ethnicity, disability, language, sexual orientation, etc.). These assumptions may manifest themselves in your interactions with students. You should consider getting to know your students to be an ongoing process related to developing a positive classroom climate that promotes excellence.

Below are examples of assumptions, how they might be dealt with, and how you might learn more about your students through the process of addressing these types of assumptions.

➢ **Assumption:** Students will seek help when they are struggling with a class.

Students do not always feel comfortable asking for help. In order to address this issue, you can request meetings with students as problems arise or make office hour meetings part of the course requirement (e.g., each student will meet with you after receiving his or her grade on the first assignment). The latter is an ideal method because it allows you the opportunity to meet one-on-one with every student.

➢ **Assumption:** Students from certain groups are not intellectual, are irresponsible, are satisfied with below average grades, lack ability, have high ability in particular subject areas, etc.

It is essential that instructors have high expectations for all students. For example, if a student earns a grade of C or lower, you should inform the student of the need for a meeting to discuss his or her performance. If students are absent, you should show concern about their absence when they return by asking if things are all right with them. It is important for you to make initial contact with students; however, at some point, students need to take the initiative.

➢ **Assumption:** Students from certain backgrounds (e.g., students from urban or rural areas, students who speak with an accent, students from specific racial or ethnic groups) are poor writers.

While the degree of writing preparation varies across the US public school system, students' regional background or group memberships do not serve as accurate predictors of the degree of preparation they
received. Furthermore, you need to be sensitive to cultural differences in writing styles, recognizing that many standards apply to the evaluation of good writing.

➢ **Assumption:** Poor writing suggests limited intellectual ability.

It is misleading to equate students' writing skills with their intellectual ability. Students have varying degrees of experience with "academic" writing. You have a responsibility to be explicit about what is expected and share with students examples of good writing done by other students.

➢ **Assumption:** Older students or students with physical disabilities are slower learners and require more attention from the instructor.

While there are many cultural assumptions about links between age or physical ability and one’s intellectual capacity, these characteristics are not typically linked. Most classes do include some students who require extra attention from the instructor but such students cannot be readily identifiable by physical characteristics.

➢ **Assumption:** Students whose cultural affiliation is tied to non-English speaking groups, are not native English speakers or are bilingual.

If you feel that it is important to know whether students speak or understand other languages, you should ask this question of all students, not just those to whom you think the question applies. If there are concerns about students' academic writing skills, it would be best to meet with the students during office hours to discuss their work. One of the questions you could ask as part of your data gathering protocol is, "What were the languages spoken in the environment in which you were raised?"

Following this question with appropriate probes would give you an opportunity to find out whether students are native speakers of English and, if not, how recently they became fluent. It is important to identify the source of students' difficulty with writing (or speaking), because identification of the factors that contribute to the problem will influence the actions taken to address the problem.

➢ **Assumption:** Students who are affiliated with a particular group (gender, race, ethnicity, etc.) are experts on issues related to that group and feel comfortable being seen as information sources to the rest of the class and the instructor who are not members of that group. AND/OR European American students do not have opinions about issues of race or ethnicity and members of other groups do have opinions about these issues.

One way to effectively deal with this set of assumptions is to pose questions about particular groups to the entire class rather than presuming that members of a certain group are the only ones who can reply. It would be best to let the class know that if any individual has experiences or information that she or he thinks would be beneficial to the class, she or he should inform you about such experiences or information. If you would like to hear from a particular student on a specific issue that relates to group membership, you should speak with the student privately instead of calling on the student when the issue arises in class.
➢ **Assumption:** All students from a particular group share the same view on an issue, and their perspective will necessarily be different from the majority of the class who are not from that group.

You can regularly encourage all students to express different perspectives on issues, and you should not express surprise when people from the same "group" share opposing views or have a view consistent with the majority of the class. It is important to understand, however, that some students who are part of a "group" will feel hesitant to share views publicly that differ from the "anticipated group position" for fear of being admonished by members of their "group" or isolated from the "group" (e.g., an African American student expressing an anti-affirmative action view).

➢ **Assumption:** In their reading, students will relate only to characters who resemble them.

This would most frequently occur in courses in which students read literature. Instructors should be careful not to treat with suspicion comments that suggest affiliation with a character that does not resemble the student in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, etc. For example, if a Caucasian student claims to feel her or his experiences resonate with an African American character, you should not dismiss her or his response, but probe for further explication about why she or he feels the connection.

➢ **Assumption:** Students from certain groups are more likely to: be argumentative or conflictual during class discussions OR not participate in class discussions OR bring a more radical agenda to class discussions.

Participation levels vary across all students, with some students more comfortable in listening roles and others more comfortable taking the lead in class discussions. While these discussion styles may be influenced by students’ past experiences, families of origin, and cultural reference points, a priori assumptions about student participation may hinder class discussion. It is important that you encourage participation among all students while also respecting the differences among students that will emerge.

**Planning Considerations**

There are a number of multicultural issues that should be taken into account during the planning process for any class. You need to become comfortable with your lack of knowledge about certain groups and seek ways to inform yourself (e.g., through experiences, readings, and/or conversations with faculty, peers, and students who are knowledgeable about the particular groups). Below you will find examples of the sort of issues that might be considered in order to increase your awareness of multicultural issues during the planning process.

**Accommodations**

Students may have religious holidays and practices that require accommodations at certain times during the academic calendar year. Students with disabilities may also require special accommodations (please see UNC Charlotte’s legal policy on disability and religious accommodations for more information: [https://legal.uncc.edu/legal-topics/classroom-policies-and-practices/basic-legal-guidelines-setting-classroom-policies](https://legal.uncc.edu/legal-topics/classroom-policies-and-practices/basic-legal-guidelines-setting-classroom-policies)).
Attendance

Students who are different in a highly visible way (women who wear Islamic clothing, African Americans or Asian Americans in a predominantly white class, students who use wheelchairs, etc.) can be penalized because of their visibility. In particular, absences of such students may be noticed more easily. For this reason, it is important to record all students’ attendance at every class session (whether or not you use the information) rather than collecting a mental record of absences of highly visible students that may inadvertently and unfairly affect how you evaluate them.

Grading

When you use different criteria to evaluate the performance of students from certain groups, this can create tensions in the class because students tend to share their grades. Furthermore, if these criteria are applied based on assumptions you have made rather than on accurate information regarding the students, some students may be unfairly penalized. You should ask all students about their prior experiences with the course content and should inform students of the criteria by which their performance will be assessed along with the rationale for differential evaluations if such a practice will be used.

Cultural Reference Points

Instructors who use examples drawn only from their own experience may fail to reach all students in the class. Given that examples are designed to clarify key points, you should collect examples from a variety of cultural reference points. Ask about students’ familiarity with an example before discussing it or ask students to produce examples of their own. Explain examples fully in order to reach a diverse classroom.

Instructional Strategies

Students bring an array of learning styles to a class. If you rely on a small repertoire of instructional strategies, you may provide effective instruction for only a small subset of your class. You should become aware of your preferred instructional strategies and consider alternative techniques that will help your students learn more effectively.

Controversial Topics

Class sessions that address controversial topics may result in any of the following unintended outcomes: (a) altercations between individual students or groups of students, (b) silence from students who feel intimidated or fear conflict, (c) the assertion and perpetuation of false stereotypes or problematic assumptions, or (d) the expression of offensive speech. You should plan strategies that provide structure for these discussions and that foster students’ ability to express their own ideas well while also increasing their ability to listen to and learn from others. In the interest of free speech, students should be encouraged to honestly share their views during discussions. Be prepared, however, to correct stereotypes and challenge students’ assumptions when comments are shared.
Establishing agreed upon guidelines early in the class can be an important aspect of productive class discussions. If such rules were not established at the beginning of the semester, it is necessary to establish them when a problem becomes apparent.

**Grouping Students for Learning**

There are a variety of reasons for using cooperative groups (to facilitate student learning, to improve interpersonal relationships among students, to foster responsibility for students' own learning and the learning of others, etc.). Because group composition can have a significant impact on group functioning, you should use a variety of methods to create groups. Such methods include: assigning students to groups (e.g., make heterogeneous groups across certain characteristics such as gender, race, and/or level of achievement in a particular discipline, or by where students live), randomly assigning students (e.g., ask students to draw a piece of paper with a group number from a bag), or allowing students to form their own groups. This latter method should be used sparingly, if possible, as it can consciously or unconsciously be used to create or reinforce social group differences within the class.

**Getting To Know Students**

Part of good teaching involves spending some time focusing on building relationships with your students. You may have more positive experiences with students if you invest some time and energy into becoming informed and more aware of issues affecting students of various backgrounds. Make use of office hours, written assignments, and class discussion to further develop your knowledge about and connections to students.

**Decisions, Comments, and Behaviors During the Teaching Process**

If you are responsible for teaching sections of a course, it is essential to understand that even when you have limited input into course content, you have much control over how that content gets taught. Students bring very different backgrounds, knowledge, and learning styles to a particular course. There are multiple interpretations of content constructed by individual students during the learning process. The following points address issues that may arise during the teaching process.

**Working with Course Content**

- Examine course content for inaccurate information and the absence of relevant perspectives.
- Be careful about the comments made during class lectures, discussions, etc.

**Student Critiques of Course Content**

- Create a classroom climate that encourages questions about course content.
- Make decisions about when to devote unanticipated time to class discussions to deal with issues raised by students that pertain to content or process.
- Be open to students' reactions to course material, even when you feel uncomfortable with the manner in which they are expressed.
- Give serious consideration to students' requests for alternative materials when materials currently used inaccurately represent students' social identity groups or cultures.
Responding to Student Identities

- Invite all students to contribute to class discussion, even if you assume that the discussion is more relevant to some students than others.
- Be sensitive to the experiences of visibly underrepresented students in your class.

Inequities in the Classroom

- Be aware of gender dynamics in classroom discussions.
- Be careful not to respond in ways that students might interpret as dismissals.

Conflict in the Classroom

- Respond to classroom conflict in a manner that helps students become aware of the "learning moment" this conflict provides.
- Recognize student fears and concerns about conflict. Students enter a class with different levels of experience and comfort with conflict.
- Maintain the role of facilitator.

Adapted from http://www.crlt.umich.edu/gsis/f6
A POSITIVE CLASSROOM CLIMATE

What an instructor does in the first few class sessions sets the tone for the rest of the semester. We know students learn best in student-centered classrooms where they are actively involved not only with the subject matter but also with their classmates and their teachers. What can teachers do to create an environment in which students are willing to be active participants?

**Recognize individual differences.**
Effective teaching is being responsive to the individual needs of students. There are simply too many differences among students for a teacher to be able to teach all of them the same thing at the same time. Quality teaching entails being sensitive to individual differences in preferred learning styles by varying the rate, amount, nature or content of the instruction given.

**Learn names.**
Calling students by name signifies a positive relationship between teachers and students.

**Arrange seating.**
Make sure that the classroom is set up in a way that is conducive to a positive climate. Asking students to come to the front of the room so that they are close to each other encourages more participation than an arrangement with students scattered around the classroom. For a small discussion section, it may be useful to arrange chairs in a circle or a U-shape.

**Establish expectations.**
Tell students what your expectations are the first day of class. When teachers clearly and consistently communicate their expectations for student behavior, they help ease student anxiety. Tell your students that you expect them to come to class prepared, to ask questions and to discuss the material on a daily basis. Encourage your students to help develop ground rules for discussion, such as: *no personal attacks, one person talks at a time, and everyone has a right to his or her opinion.*

**Make yourself available.**
Come before and stay after class to talk to students. This time can allow the teacher to build individual relationships with students. Students may feel more comfortable asking questions, expressing their concerns, or seeing you about difficulties on an individual basis. Tell your students in advance if you have to rush off to another class directly after the one(s) you teach so that they will not feel snubbed if you do not have time to answer their questions after class. Be sure to tell them when and where they can reach you to ask additional questions.

**Encourage students.**
Create a safe environment for student participation. Teachers can foster a safe climate by ensuring that they never ridicule a student's questions or remarks. It takes only one or two instances of "That's a stupid comment. Haven't you prepared for class?" to discourage participation. You can disagree with a student without attacking him or her personally (e.g., "As I see it ....").
Make frequent eye contact with your students. Move around the room often and offer words of praise such as “good” or “interesting” to participating students. Refer to student contributions in your remarks with phrases such as “As Sally said…” or “Would anyone like to respond to Joe’s point?” Use student points in your remarks (e.g., “As Mike pointed out…”).
Begin teaching the subject matter the first day of class. Because your class roster is not stable the first day of class, it is tempting to do little more than administrative housekeeping. However, if you do not take the subject matter seriously, neither will your students. If you want a classroom where students come to work diligently, you need to begin teaching the content the first day of class.

Adapted from http://www.texascollegeonline.net

Classroom Management Tips

1. Start class on time, sending a message that being there is important. If a student arrives late several days in a row, say something before it becomes a habit.

2. End class on time. If you begin letting students out early, they will begin routinely packing up their backpacks before class is over; if you go over time on a regular basis your students will become resentful.

3. Announce your office hours and keep them faithfully. Being accessible can prevent many problems.

4. Set policies at the beginning of the course. In particular, make sure attendance and grading policies are clear, preferably in writing.

5. Be conscious of signs of racial or sexual harassment, whether by you, towards you, or towards other members of the class. Make it clear by your words and actions that put-downs or derogatory comments about any groups for whatever reason are simply not acceptable.

6. Refer students with psychological, emotional, academic, or financial trouble to the appropriate counselors. You can be sympathetic and supportive, but becoming a student's counselor can cause problems.

7. When acting as a teaching assistant, involve yourself only to the extent that you are expected to be involved. If the professor you are assisting is in charge of determining grades and you receive complaints about grades, have the students deal with the professor. Do not foster a "me against you" attitude, and do not side with the students against the professor.

Adapted from https://teaching.uncc.edu/podcast/classroom-management
REFERENCE GUIDE
FOR WORKING WITH STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

This guide provides UNC Charlotte faculty and staff with a brief overview of the rights, responsibilities, accommodations, and legislation involved in working with students with disabilities.

UNC Charlotte is fortunate to have a diverse student body that enriches the classroom experience for all. In fact, the university’s mission statement to “…extend educational opportunities and to ensure success for qualified students of diverse backgrounds…” embraces the value of diversity. Students with disabilities are part of UNC Charlotte’s diverse student body. They meet the same academic requirements for admission as their non-disabled peers. Also, students with disabilities are protected legally by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. A disability is a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities (such as walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, or working.) The majority of disabilities represented on campus are not visible.

It is the ethical and legal responsibility of UNC Charlotte to reasonably accommodate student disabilities in order to allow for equal access to education. The Office of Disability Services determines eligibility for services based on documentation and identifies appropriate and reasonable accommodations to ensure academic access. Faculty and staff working with students with disabilities are strongly encouraged to contact Disability Services with questions or issues that arise.

Responsibilities of Students, Faculty/Staff, and Disability Services

Students
Students with disabilities have to: 1) Comply with all university standards and codes 2) Provide comprehensive disability documentation to the Office of Disability Services 3) Request accommodations (such as Braille text, extended time) 4) Check-in with Disability Services at the beginning of each semester 5) Request accommodations from faculty.

Disability Services
The Office of Disability Services (http://www.ds.uncc.edu/) ensures that students with documented disabilities acquire reasonable and appropriate accommodations. The specific accommodations are dependent upon the individual’s distinct needs. After review of the documentation, a counselor will meet with the student to develop a plan that addresses the disability.

Faculty and Staff
Faculty and Staff should not identify or disclose to others that a student has a disability. If Notified in Writing by the Office of Disability Services: Faculty/staff have the responsibility to cooperate with Disability Services in providing authorized accommodations.

If Not Notified in Writing
If a student requests accommodations (such as additional time on exams) and faculty/staff have not received notification from the Office of Disability Services, then faculty/staff should refer the student...
to Disability Services. Further, if the disability is visible and the accommodation appears appropriate, faculty/staff should provide the accommodation while awaiting verification from Disability Services.

The Office of Disability Services invites faculty and staff to contact our office with any disability-related questions or concerns.

**Suggestions for the Classroom**

In a university setting, a student with a disability desiring accommodations must initiate the request through Disability Services. Students with disabilities often feel uncomfortable approaching faculty when they have difficulties. Thus, faculty are encouraged to address accessibility issues with a statement on the class syllabus, such as:

“If you have a disability that qualifies you for academic accommodations, please provide a letter of accommodation from Disability Services in the beginning of the semester. For more information regarding accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services at (704) 687-4355 or stop by their office in 230 Fretwell.”

- Use a “Universal Design” approach to teaching coursework. Face the class when speaking. Repeat discussion questions. Write key phrases on the blackboard. Provide information in oral, written, and electronic format. Use captioned films.
- Identify core skills that students must have to succeed in course.
- When talking with the student, privately inquire about special needs in the classroom/lab.
- Avoid making humorous or questionable comments about disabilities to students.
- If the student has a visual impairment, select course materials (syllabi, assignments, and reading lists) early so that Disability Services can convert text to Braille or electronic format.
- If the student uses an interpreter, remember to look at the student, not the interpreter. The interpreter should be located near the instructor so that the student can see the lecturer and the interpreter.
- Work with the student and Disability Services to determine and provide appropriate accommodations.

**Examples of Disabilities**

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Blindness, Deafness, Hard of Hearing, Learning Disability, Low Vision, Medical Conditions (e.g., Cancer, Multiple Sclerosis), Physical Impairments, and Psychological Disabilities.

**Examples of Academic Accommodations:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accommodation</th>
<th>Example</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Sign Language Interpreter</td>
<td>Large print handouts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note takers</td>
<td>Audio-taped lecture notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face student when speaking</td>
<td>Computer enlarged images</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low distraction test environment</td>
<td>Text in Braille</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment/communication in electronic format</td>
<td>Adjustable tables</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food breaks during long exams/classes</td>
<td>Audio-tape class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lap equipment located within reach</td>
<td>Spell checker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Voice activated computer software</td>
<td>Classroom relocation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extended time for exams</td>
<td>Alternative keyboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic text voiced by reader software</td>
<td>Flexible attendance requirements</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Legal Policies and Procedures:**
Students with disabilities attending UNC Charlotte are protected by laws that ensure equal access to education.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 protect the civil rights of individuals with disabilities. These laws state that “no otherwise qualified individual with a disability shall, solely by reason of his/her disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity of a public entity.”

In a post secondary education setting, the term "otherwise qualified" means "a person who meets the academic and technical standards requisite to admission or participation in the education program or activity, with or without reasonable modifications to rules, policies or practices; the removal of architectural, communication or transportation barriers; or the provision of auxiliary aids and services."

A "person with a disability" is defined as "any person who 1) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities [including walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working], 2) has a record of such an impairment, or 3) is regarded as having such an impairment."

The following represents just a sample of disabilities covered by the law: AIDS, Cancer, Cerebral Palsy, Diabetes, Epilepsy, head injuries, deafness/hearing loss, specific learning disabilities, loss of limbs, Multiple Sclerosis, Muscular Dystrophy, psychiatric disorders such as depression and anxiety, speech impairments, spinal cord injuries, and visual impairments.

Under this legislation students with disabilities are entitled to reasonable and appropriate accommodations to ensure equal access to education. The university does not provide accommodations of a “personal nature.” Students are responsible for their own transportation, assistance with homework, coaching, mobility training, personal care attendants, and activities outside the university.

Adapted from [http://www.ds.uncc.edu/](http://www.ds.uncc.edu/)
ADDRESSING REQUESTS FOR PERSONAL ADVICE

Undergraduates often seek advice from TAs. While the students may begin with academic concerns, they may end up seeking personal counsel. As you might know, personal matters and academic issues frequently go hand in hand. If a student does seek personal advice, it is likely to be most constructive to:

- Follow procedures provided by your department;
- Listen carefully to understand how the student sees the situation, and tell the student that you will discuss her or his problem with a faculty member and that one of you will get back in touch with the student;
- Consult with those people who can help the student find the campus resources that would be the most helpful.

Remember that your primary responsibility is the student's academic development and that your expertise lies in your knowledge of your discipline. Even if a student does not come to you directly about a problem, you may notice signs in her/his written work or class behavior that indicate the student may be grappling with personal difficulties. If such a case arises, you should bring your observations to the attention of a faculty member or the chairperson in your department, the Student Health Center (http://studenthealth.uncc.edu/), the Center for Counseling and Psychological Services (http://caps.uncc.edu/), or the Dean of Students Office (http://www.dso.uncc.edu/). If a student appears to be in a psychological or personal crisis, you can call the Student Health Center at (704) 687-7400 or the Center for Counseling and Psychological Services at (704) 687-0311 to consult about appropriate action or to receive immediate attention for the student, if needed. In the event of an emergency, you can receive assistance by calling University Police at (704) 687-2200.

GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH DISTRESSED STUDENTS

Common Stressors in College Life Include:

1. Greater academic demands.
2. Being on one’s own in a new environment.
3. Changes in family relations.
5. Changes in one’s social life.
6. Exposure to new people, ideas, and temptations.
7. Awareness of one’s sexual identity and orientation.
8. Preparing for life after graduation.

Some Signs and Symptoms of Distress:
The following signs and symptoms may indicate that a student is experiencing health or mental health issues that could benefit from a referral to the Counseling Center or the Student Health Center.

1. Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" mood
2. Feelings of hopelessness, pessimism
3. Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, helplessness
4. Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities that were once enjoyed
5. Decreased energy, fatigue, being "slowed down"
6. Difficulty concentrating, remembering, making decisions
7. Insomnia, early-morning awakening, or oversleeping
8. Appetite and/or weight loss or overeating and weight gain
9. Thoughts of death or suicide; suicide attempts
10. Restlessness, irritability
11. Persistent physical symptoms that do not respond to treatment, such as headaches, digestive disorders, and chronic pain
12. Abnormal or excessive elation; grandiose notions; increased talking; racing thoughts
13. Markedly increased energy
14. Poor judgment
15. Inappropriate social behavior
16. Excessive absence from class without justification

You should never feel that you have to handle a student’s problems or issues on your own; in fact, you should always consult your faculty supervisor as your first step in deciding what to do when concerns arise. Here are some additional suggestions to assist students who may be having difficulties.

1. Don’t dismiss or trivialize a student’s emotional distress (i.e., the breakup of a love relationship, poor grades, DUI, argument with a parent, etc.).
2. If a student appears depressed, anxious, or unable to cope academically or otherwise, refer the student to the Counseling Center.
3. If a student is physically or verbally threatening you or other students, quickly get to the nearest phone and call Campus Police. Do not threaten or challenge the student. If a disturbance takes place during class, try to get the other students out of the classroom quickly and quietly.
4. Take any threat or report of harm to self or others seriously; lives may depend on your taking appropriate action. At the very least, contact the Counseling Center or the Dean of Students Office.


WHEN A STUDENT STOPS ATTENDING CLASS
A student who disappears from class is a particular cause for concern. There are cases when a student who has failed an exam may simply give up and unnecessarily receive a failing grade. Of even greater concern is the student who is performing adequately and stops attending class. If none of the student’s classmates has information about the student in question, this can signal a serious problem.

You should discuss with your faculty supervisor what steps to taking in trying to contact the student by phone to determine the reasons for the student’s nonattendance. This takes time but, since you may be the first person to notice that a student has stopped attending class, find out what your department’s protocol is. Don’t let a student fall between gaps in systems. Finally, if your attempts to find out the status of a student are unsuccessful, call the Dean of Students Office (http://www.dso.uncc.edu/) at (704) 687-0345, and staff there will try to make contact. The importance of identifying and trying to reach missing students cannot be overemphasized.
“My nightmare before my class started was to have two students talking in the back of the class, someone throwing paper airplanes, six people reading magazines, and everyone refusing to do the work. It wasn't that bad, but I wish I had known then how to set the tone from the beginning.”

Graduate TA

For students to learn, there must be some order in the class. Beginning teachers often are not sure how to set limits on student behavior without getting into unproductive classroom battles. It is important for new teachers to set clear boundaries in the beginning, confront disruptive behavior in a constructive way, and avoid becoming defensive and losing objectivity.

Establish Ground Rules
Establish clear, explicit ground rules from the beginning. Announce and clearly state in the syllabus expectations on side conversations, interruptions while others are talking, tardiness, and other student behaviors.

If you have not taught before, you might want to read guidelines established by experienced TAs or faculty members. Also, you might reflect on your own classroom experiences to determine behaviors you find disruptive.

Avoid Becoming Defensive
The more defensive and hostile the teacher becomes when confronted with a disruptive student, the more likely it is that the hostility will escalate. Students often recognize faculty members' "hot" buttons and make comments that trigger an automatic emotional reaction. Effective teachers learn to respond calmly and to defuse rather than increase conflict.

Confront Disruptive Dynamics
You can deal with inappropriate behavior by:

- Referring to the established ground rules. Subtly calling attention to the behavior (e.g., stand next to the students who are talking).
- Redirecting the interaction (e.g., "Do you have something to add, John?").
- Confronting the behavior in general (e.g., "Let's call a halt to interruptions. Give her a chance to finish").
- Confronting an individual student outside of class (e.g., "Mary, when you come in late and make a great deal of noise getting settled, it distracts the whole class. Could you try to get here on time?").

If a student makes you so angry that you lose your sense of objectivity, tell that student that you will discuss the problem outside of class at a later time. You should not use valuable class time to reprimand a student with whom you need to speak individually. Simply ask the student to see you after class to make an appointment to discuss the problem. Make sure you do not confront the student in a sarcastic tone. Remember, you should model appropriate, professional behavior for the student. If your disagreement with the student is not resolved with this strategy, consider meeting the student again with a faculty member present.
Learn to “Read” the Class
Observe student nonverbal behavior. Disruptive or inattentive behavior can be a clue to some problem in the class that needs to be addressed. For example, students might start talking to each other when the material presented is over their heads, is repetitive, or they cannot hear or see the teacher. An alert teacher, sensitive to clues that students may have difficulties, will ask students about their behavior and will shift gears to eliminate the problem.

Always watch and listen to how classmates react to a disruptive peer. Students often will comment on a peer's behavior (e.g., "Did you see how sarcastic he was? He's really out of line."). Students' reactions can help you gauge your own reaction.

Do Not Discuss an Individual Student's Progress During Class
While it can be helpful to offer positive feedback about student progress in general (e.g., "As a whole, the class did much better on the exam than I anticipated") or to discuss areas for improvement (e.g., "Many people had problems with section three"), it is not appropriate to discuss one student's performance during class. Sometimes, students become hostile when they receive unfavorable feedback.

To avoid disruptive behavior due to disappointment over a grade, you should return graded work at the end of the class period. In your syllabus, include a statement that you will not discuss a student's grade until at least twenty-four hours after you return the work. Explain to your students that a twenty-four waiting period allows everyone involved to assess the situation more objectively. Providing adequate written explanation for the grade and detailed feedback on class performance can help to prevent confusion.

Examine Your Teaching Style
If persistent disruptions plague the classroom, then TAs and faculty members should consider examining their teaching styles. An instructor's attitude or manner of teaching might inadvertently spark a reaction from students. For example, overly strict standards might result in defiant behavior, while lax standards might encourage disrespectful behavior. Teachers should consider classroom practices that create an active learning environment which increases student engagement and interest.

Locate Individuals in Your Department Who Can Help You Handle Disruptive Students
TAs and faculty members should be aware of resources designed to make their teaching easier. For example, many departments designate a faculty member to supervise, assist, and mentor the graduate students.

Adapted from http://cte.udel.edu/

What constitutes disruptive behavior in a college environment? This may depend on the size and nature of the class, but in general, classroom disruption generally refers to behavior a reasonable person would view as substantially or repeatedly interfering with an educational environment. Faculty
and student response to disruptions can range from annoyance to fear. Repeat offenses can turn something that started out as irritating into something that should be documented and reported.

Examples of student disruptive behaviors include:
- Persistent interruptions
- Excessive arguing / disputing / monopolizing class time
- “Side conversations”
- Coming to class late or leaving early without permission
- Using electronic devices (e.g., cell phones, MP3 players)
- Sleeping in class
- Eating or drinking in class
- Poor personal hygiene
- Use of profane or obscene language

Any emergency situation which elicits fear for the safety of the instructor or students in the class should result in a call to UNC Charlotte Police (704-687-2200) for immediate assistance. Examples include: harassment, threats, intoxication, and physical altercations.

Instructors can address disruptions in a number of ways, depending on the degree of disruption and number of times incidents have occurred. Establishing classroom behavioral expectations (“ground rules”) and reviewing those expectations during the first class period is essential.

After establishing clear guidelines, if disruptions do occur, instructors can try these techniques:

1. Remain calm!
2. Make a general statement to the whole class, such as “Let’s discontinue any behavior that is distracting and focus on our topic.”
3. If the behavior does not cease, direct your comment to the student(s) involved, using name(s) and specific behavior(s).
4. Ask the student(s) to see you after class.
5. Ask the student to leave the room and to come see you during your office hours. You may want to ask your faculty supervisor to join you in a discussion with the student.
6. Report the incident to your faculty supervisor and the Dean of Students Office (http://www.dso.uncc.edu/), and tell the student that he/she may not return to class until the issue is resolved.

It is important to document all warnings regarding disruptive behavior, with the date and time of each occurrence, in case you need to submit a conduct report after repeated incidents.
CIVILITY IN THE CLASSROOM: PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR UNC CHARLOTTE FACULTY

Faculty members are responsible for management of the classroom environment. Teachers can be compared to judges: both focus on relevant issues, set reasonable time limits, assess the quality of ideas and expression, and make sure participants are heard in an orderly manner. While their ultimate goals may be different, both judges and teachers need to exercise authority with a sense of fairness.

Both students and faculty members have some measure of academic freedom. University policies on classroom disruption cannot be used to punish lawful classroom dissent. The lawful expression of a disagreement with the teacher or other students is not in itself "disruptive" behavior.

Rudeness, incivility, and disruption are often distinguishable, even though they may intersect. In most instances, it’s better to respond to rudeness by example (e.g. advising a student in private that he or she appears to have a habit of interrupting others). Rudeness can become disruption when it is repetitive, especially after a warning has been given.

Strategies to prevent and respond to disruptive behavior include:

- Clarify standards for the conduct of your class. For example, if you want students to raise their hands for permission to speak, say so.
- Serve as a role model for the conduct you expect from your students.
- If you believe inappropriate behavior is occurring, consider a general word of caution, rather than warning a particular student (e.g., "We have too many contemporary conversations at the moment; let’s all focus on the same topic").
- If the behavior is irritating, but not disruptive, try speaking with the student after class. Most students are unaware of distracting habits or mannerisms, and have no intent to be offensive or disruptive.
- There may be rare circumstances when it is necessary to speak to a student during class about his or her behavior. Do so in a firm and friendly manner, indicating that further discussion can occur after class.
- A student who persists in disrupting a class may be directed by the faculty member to leave the classroom for the remainder of the class period. The student should be told the reason(s) for such action, and given an opportunity to discuss the matter with the faculty member as soon as practicable. Prompt consultation should be undertaken with the Department Chair. Suspension for more than one class period requires appropriate disciplinary action.
- If disruption is serious, and other reasonable measures have failed, the class may be adjourned, and the campus police summoned.

UNIVERSITY POLICY #101.7
POLICY ON WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

All TAs should be familiar with the UNC Charlotte Policy on Workplace Violence. Communicate expectations that all incidents that might be perceived as workplace violence must be actively responded to.

POLICY
The University of North Carolina at Charlotte is committed to provide a workplace for its employees and students which is safe, secure and respectful -- an environment that is free from violence. Behaviors and actions which inappropriately represent violence are potentially damaging to University employees, students and property. Violent behavior is a violation of University policy and will not be tolerated in the University community. It will be dealt with promptly by the University administration.

DEFINITIONS
Workplace Violence: Includes, but is not limited to, intimidation, threats, physical attack or property damage.

Intimidation: Includes but is not limited to stalking or engaging in actions intended to frighten, coerce, or induce duress.

Threat: The expression of an intent to cause physical or mental harm. An expression constitutes a threat without regard to whether the party communicating the threat has the present ability to carry it out and without regard to whether the expression is contingent, conditional or future.

Physical Attack: Unwanted or hostile physical contact such as hitting, fighting, pushing, shoving or throwing objects.

Property Damage: Intentional damage to property which includes property owned by the State, employees, students, visitors or vendors.

It is a violation of this Policy to engage in Workplace Violence as defined herein or use or possess an unauthorized weapon during a time covered by this Policy. By law, weapons are prohibited on campus except for law enforcement and military personnel carrying out their official duties, and for ceremonial or educational uses specifically authorized by the Chancellor (see Policy Statement #702, http://legal.uncc.edu/policies/up-702).

RESPONSIBILITIES AND APPOINTMENTS
A. General
It is the responsibility of all employees and students in the University to conduct themselves in such a way as to contribute to an environment that is free of violence. University administrators and supervisors have a special responsibility to create and maintain such an environment. Should an administrator or supervisor have knowledge of conduct that creates violence or receives a complaint of violence under his or her administrative jurisdiction, immediate steps must be taken to deal with the matter appropriately. Taking positive steps to educate and sensitize employees and students with respect to this issue is also a responsibility of University administration.

B. Responsible Institutional Officer
The Associate Vice Chancellor for Human Resources shall serve as Coordinator and have overall responsibility for implementation of policies and procedures dealing with Workplace Violence. The maintenance of records and preparation of requested reports on Workplace Violence shall be the responsibility of the Coordinator.

C. Workplace Violence Education and Awareness

The Coordinator shall have the responsibility to coordinate the design and presentation of training and education of supervisors regarding the signs of potential workplace violence. Advice and assistance will be solicited from other University resources on the contents of the training and education program, to assess the effectiveness of the program, and to determine revisions as necessary to the policy.

PROCEDURES

To address incidents of workplace violence in your work area and to insure speedy and effective resolution of these incidents, the University has established the following process.

A. When a University employee or student experiences or has knowledge of workplace violence, the first action is to inform immediately the appropriate supervisor or faculty member respectively. The supervisor or faculty member will investigate the situation, with caution and safety as first concerns, or seek assistance from the Coordinator (for faculty and staff) or Dean of Students Office (for students) respectively. If a supervisor or faculty member is not present, or the reporter of the violence is not comfortable reporting the incident to a supervisor or faculty member, contact the Coordinator, or, in cases involving students, the Dean of Students Office.

B. The Department of Police and Public Safety is also available to assist in response to workplace violence and may be contacted by any University employee or student at any time in the process.

C. When parties involved have been calmed and the situation resolved, the person responding will be asked for information in order that a Workplace Violence Incident Report be completed and forwarded to the Coordinator.

D. If it is determined that persons involved in workplace violence need assistance beyond intervention at the scene, they may be referred to the University Counseling Center. Staff and faculty members may also be referred to the Employee Assistance Program.

Inquires from the media about any incident of workplace violence should be directed to the Office of Public Relations.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT TEAM

The University has in place a team of administrators to respond to critical incidents of Workplace Violence that affect the University community and has precedence over those previously identified in this Policy. The Team may respond to Workplace Violence that has been identified as critical in nature and as life-threatening situations (i.e., death, hostage, bomb).

The Coordinator will first notify the University Police Watch Commander who has the responsibility for directing the response and making appropriate notification about the critical and or emergency situation. The University Police Watch Commander will immediately notify the Critical Incident Response Team Person on Call.

REMEDIAL ACTION

Remedial actions will depend on the severity of the incident. University authorities may direct a faculty member or a staff member who violates this Policy to the Employee Assistance Program, or may refer the matter for disciplinary action in accordance with University procedures applicable to the
individual's status as student, or to the employee's category of employment. Disciplinary action may include discharge from employment or expulsion of a student.

**RETAILIATION PROHIBITED**

Employees and students who act in good faith by reporting real or implied violent behavior or violations of this Policy will not be retaliated against or subjected to harassment.
UNIVERSITY POLICY #502
SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

I. Statement of Policy

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte affirms its commitment to ensuring an environment for all employees and students that is fair, humane, and respectful—an environment that supports and rewards employee and student performance on the basis of relevant considerations such as ability and effort. Behaviors that inappropriately assert sexuality as relevant to employee or student performance are damaging to this environment. Sexual harassment is a violation of both law and University policy and will not be tolerated in the University community. Sexual harassment is a particularly sensitive issue that may affect any member of the University community and as such will be dealt with promptly and confidentially by the University administration.

II. Definitions of Sexual Harassment

A. Employees

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) guidelines define sexual harassment as follows:

Harassment on the basis of sex is a violation of Section 703 of Title VII, which states that:
"Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal and physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when --

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

B. Students

Sexual harassment of students is a form of prohibited sex discrimination. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature by a University employee, by another student, or by a third party, constitutes sexual harassment if such conduct is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive to limit the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an education program or activity, or create a hostile or abusive educational environment.

"Quid pro quo" sexual harassment is equally unlawful. It occurs when a University employee explicitly or implicitly conditions a student's participation in an education program or activity, or bases an educational decision, on the student's submission to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. "Quid pro quo" harassment
occurs whether the student resists and suffers the threatened harm or submits and thus avoids the threatened harm.

III. Responsibilities and Appointments

A. General

It is the responsibility of all employees and students in the University to conduct themselves in such a way as to contribute to an environment free of sexual harassment. University administrators and supervisors have special responsibilities to create and maintain such an environment. Should an administrator or supervisor have knowledge of conduct involving sexual harassment or receive a complaint of sexual harassment that involves a University employee or agent under his or her administrative jurisdiction, immediate steps must be taken to deal with the matter appropriately, whether or not invoked by a grievance procedure. Taking positive steps to educate and sensitize employees and students with respect to this issue is also a responsibility of University administration.

B. Responsible Institutional Officer

The University Affirmative Action Officer shall have overall responsibility for implementation of policies and procedures dealing with sexual harassment.

Annually in July, the Affirmative Action Officer will submit to the Chancellor a report of the cases of alleged sexual harassment received during the preceding fiscal year (July 1 - June 30) and the disposition of each case. A summary of this report (omitting names) will be made available to The University Times and The Campus News (weekly green sheet) for publication.

C. Advisory Committee on the Prevention of Sexual Harassment

The Chancellor shall appoint, by written notice, a committee of six to eight members to advise and assist the University Affirmative Action Officer in maintaining a University environment that is free of sexual harassment. The committee shall include not less than two faculty members, two staff employees, and two students with the Chairperson to be elected by the members at the first sitting of the committee. Committee members shall, except where necessary to initially establish the rotation herein prescribed, serve two-year terms with approximately one-half of the terms expiring annually.

The Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Programs and Compliance Administrator (Human Resources Department), the Training and Staff Development Manager (Human Resources Department) and the Assistant Director of Programs (Student Affairs) serve as ex officio non-voting members of the Committee.

The University Affirmative Action Officer will keep the Chancellor informed of the activities of the Advisory Committee on the Prevention of Sexual Harassment.
D. Sexual Harassment Education and Awareness Program

The Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Programs and Compliance Administrator (Human Resources Department) is responsible for coordinating the design and presentation of a comprehensive program of training and education on the subject of preventing sexual harassment. The program shall include education and awareness training for administrators, managers, and supervisors; faculty; staff members; and students. Student programs will be coordinated with the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs (position title); faculty programs with the Office of the Provost; and all other programs with the Human Resources Department (Training and Staff Development Manager).

Advice and assistance will be solicited from other members of the Advisory Committee on the Prevention of Sexual Harassment regarding the training and education program.

E. University Mediators

On recommendation of the University Affirmative Action Officer the Chancellor shall appoint, by written notice, counselors and third party mediators to serve members of the University community. Term of appointment shall be two years.

IV. Grievance Procedures

To address the sensitive nature of situations involving sexual harassment and to assure speedy and confidential resolution of these issues, the University has established an informal counseling and mediation process as well as formal grievance procedures (Attachments 1-4) for handling complaints involving sexual harassment. Informal counseling and mediation may be utilized, but are not required to precede the formal grievance procedures.

If a complaint is directed against a supervisor or administrator who would otherwise play a role in responding to and attempting to resolve the complaint, the function assigned to that person by these procedures will be assigned to another person designated by the appropriate Vice Chancellor or the Chancellor.

A. Mediation; Counseling and Support

The function of University Mediators shall be to attempt to resolve, informally, complaints of sexual harassment brought to them by members of the University. Students, staff and faculty members may select a counselor/mediator of their choice from the list of University Mediators published by the University Affirmative Action Officer. In consultation with the University Affirmative Action Officer, informal proceedings may also be initiated by an administrative official of the University. Each mediator will function to mediate complaints, but all mediators will be trained by the Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Programs and Compliance Administrator and follow consistent
procedures established by the Affirmative Action Office. A confidential record of the mediation efforts will be kept on file with the University Affirmative Action Officer.

The Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Programs and Compliance Administrator (Human Resources Department) will maintain a list of individuals and groups in the University community offering to provide emotional support and formal or informal counseling to individuals involved in sexual harassment complaints.

B. Formal Grievance Procedures

Any UNC Charlotte student, faculty member, or other employee exempt from the State Personnel Act who believes that he or she has been the victim of sexual harassment by another member of the University community may seek relief by following the appropriate grievance procedure, according to the student status or employment category of the complainant and accused:

- Grievance Procedure for Faculty Members Alleging Sexual Harassment
- Grievance Procedure for Certain Employees Exempt from the State Personnel Act Alleging Sexual Harassment
- Grievance Procedure for Students Alleging Sexual Harassment by a University Employee
- Grievance Procedure for Students Alleging Sexual Harassment by Another Student

These sexual harassment grievance procedures are initiated by contacting the University Affirmative Action Office. A professional staff member in that office will provide advice, in confidence, on the specific procedure to follow.

Formal action may be pursued either in lieu of informal mediation or when efforts at informal mediation have failed.

The University encourages settlement of any actual or proposed formal complaint of sexual harassment through mutual agreement of the persons directly involved in the complaint and the University. Such settlements may or may not include the imposition of disciplinary sanctions mutually agreed upon. The Affirmative Action Officer, or a University official designated by that officer, is authorized to assist the parties involved in the complaint to achieve such settlements. The Affirmative Action Officer is authorized to approve such a settlement on behalf of the University after approval by the Chancellor or such others as the Chancellor may direct. The Affirmative Action Officer will maintain a confidential record of the terms of the settlement.

Sexual harassment grievance procedures for SPA employees are administered according to State requirements and guidelines set forth in UNC Charlotte Personnel Information Memorandum #35 (PIM-35) and are not addressed in this Policy.
V. Remedial Action

Remedial actions will depend on the severity of the incident, but violation of this policy may, in appropriate cases, result in discharge from employment, expulsion as a student, or, for non-employees or non-students, removal from campus property. Because of the private nature of sexual harassment incidents, and the emotional and moral complexities surrounding such issues, every effort shall be made to resolve problems on an informal basis, if possible. Informal resolution may include disciplinary action when appropriate. A confidential record of the mediation efforts will be kept on file with the University Affirmative Action Officer.

VI. Retaliation Prohibited

This policy seeks to encourage students, staff and faculty to express freely, responsibly, and in an orderly way their opinions and feelings about any problem or complaint of sexual harassment. Any act by a University employee or agent of reprisal, interference, restraint, penalty, discrimination, coercion or harassment--overtly or covertly--against a student or an employee for responsibly using the Policy and its Procedures interferes with free expression and openness. Accordingly, such acts violate this policy and require appropriate and prompt disciplinary action.

VII. Frivolous or False Charge

This policy shall not be used to bring frivolous or malicious charges against fellow students, faculty members or employees. Disciplinary action under the appropriate policies concerning personal misconduct shall be taken against any person bringing a charge of sexual harassment in bad faith.

(Initially approved June 9, 1980; revised November 4, 1985; revised March 26, 1993; revised May 21, 1997; May 19, 1998; February 26, 2001.)

http://legal.uncc.edu/policies/up-502
APPENDIX

Additional Resources and Information
UNC Charlotte is one of a generation of universities founded in metropolitan areas of the United States immediately after World War II in response to rising education demands generated by the war and its technology. To serve returning veterans, North Carolina opened 14 evening college centers in communities across the state. The Charlotte Center opened September 23, 1946, offering evening classes to 278 freshmen and sophomore students in the facilities of Charlotte’s Central High School. Subsequently, the Charlotte Center was taken over by the city school district and operated as Charlotte College, offering the first two years of college course.

As soon as Charlotte College was firmly established, efforts were launched to give it a campus of its own. With the backing of Charlotte business leaders and legislators from Mecklenburg and surrounding counties, land was acquired on the northern fringe of the city. In 1961, Charlotte College moved its growing student body into two new buildings on what was to become a 1,000-acre campus 10 miles from downtown Charlotte. Three years later, the North Carolina legislature approved Charlotte College as a four-year, state-supported college. The next year, 1965, the legislature approved creation of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, the fourth campus of the statewide university system. In 1969, the University began offering programs leading to master’s degrees. In 1992, it was authorized to offer programs leading to doctoral degrees.

Now a research intensive university, UNC Charlotte is the fourth largest of the 16 institutions within the University of North Carolina system and the largest institution in the Charlotte region.

The University comprises seven professional colleges and currently offers 19 doctoral programs, 66 master’s degree programs and 90 bachelor’s degrees. More than 900 full-time faculty comprise the university’s academic departments and the 2011 fall enrollment exceeded 25,000 students. UNC Charlotte boasts more than 90,000 living alumni and adds 4,000 to 4,500 new alumni each year.
THE NOBLE NINER CODE
Approved by UNC Charlotte Board of Trustees April 20, 2007

Scholarship
A Niner shall strive for academic excellence in and out of the classroom while maintaining academic honesty and ethical values.

Integrity
A Niner shall act to uphold and improve one’s self, the community, and the high standards of the institution.

Respect
A Niner shall welcome all aspects of individuality and self-worth while embracing the learning opportunities that diversity provides.

Accountability
A Niner shall hold others responsible for their actions while accepting responsibility for one’s own.

Dignity
A Niner shall appreciate the intrinsic value of the institution and work to preserve the 49er environment.

Honor
A Niner shall appreciate students, faculty, administration, and staff as contributing members of the University community.

Compassion
A Niner shall demonstrate genuine consideration and concern for the needs, feelings, ideas, and well-being of others.

Character
A Niner shall exemplify all qualities and traits that promote fellowship and camaraderie among the student body, faculty, staff, and administration.

Nobility
A Niner shall exhibit the virtues and values listed above which benefit all members of our Niner Nation.
THE CENTER FOR TEACHING & LEARNING

The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) assists faculty by promoting teaching and learning excellence, supporting the integration of learning technologies, and encouraging scholarly teaching. CTL supports the University’s mission of teaching, research, and service to the greater Charlotte metropolitan region and beyond.

Located on the second floor of the Kennedy Building, the Center for Teaching and Learning provides several resources to assist in your teaching and professional development: http://teaching.uncc.edu

Tip Sheets
A brief summary of best practices in college teaching:

Best Practice Articles
Online instructional documents and other resources highlighting best practices:
https://teaching.uncc.edu/learning-resources/articles-books/best-practice

Professional Development Library
Contains over 700 books and multimedia items for faculty checkout:
http://teaching.uncc.edu/articles-books/ctl-library

Calendar of Workshops
Dates and locations for many workshops on a variety of teaching topics:
http://teaching.uncc.edu/calendar

Brief Survival Guide for New Graduate TAs
To remove some of the “mystery” in your new role as a graduate teaching assistant, we have pulled together some information in this packet that might be useful to you:

WRITING RESOURCES CENTER
The Writing Resources Center (WRC) provides free, one-on-one writing consultations for students. Students can receive assistance with any part of the writing process as they strive to become competent members of the academic writing community.

The center offers the following services and materials to help students become more effective writers:

- One-on-one writing tutorials
- Student referral program
- In-class presentations
- Online research assistance
- Peer revision groups
- Online writing tutorials
- Print library of writing resources

WRC assistance is available in Cameron 125, Atkins Library Ground Floor (T1 table, by Peet’s), Cone 268 (Center for Grad Life), and Center City 714: [http://www.uncc.edu/writing/wrcindex.html](http://www.uncc.edu/writing/wrcindex.html)

**CENTER FOR COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES**

The Center for Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at UNC Charlotte supports the academic, personal, and interpersonal development of UNC Charlotte students by providing short-term individual and group counseling, psychological assessment, consultation for faculty, staff, parents, and students, and educational programs to the campus community.

Consistent with the academic mission of the University, the Center serves as a training site for graduate students in psychology and counseling and encourages and supports scholarly activity and professional development of staff.

CAPS will be relocating to a new facility next to the Student Health Center in on September 14, 2017: [http://caps.uncc.edu/](http://caps.uncc.edu/)

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**UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE**
The University Center for Academic Excellence provides free academic support for enrolled UNC Charlotte students. UCAE offices are located on the 3rd floor of Fretwell (Room 330).

The UCAE is a combination of five offices poised to help students enhance their learning skills and improve their academic performance:

- **The Learning Lab** includes skill workshops, a resource library and a computer lab. Among the workshop topics are: Procrastination Prevention, Managing Test Tension, Improving Note Taking and Text Reading, Time Management Skills, and Succeeding in Large Lecture Courses. Workshops are offered throughout the semester. You can also request to have a workshop topic presented in your class.

- The UCAE also provides *Individual Academic Consultations*—one-on-one sessions conducted by UCAE graduate students to help students develop specific strategies which address their academic concerns.

- **Tutorial Services (TS)** provides FREE peer tutoring in the areas of math, sciences, business and foreign languages. Tutoring is primarily offered in the introductory levels of these subjects. Studies show that students’ consistent tutoring make significant progress in their most difficult courses. UNC Charlotte Tutorial Services is certified by the International Tutor Certification Program.

- **Supplemental Instruction (SI)** is a successful, peer led group study program that helps students earn better grades in challenging courses. The SI leaders are students who successfully completed the class and attend the class again to tailor the SI sessions to specific classes. Students regularly attending SI sessions earn higher grades!

- **Building Educational Strengths and Talents (BEST)** is a federally funded program for students who are the first in their family to attend college and who qualify financially. BEST will assist with registration and class preparation, provide tutors and peer mentors, assess student writing skills, and expose participants to diverse cultural activities.

- **Student Success (SS)** provides assistance to students who are having academic difficulties. The Students Obtaining Success (SOS) program is designed for students on Academic Probation. Through peer mentoring and ongoing support, students acquire skills and learn to utilize resources to become academically successful.

UCAE website: [http://ucae.uncc.edu/](http://ucae.uncc.edu/)
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- *University Policy #703: Safety and Environmental Health*
  http://www.legal.uncc.edu/policies/up-703

- *University Policy #406: The Code of Student Responsibility*
  http://www.legal.uncc.edu/policies/up-406

- *University Policy #407: The Code of Student Academic Integrity*
  http://www.legal.uncc.edu/policies/up-407

- *Suggested Standard Syllabus Policies*
  http://legal.uncc.edu/legal-topics/classroom-policies-and-practices/suggested-standard-syllabus-policies

- **Office of Student Conduct** | http://www.dso.uncc.edu/judicial/ |

- **UNC Charlotte Alerts** | http://unccharlottealerts.com/ |
If you are interested in additional information, many colleges and universities have TA guidelines and handbooks that can be located via Internet search. Below are a few you might find useful:

General Information:

- [http://teachingcenter.wustl.edu/strategies/Pages/tips-first-time-TA.aspx](http://teachingcenter.wustl.edu/strategies/Pages/tips-first-time-TA.aspx)
- [http://www.washington.edu/teaching](http://www.washington.edu/teaching)
- [http://www.celt.iastate.edu/teaching/TAhandbook.html](http://www.celt.iastate.edu/teaching/TAhandbook.html)

Syllabi:

- [http://pandora.cii.wwu.edu/cii/workshop_handouts/syllabus_3-2-06/](http://pandora.cii.wwu.edu/cii/workshop_handouts/syllabus_3-2-06/)
- [http://www.niu.edu/facdev/resources/quicktips/transcripts/syllabus.shtml](http://www.niu.edu/facdev/resources/quicktips/transcripts/syllabus.shtml)

Lecturing:

- [http://gradschool.about.com/od/colleteaching/p/How-To-Lecture-Teaching-Tips-For-Graduate-Students.htm](http://gradschool.about.com/od/colleteaching/p/How-To-Lecture-Teaching-Tips-For-Graduate-Students.htm)
1. Be prepared for class. Look up words for pronunciation. Know what you want to say and have a lesson plan set out. You may not end up following it precisely but it will give you a guide and allow you to walk into the classroom with confidence. You can always practice any presentation you want to give beforehand too.

2. Be upfront with your students from the first class. Tell them that you might have difficulty understanding each other and that if they do not understand something, you would be happy for them to ask you for clarification. Do not dwell on this point as it may undermine your authority, causing students to perceive you as unqualified. Remember that you have been hired for your abilities in the discipline.

3. Speak slowly in class, repeat the things that you say when necessary and/or write questions, terms etc. on the board. You could also provide handouts or make overheads to provide clarity for students.

4. Be willing to accept informal behavior (eating and talking in class, addressing one another on a first-name basis), but realize that you do not have to accept disrespectful or rude behavior from anyone.

5. Watch TV, read the newspaper, talk with other graduate students in your program and with your students in class about everyday affairs. This will allow you to practice your English informally, and allow you to learn and understand cultural practices, thoughts, ideas and humor.

6. If possible sit in on another graduate student TA's class whom you respect, to see how things work. Ask for advice on the grading scheme to be employed and the type and extent of comments you are generally expected to provide on student work.

7. Allow students to discuss their ideas with you and to question your own. The teacher does not know everything and is not always right. Sometimes teachers learn from students and this can be rewarding for both teacher and student. Emphasis should be on students learning to think and work independently not on memorizing and repeating your thoughts and ideas.

8. Students enjoy informal conversation with their instructors as it makes them feel the professor is interested in them and respects their thoughts and ideas. Arrive at your classroom 5 minutes early and be prepared to hang around for a few minutes after class too whenever possible to allow students to approach you with their questions. Many students find this time the best opportunity to ask questions as they feel less intimidated than they would coming to your office.

9. If you get to know your students well, learning their names and getting to know them as individuals, you will be able to ask some students informally about how they think the class is going and how it might be improved.

10. Share with your students your experiences in your home country when relevant opportunities present themselves. Students enjoy learning more about you and where you have come from and will also learn from your experiences that will be different from their own.
11. Students may query grades. Listen to their questions and offer to re-read their work and/or to explain why they received the grade they did. You are not under any obligation to change the grade, but the student does have the right to ask for further explanation and clarification.

12. Use all the resources available to you, including the professor for the course, classmates, or other international students who have experience in American classrooms.

Adapted from http://learningandteaching.dal.ca/12itas.html

INTERNATIONAL TA RESOURCES ON THE INTERNET

UNC Charlotte International Student/Scholar Office
http://www.isko.uncc.edu/

General Resources for Reading, Speaking, and Writing
http://elti.uncc.edu/home/language-resources/elti-language-lab

English Language Training Institute
http://elti.uncc.edu/

Various Resources/Links for International TAs
http://www.pdx.edu/cae/resources-international-teaching-assistants

CAMPUS PHONE NUMBERS

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<td>Academic Affairs</td>
<td>Reese 5th Floor</td>
<td>704-687-5717</td>
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<td>Reese 4th Floor</td>
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