Preface

This document represents the policies and procedures of the Department of Communication with respect to graduate assistantships as of its publishing in August 2020. Various university websites are referenced through this handbook. More information and potentially updated information is available at these websites. The information in this handbook is intended to complement that in the department’s Graduate Student Handbook. The Department of Communication follows all policies and rules of the University of Connecticut, the Graduate School, and the Graduate Employee Union Local 6950 Collective Bargaining Agreement. Graduate Assistants are expected to be familiar with all of these policies, and not only those referenced in this handbook.
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The Graduate Assistantship

Graduate assistantships serve multiple purposes – to provide teaching or research support to the university, to provide an applied learning opportunity for the graduate student within his or her academic discipline, and to provide financial support for the graduate student. Assistantship positions can involve teaching or research or a combination of teaching and research. Effort devoted to the duties of a graduate assistantship typically range between 10 and 20 hours per week (also sometimes called a “half G.A.” and “full G.A.” respectively). Graduate assistants receive a tuition waiver, subsidized health insurance, and a stipend. Appointments ordinarily are made for the nine-month period, August 23 through May 22, but may be of shorter duration for a variety of reasons. Administration of all assistantships occurs through the academic department.

Eligibility Criteria

To be appointed, to retain an appointment, or to be reappointed, a student must hold Regular (not Provisional) status, must maintain a cumulative average of at least B (3.00) in any course work taken, must be eligible to register, must be enrolled in a graduate degree program scheduled to extend through the entire period of the appointment or reappointment, must not have any Incomplete grades that are not resolved within one semester following the assigned grade on his or her graduate academic record, and must be a full-time student.

Payroll and Benefits

Various UConn websites have information on graduate assistant health benefits (https://hr.uconn.edu/ga-health-insurance/), GA leave administration (https://hr.uconn.edu/ga-leave-administration/), payroll (https://payroll.uconn.edu/graduate/), and the contract between UConn and the Graduate Employee Union (https://hr.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1421/2020/03/2018-GEU-UAW-CBA.pdf).

Stipend Rates

Stipend rates for graduate assistants are graduated in terms of progress toward the advanced degree and experience.

- Level B/I: for graduate assistants with at least the baccalaureate.
- Level M/II: for graduate assistants in a doctoral program with at least the master’s degree or its equivalent in the field of graduate study. Equivalency consists of twenty-four graduate level content course credits of appropriate course work beyond the baccalaureate completed at the University of Connecticut, together with admission to a doctoral program.
- Level P/III: for students with experience as graduate assistants who have at least the master’s degree or its equivalent and who have passed the doctoral general examination.

GA Contract Dates

Graduate assistantships that span the full academic year begin on August 23rd and end on May 22nd. Though responsibilities will vary with each position, graduate assistants are considered to be within their contract period between and including these dates. Duties such as course preparation, training, student meetings, or research analysis may need to take place when the GA is within their contract period, even
if classes are not in session. GAs should consult with their supervisors before making any arrangements for academic break periods. See https://hr.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1421/2020/03/2018-GEU-UAW-CBA.pdf for the full text of the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the University of Connecticut Board of Trustees and the Graduate Employee Union.

**GA Leaves of Absence**

A GA may request in writing a personal leave of absence from his or her GA appointment for reasons including, but not limited to, illness or injury, immigration hearings, pregnancy, to care for a newborn or adopted child, or to care for an immediate family member (spouse/registered domestic partner, son, daughter, or parent of the GA or parent of the GA’s spouse/registered domestic partner) with a serious health condition. Each GA shall be entitled to up to 3 days of such leave or leaves paid per semester (no carry-over). A GA is entitled to up to 5 days of leave due to the death of an immediate family member (as defined above).

It is the responsibility of the GA to contact the appropriate faculty member(s) or other supervisor(s) in advance of the leave unless circumstances make this impossible. In addition to speaking with the supervisor, GAs must request approval for part or all of the 3 days of leave by completing the COMM GA Time Off Request Form online at http://comm.uconn.edu/comm-ga-time-off-form/.

For more details about short-term leaves of absence, and for information about longer-term leaves of absence such as military leave, jury duty leave, or maternity/parental leave, please see Article 15 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the University and the GEU-UAW, at https://hr.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1421/2020/03/2018-GEU-UAW-CBA.pdf and speak with the department administrative staff.

**Time Off**

GAs with academic year appointments can have up to 20 business days of time off from expected duties. Time off is normally taken during academic break periods when classes are not in session, but may be requested at other times, with as much advance notice as possible. Unused time off days will not be rolled over to future appointments. There is no payout of unused time off days.

It is the responsibility of the GA to contact the appropriate faculty member(s) or supervisor(s) in advance to request time off. In addition to speaking with the supervisor, GAs must request approval by completing the COMM GA Time Off Request Form online at http://comm.uconn.edu/com-ga-time-off-form/.


**Supplemental Employment**

Federal regulations prohibit International students on F-1 or J-1 visas from working more than 20 hours per week (a full-time graduate assistantship). Failure to abide by these regulations may result in deportation.
For domestic students, it is the policy of the Graduate School and of the Department of Communication to limit state employment of full-time graduate students to 20 hours per week. However, exceptions to this policy can be made.

The following criteria are used in evaluating a request for an exemption:

1) academic standing
2) academic progress toward the degree
3) the nature of the employment and its relationship to the student’s academic program
4) special circumstances described by the requesting student

Graduate Assistants seeking university or state employment beyond their G.A. appointment must discuss this in advance with their major advisor. In addition, those seeking employment beyond a full-time GA appointment with the state or university must complete the Graduate Assistant Academic Year Supplemental Employment Approval online form, available on the Grad School website at https://grad.uconn.edu/forms/ in the Forms for All Enrolled Graduate Students section. This form will be routed to the major advisor for approval, so it is critical that the student has discussed this with his or her advisor in advance.

Approval for an exemption to the 20-hour per week employment limit must be made each semester. Exceptions are granted only for a single semester. If you do not follow this procedure, your Graduate Assistantship may be revoked or reduced from full-time to part-time.

**Evaluation of Graduate Assistant Performance**

At least once a year the faculty meets to discuss each graduate assistant’s performance. This review is designed to provide feedback on classroom performance, to determine if the student should continue to receive funding as a teaching assistant, and what improvements can be made. During this evaluation, the TA’s performance in the classroom and interactions with course supervisors and peers are discussed. Course supervisors are the primary source of information about a TA’s performance. Graduate Assistants with research assistantships are also reviewed at least annually, and their supervisor is the primary source of information about their performance. All continuing graduate students receive an annual evaluation letter during the summer. The following are key points to keep in mind while performing funded duties:

- Funding is never guaranteed beyond the dates specified in the offer letter.
- Satisfactory (or better) performance of duties is crucial to maintaining funding.

If a GA’s performance does not meet the department’s standards, the course or research supervisor may provide written notification to the GA of the standards that have not been met, steps that need to be taken for improvement, and the timeframe in which improvements must be seen. The GEU-UAW Agreement also provides guidelines for addressing performance-based issues. Unsatisfactory performance in graduate teaching assistantships can include, but is not limited to: failure to attend the required TA orientation preceding fall/spring classes, failure to meet classes and/or hold office hours,
lack of cooperation in following class policies, providing inappropriate content in lectures, failure to
give students appropriate or timely feedback, inability to accurately record grades, and failure to follow
Department grading and exam policies.

Above all, please remember that teaching and research are collegial efforts. If a GA is having difficulty,
the GA should approach his or her supervisor for advice. Supervisors may approach a GA with
suggestions or concerns. GAs are encouraged to receive a supervisor’s comments as constructive
feedback. Many TA's have improved their teaching, for example, by having more frequent meetings
with their supervisors and visiting the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. The faculty want
all of our TAs and RAs to succeed, and they recognize that people develop teaching and research skills
at different rates.
Being a Teaching Assistant

Being a funded Teaching Assistant is a job that comes with responsibilities. The primary responsibility of the TA is to teach students the content of the course while following the rules and standards of the department. A TA is expected to be familiar with all the rules and policies of this document as well as the University guidelines for teaching and the policies of the course supervisor. The TA should consult the course supervisor throughout the semester.

The TA has many duties that include but are not limited to being on time, professionally dressed, and prepared for every class meeting. Additionally, teaching assistants are expected to attend all orientations and meetings held either by the department or the course supervisor. The TA must also hold at least 3 hours of office hours per week that will be posted on the syllabus and must notify the course supervisor and office staff of temporary or permanent changes to his or her office hours. The TA is also responsible for grading all assignments and examinations, keeping accurate track of scores, and submitting grades in a timely manner. Grades should be approved by the course supervisor before releasing them and kept confidential as described below. Being a paid TA is a privilege and not a right. Failure to adhere to these job requirements in a conscientious manner can result in a loss of funding as described below.

Academic Calendar and TA Availability

Funded, academic-year GAs are paid for August 23, 2020 through May 22, 2021 and should be available for meetings during these times. The Academic Calendar is online at [http://registrar.uconn.edu/academic-calendar/](http://registrar.uconn.edu/academic-calendar/). Fall 2020 classes begin on Monday, August 31, and the last day of classes is Monday, December 7. The final exam schedule is at [http://registrar.uconn.edu/exams/](http://registrar.uconn.edu/exams/). Grades must be submitted to course supervisors prior to entering them in StudentAdmin (a.k.a. PeopleSoft). Grades must be entered in StudentAdmin no later than 72 hours after the final exam, so plan accordingly. Spring 2021 classes begin on Tuesday, January 19, but TAs should be available for meetings the week before this date. The last day of classes is Friday, April 30, and exams end Saturday, May 8, but TAs are funded until May 22, 2020 and should be available for meetings until that date.

A funded teaching assistant should be available to the course supervisor during the course of their contract. Students often have questions regarding their grades, and it is the job of the TA to respond to them. A clear grading policy and timely and effective feedback are an absolute requirement and will reduce the questions, but students may still wish to discuss things with the instructor after grades have been entered, and funded teaching assistants are responsible for answering those questions in a timely manner.

Grades are due in every course within 72 hours following the final exam. When multiple sections of the same course are taught with common exams, the department expects all examinations to be considered in relationship to each other and thus the 72-hour period begins at the later final exam. Teaching assistants should inform their students of this timeline in advance. TAs must answer grade queries and be available for meetings with students after the semester has ended. Grade changes after submitting grades should only be approved when an error in calculation was made, and these errors should be rare.
Note that ALL new and returning graduate students are required to attend orientation at the beginning of every academic year. Orientation takes place during the week before the start of the semester, so plan travel and vacations accordingly.

### In the Classroom

#### Course Syllabus

Every course that is taught should have a syllabus, and it should be shared with students the first day of class. PLEASE BE CERTAIN TO SEND THE DEPARTMENT STAFF A COPY OF EACH SYLLABUS, EVERY SEMESTER. These course syllabi are kept on file. If you need assistance constructing a syllabus, please ask to see prior syllabi. Be sure to have your syllabus approved by your course supervisor before distributing it to your students, and give yourself plenty of time to make enough copies for your students.

#### Basic Information to Include in Syllabus

- Course Number and Title, Section Number, Semester, and Year
- Name, contact info, and office hours of primary and secondary instructors
- Learning objectives for the course (numbered or bulleted)
- Required and recommended texts – title, author, publisher, edition/publication year (the texts for your course will be chosen by your course supervisor)
- Explanation of how grades will be calculated
- Standard practice for late and/or missing exams, papers, assignments
- Due dates for all reading assignments, written assignments, quizzes, and exams
- Statement about academic integrity (see recommended language below)
- Statement on the university’s policy on final exams (see recommended language below)
- Statement on services for students with disabilities (see recommended language below)

#### Language Regarding Final Exams (taken directly from 2019-2020 Undergraduate Catalog)

**Absences from Final Examinations.** A student who is prevented by sickness or other unavoidable causes from completing a scheduled final assessment must apply to the Dean of Students or designee for validation that will authorize the student’s instructor to give a substitute assessment. A student whose absence is excused by the Dean of Students or designee shall have an opportunity to complete a substitute assessment without penalty. A student whose absence from a scheduled final assessment is not excused in this way shall receive a failure for this assessment.

**Rescheduling Final Examinations.** Students should check their final examination schedule to see if they have either:

- four examinations in two consecutive calendar days
- three examinations in one calendar day
- three examinations in consecutive time-blocks spanning parts of two consecutive days
If any of the above apply, they may request the Dean of Students Office to rearrange their schedule. The Dean of Students Office will select one of the examinations for rescheduling and notify the instructor, usually with a letter given to the student.

**Language Regarding Services for Students with Disabilities**

The Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) encourages faculty to include a statement in their courses syllabi inviting students to discuss academic accommodations with their instructors. For example:

The University of Connecticut is committed to protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities and assuring that the learning environment is accessible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability or pregnancy, please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options. Students who require accommodations should contact the Center for Students with Disabilities, Wilbur Cross Building Room 204, (860) 486-2020 or https://csd.uconn.edu/.

**Academic Integrity Statement**

Consider adding a statement such as this: This course expects all students to act in accordance with the Guidelines for Academic Integrity at the University of Connecticut. Because questions of intellectual property are important to the field of this course, we will discuss academic honesty as a topic and not just a policy. If you have questions about academic integrity or intellectual property, you should consult with your instructor. Additionally, consult UConn’s guidelines for academic integrity at https://community.uconn.edu/the-student-code-preamble/.

**Emergency Preparedness**

In case of inclement weather, a natural disaster, or a campus emergency, the University communicates through email and text message. Students are encouraged to sign up for alerts through http://alert.uconn.edu. Students should be aware of emergency procedures, and further information is available through the Office of Emergency Management at https://publicsafety.uconn.edu/emergency/.

**Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Related Interpersonal Violence**

The University is committed to maintaining an environment free of discrimination or discriminatory harassment directed toward any person or group within its community – students, employees, or visitors. Academic and professional excellence can flourish only when each member of our community is assured an atmosphere of mutual respect. All members of the University community are responsible for the maintenance of an academic and work environment in which people are free to learn and work without fear of discrimination or discriminatory harassment. In addition, inappropriate amorous relationships can undermine the University’s mission when those in positions of authority abuse or appear to abuse their authority. To that end, and in accordance with federal and state law, the University prohibits discrimination and discriminatory harassment, as well as inappropriate amorous relationships, and such behavior will be met with appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the University. Additionally, to protect the campus community, all non-confidential University employees (including faculty) are required to report sexual assaults, intimate partner violence, and/or stalking involving a student that they witness or are told about to the Office of Institutional Equity. The University takes all reports with the utmost seriousness. Please be aware that while the information you provide will remain private, it will not be confidential and will be shared with University officials who can help. More information is available at https://equity.uconn.edu/ and https://titleix.uconn.edu/.

**Other possible additions to syllabus:**
• Your policy on use of personal electronic devices in the classroom
• Your policy on communication with students (How and when should students contact you? When can you be expected to reply to an email? How formal should the language in email messages be? What should students call you?)
• Your expectations for appropriate student use of class notes and course materials (see Copyright section below)

Language Regarding Copyright
The Office of the Attorney General in Storrs advises that instructors include an assertion of copyright in their syllabi and suggest the following language: My lectures, notes, handouts, and displays are protected by state common law and federal copyright law. They are my own original expression and I’ve recorded them prior or during my lecture in order to ensure that I obtain copyright protection. Students are authorized to take notes in my class; however, this authorization extends only to making one set of notes for your own personal use and no other use. I will inform you as to whether you are authorized to record my lectures at the beginning of each semester. If you are so authorized to record my lectures, you may not copy this recording or any other material, provide copies of either to anyone else, or make a commercial use of them without prior permission from me.

URLs to consider including in your syllabus
• UConn Student Health and Wellness - Mental Health http://counseling.uconn.edu/
• UConn Sexual Assault, Intimate Partner Violence, and Stalking Awareness http://titleix.uconn.edu/
• UConn Office of Institutional Equity http://equity.uconn.edu/
• UConn Academic Achievement Center http://achieve.uconn.edu/
• CLAS Academic Services Center http://clasadvising.uconn.edu/

For more information and resources for creating a syllabus, go to http://cetl.uconn.edu/syllabus-design/.

Class Meeting Duration
As a TA you should always arrive to class early and end class promptly. Normal MWF 3-credit courses meet for a 50-minute period. The normal TuTh schedule has classes meeting for a 1 hour and 15 minute period. Evening classes need to include 2 hours and 30 minutes of class time, and typically last 15 to 20 minutes more if you build in a break. A TA should obtain permission from the course supervisor before canceling a class or ending a class early.

Classroom Etiquette
Instructors should always be dressed professionally and behave appropriately. In addition, instructors should have students return their chairs to the proper places before leaving the classroom and erase the blackboard or whiteboard when exiting the room. Be certain that the computer and projector have been turned OFF when you exit the room. Do not expect to use times between classes for meeting with students, make-up work, etc., unless you have previously negotiated this with the next instructor teaching in your room for that particular day. Students and teachers need time to travel between classes.
Similarly, if you encounter another instructor who habitually runs over time, please bring this up with your course supervisor. Usually a polite conversation will resolve the issue.

**Attendance Policy for Students**

You may build into your syllabus an incentive for actively participating in the course. Many instructors allot 5 or 10% of the final grade but this decision will be made by the course supervisor. Here is the University policy:

The instructor describes the computation of the grades and the relation between grades and attendance at the beginning of the semester. Where grades depend on classroom participation, absences may affect the student’s grade. However, if a student was absent and the instructor reduced the grade, the reduction would be due to lack of class participation, not the student’s absence. Except for final examinations, instructors have final authority in permitting students to submit assignments late or make up examinations.

Graduate students teaching sections of a course with a lecture component, such as COMM 1000 or COMM 1100, are required to attend course lectures and their discussion sections. It is important for your students to see you in lecture, and it is also the only way for you to stay on top of course information, announcements, etc. This policy holds true even if you have taught the course before. TAs should seek permission from their course supervisor in advance to miss a lecture.

**Classroom Teaching Technology**

High-tech classrooms contain a computer and a multimedia projector and may also contain a document camera and/or DVD player. Any instructor teaching in a high-tech classroom should receive training in the equipment. In addition, in some classrooms a key is required to access the equipment. See more information about the available equipment and access requirements of each high-tech classroom at [https://ait.uconn.edu/classroom-technology/](https://ait.uconn.edu/classroom-technology/). Please note that for a few "high-tech" classrooms, instructors will need to bring a laptop. The department does not provide laptops. For information about training and support, including online manuals and quick-start guides, go to [https://ait.uconn.edu/avt-support/](https://ait.uconn.edu/avt-support/).

For classrooms with white boards, including high-tech classrooms, you need to bring your own markers. Please see the department staff to obtain suitable dry erase markers.

**Final Examinations**

Exams should be consistent with the learning objectives for the course. As stated in the Undergraduate Catalog, “Instructors of undergraduate courses shall provide a clear form of assessment of student work that shall be consistent with and sufficient for the learning goals of the course.”

Final in-class examinations for undergraduate courses must be given during the scheduled exam period and in the location assigned by the university. No exceptions. Instructors are NOT ALLOWED to alter the final examination schedule for their courses. In the case of online final examinations, though faculty may choose to make examinations available an extended period of time, students must be allowed the opportunity to take the examination during the time scheduled by the University. Final exam schedules
are online at http://registrar.uconn.edu/exams/. Note that this schedule may be preliminary. This date, however, should be included on the syllabus – with an asterisk stating that this date is from the Preliminary Exam Schedule, and the absolute final examination schedule will be published later in the term. Make sure you consult the updated exam schedule when it becomes available, as there may be changes.

There are also rules governing student absences from final exams. According to the Undergraduate Catalog:

A student who is prevented by sickness or other unavoidable causes from completing a scheduled final assessment must apply to the Dean of Students or designee for validation that will authorize the student’s instructor to give a substitute assessment. A student whose absence is excused by the Dean of Students or designee shall have an opportunity to complete a substitute assessment without penalty. A student whose absence from a scheduled final assessment is not excused in this way shall receive a failure for this assessment.

Rescheduling Final Examinations

Students should check their final examination schedule to see if they have either:

a. four examinations in two consecutive calendar days
b. three examinations in one calendar day
c. three examinations in consecutive time-blocks spanning parts of two consecutive days

If any of the above apply, they may request the Dean of Students Office to rearrange their schedule. The Dean of Students Office will select one of the examinations for rescheduling and notify the instructor, usually with a letter given to the student.

As noted above, you MUST accommodate students with approved requests from Dean of Students for exam rescheduling. Students who merely do not show up for a final exam should be given a grade of “X” or, if the student was unlikely to pass even if they had taken the final, you may give an “F.”

IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY AS A TEACHING ASSISTANT TO BE AT THE SCHEDULED FINAL EXAM. PLEASE BE CERTAIN TO CHECK WHEN AND WHERE THE EXAM IS SCHEDULED.

Make-up Exams

It is the instructor’s responsibility to administer/proctor and locate space for the make-up exams. If a student is excused by the Dean of Students from taking a final exam at the scheduled time, you will receive an official notification from the Dean, usually delivered by the student. It is then expected that you will arrange a make-up at a time convenient for you and the student.

Teaching Assistant Absence and Make-up Classes

It is a rare occurrence that necessitates an instructor's absence from class or from office hours. Only in unavoidable situations should another instructor cover classes and only in emergencies should class meetings be cancelled or office hours be rescheduled. If the course instructor must be absent from a
class because of an unavoidable circumstance, he or she should find a qualified person to cover the course and should inform the course supervisor and the Administrative Coordinator in advance. Likewise, if no one is available to cover the course and it must be cancelled, or in the event that office hours must be canceled, please inform the course supervisor and the department staff as far in advance as possible. Also make sure to inform the students in class, on HuskyCT, and via email. Contacting students via email is relatively simple: in StudentAdmin, select class roster and click on "Notify All Students" at the bottom of the page. Do not rely only on announcements made in prior classes, because some students may miss the announcements. Remember that confused students will call the Department Office for information, so be sure to notify them.

For more information on requesting time off in advance, see the GA Leaves of Absence section.

Outside the Classroom

Office Hours

Each TA is required to hold office hours on at least two different weekdays for a total of at least 3 hours per week. The time span should be different on each day. For example, not Mondays and Wednesdays 11:00-12:30, but instead Mondays 9:00-10:30 and Wednesdays 11:00-12:30. Do not schedule office hours during the time kept clear for colloquia presentations – Tuesday/Thursday 12:30–1:45 p.m.

It is imperative that you be available during your published office hours to meet/talk with students. Please do not schedule other meetings during your regularly scheduled office hours. If you will not be available during your office hours, or will be in a location other than your office, please be certain that the departmental staff are aware of this and know how to contact you, and let the students know (email your students via HuskyCT or Student Admin).

Availability

Graduate assistants need to be available to work for scheduled class times, research hours, office hours, meeting hours, exam hours, study session hours, and any other hours required by your course supervisor. Full-time assistantships involve an average of 20 hours of work per week from August 23 until May 22. Some weeks may require somewhat more work and some weeks may require less. If you are funded through our Department, we expect this job to take priority over other non-curricular activities. Therefore, TAs are expected to be on campus each day they are scheduled to teach, to attend teaching meetings and orientations, and to hold office hours, regardless of where they live.

Privacy

Guidelines for faculty concerning the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (also known as FERPA or the Buckley Amendment) can be found at: http://ferpa.uconn.edu/guidelines/. Please read this carefully as it includes legal requirements of you as an instructor. Some of the main points:

Do NOT release information to parents or others regarding a student without written permission from the student.

Do NOT post grades in hallways, such that names, Social Security Numbers, or other personal identifiers are listed. If scores or grades are posted, use some code known only to you and the individual...
student. In no case should the list be posted in alphabetic sequence by student name. Note that students will have access to final course grades on-line almost immediately after they are submitted, so there is no need to post grades at the end of the term.

Do NOT leave papers or other graded materials in hallways for students to pick up. If a student wants a paper returned at the end of the semester, you should have the student give you a self-addressed envelope (we can put the departmental code on the envelope so postage will not be necessary).

Posting grades to HuskyCT is appropriate.

**Grading**

**Responsibilities**

It is the Teaching Assistant’s responsibility to grade exams and assignments in a timely manner. Although circumstances may vary from course to course, the general guidelines are a 1-week turnaround on all non-written assignments, and a 2-week turnaround on papers. Be sure to communicate the schedule to students so they know when to expect feedback and grades. This is especially important for public speaking (wherein students need regular, detailed feedback about their performance) and for W courses (which require feedback and revision per University policy). You are also required to have your grades recorded accurately in a timely manner. In some heavily supervised courses you will be provided with a template that you must use. Do not wait until the end of the semester to enter your grades.

Note that the grade books/websites/spreadsheets are part of the University’s record keeping, and in the case of grade appeals, faculty inside and outside the department may be examining them in the future.

**Procedures**

Course assignments must be planned in advance, particularly major assignments such as papers and projects. Instructors must clearly indicate to students what is expected of them. Course assignments should be constructed in consultation with the course supervisor. Unless otherwise specified, make sure to consult with the supervisor during exam construction and before releasing grades to students.

It must be clearly stated in the syllabus how grades will be calculated. Supervisors need to approve the approach that will be used (see Calculating Grades below). All TAs need to show mid-term and final class grade distributions to their supervisors before notifying students or submitting them on StudentAdmin.
### Permissible grades

According to the University rules, undergraduates can receive grades of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Final Grades</th>
<th>Grade Points</th>
<th>Course Credits</th>
<th>Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merely Passing</td>
<td>D-</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass/Fail Pass</td>
<td>P@</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass/Fail Failure</td>
<td>F@</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audit</td>
<td>Au</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawal</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing Registration</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The P@ or F@ is assigned by the registrar, not the instructor; in other words, a student taking your course on a Pass/Fail basis earns a regular grade from you that is converted by the Registrar. (See subsection below). Internship has the grades S or U. Other temporary grades that may be used when submitting final course grades are:

- **I** Incomplete
- **X** Absent from the final exam and it is possible with a good exam grade to pass the course
If you do not submit your grades on time, the registrar will assign all your students “L”. This should not happen. It reflects poorly on your teaching commitment as well as on the department. Class grades are due within 72 hours of the final exam.

**Calculating grades**

Consistent with the literal interpretations of the description of letter grades, the Communication Department expects that the average grade per 1000-level course will be a C, and core courses (i.e. COMM 3000Q, 3100, 3200, 3300) will be about C+. Students in the senior-level courses will generally perform better than students in the 1000-level courses or core courses, because they have greater knowledge in Communication (and so have an easier time learning building on that knowledge base than beginners), are more likely to be taking courses that interest them greatly, and are often more motivated to perform well in their major. Hence, the average grade in Senior-level courses should be in the B-range, but discuss this with your course supervisor. Minor deviations from these guidelines may occur for a given class. However, over the larger number of sections taught, the average of the grades assigned by an instructor is expected to fall consistently within appropriate range. Note that the faculty do examine TA grading trends over time when assessing teaching skills.

Instructors use four main types of procedures to calculate grades during the semester. These four types are described below. You should consult with your supervisor about the system that is required for your course prior to constructing your syllabus. Do not depart from the syllabus unless you have approval from the faculty supervisor for the course.

The first procedure uses a straight scale that equates particular performance criteria with particular grades. For example, a commonly used straight scale is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Correct</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93-100</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-92</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88-90</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83-87</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78-80</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73-77</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68-70</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63-67</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-62</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-59</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In fact, this conversion of percent correct to letter grade is so common that many students have come to expect that this is the only appropriate way to grade. However, some instructors may choose to equate grades to percent correct in a different manner. If the instructor chooses to equate 80% correct with an A instead of 90%, few students will object. On the other hand, if the instructor chooses to equate 95% correct with an A-, then the students are likely to complain that this is unfair. Recognize that this sense of fairness derives from a comparison with the commonly used criteria of percent correct.
The second procedure is a curve that assigns grades based on students' performance relative to the average student in the course, adjusted for the amount of variability. How letter grades are assigned to location on the curve can vary from instructor to instructor. Some instructors choose to use a z-score conversion that equates placement in the distribution of scores with a normal distribution. Note that the choice of z-score cut-off points for grades can vary by instructor depending how "flat" or "steep" the instructor chooses to make the cutoff points. If students do better under a curve than a straight scale because the test is hard, then they will welcome the use of the curve. If students do more poorly under a curve than a straight scale because the test is easy, then they will object to the use of the curve. The worst possible case for instructor-student relations is a very easy test that the instructor chooses to curve. This leads to the perception that the students have been "down-curved" -- as opposed to "up-curved". Students see down-curving as illegitimate but up-curving as legitimate. Our experience is that students will generate "pedagogical" arguments to justify whichever grading procedure provides them the higher grade. The combination to avoid at all costs is to give a test that is so easy that it does not allow discrimination in performance, and then to curve grades in an effort to impose discrimination after the fact. Bottom-line: give tests that are of sufficient difficulty that they will discriminate between those students who know the material and those who do not. This is another reason why it is so important to go over your exams with your course supervisor in advance.

The third procedure is to look for natural breaks in the distribution of scores that correspond roughly to either percentage point cutoffs or location on a normal curve. This procedure involves a gestalt judgment about what grades should be within a given cluster of students. Note that this procedure works best when the instructor has experience using both straight scales and curves and can make defensible gestalt judgments. It is also critical that you do not use a distribution of scores that ranges to 100, because this will confuse students used to the straight-scale procedure above. The looking-for-natural-breaks approach is harder to defend on objective grounds, so it is not encouraged for beginning instructors.

The fourth procedure, also best reserved for experienced teachers, is to a priori define what level of work corresponds to a particular grade. This approach is sometimes used for courses teaching skills, in which it is possible to grade on a scale representing how close the student is performing relative to an objective skill level, such as professional standards.

Note that the systems can be combined, such as by grading papers according to an a priori definition, exams by a curve, and final grade by straight percentage. Again, the system you use must be approved by your supervisor.

**Mid-Term Grades**

Remember, all grades and distributions should be shared with the course supervisor before they are posted for students.

Instructors of 1000 and 2000 level courses are required to inform the Registrar’s Office of students who appear to be in danger of earning D, F, N or U grades before the end of the 5th week of class each semester. This is done via a special form within StudentAdmin. The Registrar’s Office will notify the students, their advisors, and others as appropriate. While submission of mid-term grades for students in
danger of earning D, F, N, or U grades in 1000 and 2000 level courses is required, you may also submit grades for students who are doing better and both positive and negative grades for students in 2000-3000- or 4000-level courses. More information on this policy can be found here: http://clasadvising.uconn.edu/policies-and-procedures-on-academic-warning-probation-and-dismissal/

**Final Grades**

Final grades are submitted using the StudentAdmin system. If a student contacts a TA regarding an inaccurate final grade, the TA should immediately report this claim to the course supervisor and, if necessary, submit a grade change request. If a student contacts a TA in regards to final grade appeal, the student should bring this to the attention of the course supervisor and follow the policies that are provided here, under the heading Changes of Course Grades: https://catalog.uconn.edu/academic-regulations/grade-information/.

**Academic Misconduct**

Appendix A of this document contains the University Policy regarding academic integrity. Please read this appendix carefully and see the complete code at http://community.uconn.edu/the-student-code-preamble/. TAs are responsible for being aware of the student conduct code and for knowing the portion of the code related to academic integrity.

In the past, during exams, students have written things on their phones, computers, bodies, hats, book jackets, etc. Students have also hidden copies of texts and notes in restrooms and tried to send pictures and messages to one another. We suggest instructors have students remove all materials from their desks, remove hats and put them under their seats, and do not allow bathroom breaks or phones or electronics to be on desks (this should be announced in advance). Of course, electronic devices should also be disallowed as students can upload documents to their cell phones, text friends with questions, or even upload notes to themselves on their devices.

In the event of suspected cheating or plagiarism, an instructor should take the appropriate action as indicated in Appendix A. As a Teaching Assistant, you MUST discuss with the course supervisor how to proceed should a case of academic misconduct arise in a course. The specifics of the situation should be taken into account: as evidence for cheating in large courses, other TAs and instructors are available as witnesses. For instance, if you suspect a student is copying from another student during a large lecture examination, you should notify the course supervisor and have the supervisor take note and deal with the suspected student. If you are proctoring an exam in your own class, you should first warn the suspected students that they need to keep their eyes on their own papers. If the suspicious behavior continues, ask one of the suspected students to move and inform them of your suspicions. At the end of the exam, collect their exams for comparison, being sure to inform the students of your intent. You will need to notify students in writing of any action. For the discovery of plagiarized papers, different actions would be called for.

Always consult with the course supervisor when academic misconduct is suspected. They will need to be involved in the action you take as a result of suspected misconduct and any student appeals.
Special Course Types

Writing-Intensive Courses

Writing-Intensive courses (also known as “W courses”) have the added goal of teaching students to write clearly. They must include major writing assignments, feedback about writing, and a portion of the grade determined by writing skills.

If you are a graduate assistant teaching a W course, you are REQUIRED to attend a W course training. In addition, even though you may not be assigned to teach a W course in the immediate future, you may be asked to take the W course training so that you are prepared should the opportunity arise for you to be assigned to a W course. There are also workshops that instructors/teaching assistants can attend. At the orientation, the university requirements for W courses will be outlined. According to the policies of the General Education Oversight Committee and the Faculty Senate, those teaching W courses must:

- Assign 15 pages of edited written work
- Not only assign writing, but teach it
- Build in a process for revision
- Inform students that in order to pass the course, they must pass the writing component. (This should be stated on the syllabus)

Honors Sections

Occasionally students will ask teaching assistants if they can convert a course (i.e., 3100) to an Honor’s credit. The Honors program says “A graduate student can only agree to an honors conversion with active and direct supervision from the faculty supervisor. Graduate students are asked to consult with a tenure-track member of the department who teaches the same course to review the development and fulfillment of the conversion project. If the conversion project is overseen by a graduate student, both the graduate student and her/his faculty supervisor must sign as course instructors on the Course Conversion Agreement form.” (See http://honors.uconn.edu/academics/honors-courses-and-credit/honors-course-conversions/ for more information.) TAs should check with their course supervisor and the Honors Advisor (Thomas Meade) to see if it would be appropriate to make such a conversion for the individual student, given the TA, the course, and other considerations. Please note, that honors conversions should take place in the first two weeks of the semester and not all courses or cases will be appropriate for an honors conversion.

Independent Study

Graduate students are NOT allowed to supervise an independent study.
Other Important Information

Helping Students in Distress

The University encourages and will support an instructor’s decision to respond to students in distress. Students in distress may display behavior that may pose a threat to self or others. Such behavior may include the following:

- Suicidal gestures, intentions, or attempts
- Other behavior posing a threat to the student (e.g., drug abuse)
- Threats or aggression directed toward others
- Demonstrated inability to care for oneself

What you can do: Move the student to a quiet and secure place. Enlist the help of a co-worker so that the student isn’t left alone and you aren’t left alone with the student; listen attentively and respond in a straightforward and considerate way. When contacting a campus resource, have as much information as possible, including your name, the student’s name and location, a description of the circumstances and the type of assistance needed, the exact location of the student in the building, and an accurate description of the student. Alert the Dean of Students Office as soon as possible at 860-486-3426. If you feel there is immediate danger – do not hesitate to call 911.

Please review the information, options, and resources available to instructors who are working with students in distress at: https://comm.uconn.edu/forcomm/#collapsepanel-347-0-0-05.

Services for Students with Disabilities

As a Primary Instructor or Teaching Assistant, you may be contacted by the Center for Students with Disabilities regarding an accommodation for a student in your class. CSD’s goal is to ensure a comprehensively accessible University experience where individuals with disabilities have the same access to programs, opportunities and activities as all others.

At the beginning of each semester, the CSD will contact you to notify you of accommodations for any students enrolled in your course(s). Some accommodations require flexibility with assignment deadlines, or increased time to complete quizzes and exams; in these cases, when there is any ambiguity about how the accommodations can or should be made, you should reach out to the disability specialist who initially contacted you to discuss the implementation of accommodations. Each course is different, as is each student, but it’s best to be proactive about discussing accommodations at the start of a semester to ensure clarity as the course unfolds. If you have a question related to the academic integrity of upholding an accommodation as recommended in your course, contact your course supervisor to discuss it and plan your next steps.

During the semester, additional students may reach out to you and mention their struggles related to completing work on time or mention specific health issues that may preclude them from performing successfully in your course. In these cases, it is helpful to suggest that the student consult with the CSD if you suspect (or they suggest) they would benefit from unique accommodations in your course.
Whenever a student receives accommodations that necessitate flexibility in courses, it is helpful to discuss the accommodation directly with the student; for example, if a student accommodation affords them “occasional extended time on assignments,” it is useful to reach out to the student and discuss your expectations for communicating this need when it arises. Nonetheless, while we encourage establishing clear expectations in all facets of a course, it must be stressed that our goal is to support every student with disability accommodations to ensure that they have a fair and reasonable opportunity to complete their coursework.

**Emergency Closings Due to Inclement Weather**

In the event of inclement weather, announcements of delayed openings, cancellations or early closings are usually made on the local TV and news apps (Channels 3, 8, & 30) and radio stations (be certain that they indicate the Storrs Campus). UConn announces emergency closings via text alerts, on the UConn Emergency Closing Line (860-486-3768) and on the UConn website at [http://alert.uconn.edu/](http://alert.uconn.edu/). Even if the University chooses to remain open, it may not be safe for everyone to travel to campus. Instructors may decide the roads are not safe for them to travel and follow the guidelines above for cancelling classes and contacting the course supervisor. Be flexible with students who may need to travel from locales that make it less safe to travel and allow them to make up any missed work.

When classes are canceled, the University provides make-up days. It is especially important to remain flexible (and remind your students of this) during the Fall semester's final examination period.

**Campus Emergencies**

UConn has developed communication and response procedures for campus emergencies. As a member of the UConn community, you should be familiar with these procedures. More detailed information can be found at the Office of Emergency Management’s website [http://oem.uconn.edu](http://oem.uconn.edu). The following is provided as an overview.

In the event of an emergency, the UConn community will be notified through a variety of mechanisms including text message, social media, email, voicemail, and the website http://alert.uconn.edu. Emails will go out to faculty, staff, and students. A voicemail will be posted at the University’s 24-hour emergency closing information number, (860) 486-3768. UConn’s Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/uconn and Twitter account https://twitter.com/uconn will also broadcast the alert. Text messages will go out to those who have registered their phone number. As a UConn student, you can register your cell phone number via the Student Administration System. Go to the Student Center and scroll down to the Personal Information section. Access the Phone Numbers area and update your cell phone information as needed. (Please Note: UConn Alert does not support Google Voice or international phone numbers. As a result, users of Google Voice or those with international numbers will not be able to receive any text messages during Emergency Communications.)

In any emergency situation, reacting quickly and calmly, and following directions, is of utmost importance. You play a critical role during emergency response procedures. Other people may not be familiar with the building they are in, the hazards presented in the building, or the procedures that should be followed to ensure their health and safety in the event of an emergency. They will depend on
you for immediate direction and assistance. Become familiar with the following terms. In an emergency, it could make all the difference.

**Shelter-in-Place** – you should stay inside the building you are already in or closest to or immediately proceed to the closest building. This is typically used for severe weather events, such as a tornado. Preferably, when a shelter-in-place order is given, the shelter will be a small interior room with few or no windows, such as a bathroom. Do not lock the doors behind you as others may also need to shelter-in-place. Do not walk around or go outdoors once a shelter-in-place order has been given.

**Evacuation** – you should leave the building or area you are in immediately and safely.

**Lockdown** – a state of isolation or restricted access instituted as a security measure. You will be the safest by quickly placing a locked door or other barricade between you and the potential threat or danger.

You can prepare in advance by doing the following:

- Determine a location to seek shelter in your building for a Shelter-in-Place order.
- Determine an assembly point outside of your building for an Evacuation order. If you are in the Communication department, the assembly point is the Area 1 parking lot just up Whitney Road, toward the Dodd Center.
- Develop a system to account for everyone in your unit. If someone is not at the assembly point, do you know how to contact them?
- Develop a communications plan. This should include both work and personal contacts.
- Go to the Office of Emergency Management’s website http://oem.uconn.edu to learn more about responses to an active threat/active shooter, a bomb threat, extreme weather, a fire or explosion, a power outage, hazardous materials accidents, and medical emergencies.
- Instructors – Before you teach a class, determine an assembly point outside of the building that you can evacuate to. In the event of an evacuation, you should instruct your class to exit the building and go to this point. You should think about this for each of the different locations that you teach in. They should be a safe distance from the building.
- Instructors – Before you teach a class, determine where it would be safest to lockdown. Know what you should do in each particular room ahead of time. You should think about this for each of the different locations that you teach in.

Take note of the following phone numbers:

Police/Fire: 9-1-1

Non-emergency calls to UConn Police: (860) 486-4800
Non-emergency calls to UConn Fire: (860) 486-4925
Student Health Services 24-hour Advice Nurse: (860) 486-4700

**Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment and Related Interpersonal Violence**

The University of Connecticut is committed to maintaining a safe and non-discriminatory learning, living and working environment for all members of the University community – students, employees,
and visitors. Academic and professional excellence can exist only when each member of our community is assured an atmosphere of safety and mutual respect. All members of the University community are responsible for the maintenance of an environment in which people are free to learn and work without fear of discrimination, discriminatory harassment or interpersonal violence. Discrimination diminishes individual dignity and impedes equal employment and educational opportunities.

A revised Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment and Related Interpersonal Violence became effective January 1, 2016. It can be found in full at http://policy.uconn.edu/2015/12/29/policy-against-discrimination-harassment-and-related-interpersonal-violence/. This policy applies to Graduate Assistants, as both students and employees of the university. It is possible for a GA to be a “Complainant” (the individual who presents as the victim of any Prohibited Conduct) or a “Respondent” (the individual who has been accused of violating this Policy).

Graduate Assistants should be aware that they may be considered to be in positions of authority with respect to this policy and its prohibition of inappropriate amorous relationships. Section X.A.3. of the policy states in part:

**Graduate Students in Positions of Authority**

Like faculty and staff members, graduate students may themselves be in a position of authority over other students, for example, when serving as a teaching assistant in a course or when serving as a research assistant and supervising other students in research. The power difference inherent in such relationships means that any amorous relationship between a graduate student and another student over whom they have authority is potentially exploitative and should be avoided. All graduate students currently or previously engaged in an amorous relationship with another student are prohibited from serving in a position of authority over that student. Graduate students also should be sensitive to the continuous possibility that they may unexpectedly be placed in a position of responsibility for another student’s instruction or evaluation.

In addition, as a university employee, a GA has specific reporting responsibilities that are outlined in this policy. More information and resources are available at http://policy.uconn.edu/2015/12/29/policy-against-discrimination-harassment-and-related-interpersonal-violence/, but the following summarizes the GAs responsibilities:

**What to Do When a Student Reports Sexual Violence, Relationship Violence, and/or Stalking**

The University is committed to protecting community safety and supporting victims and survivors of sexual violence, relationship violence and stalking. Under UConn’s Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Related Interpersonal Violence, all employees who witness or receive a disclosure of sexual violence, relationship violence or stalking involving students must immediately report to the Office of Institutional Equity (OIE). This allows the University to offer a range of resources and options to impacted students. Employees who are empowered by law to maintain confidentiality within Student Health Services and Counseling and Mental Health Services are exempted from reporting. Exceptions
also exist for disclosures made during public speak-out events and in connection with course assignments submitted to instructors.

What to do

- Listen without judgment and offer your support. “I’m sorry that this happened. I appreciated your telling me and would like to help. Is there anything I can do that would be most helpful to you right now?”
- Inform the student early in your conversation that while your conversation will be private, it will not be confidential, given your status as a Responsible Employee. The University takes these matters very seriously and after your conversation, you will be calling an office that can help, the Office of Institutional Equity (OIE). If you are a Campus Security Authority (CSA), you also will be calling UConn Police. The person disclosing will have choices after that about whether to talk with OIE or Police or engage with any other offices – that will be their decision.
- Address any medical concerns. Inform her/him of the importance of preserving evidence. A student does not need to make a report or press charges to receive medical care.
- Strongly encourage the student to report directly herself or himself to both police and OIE.
- Connect the student to resources, including http://titleix.uconn.edu. “There are a number of places on and off campus that can provide you with help, information and support. Detailed information is contained online at titleix.uconn.edu. Available resources include counseling, or discussing the need for adjustments to course, work or living situations”
- Report the information to OIE. “I know this was hard to share with me. I am now going to make a report to the Office of Institutional Equity, an office that can help. I can make the call or you can, while I sit with you. OIE will reach out to you to offer assistance and options.”

What NOT to do

- Do NOT promise confidentiality. You are not able to keep information confidential, and you should never promise confidentiality. You should instead offer privacy and discretion.
- Do NOT offer or attempt to investigate the information shared with you or mediate the situation between the people involved.

What Happens Next?

OIE and other appropriate University offices will assist the student with any immediate concerns, such as safety and housing or classroom arrangements, connect the student to on and off-campus resources, and determine the appropriate investigatory action in response to the report.

Reporting Sexual Harassment

All university community members are strongly encouraged to report all incidents of sexual harassment to OIE. Deans, Directors, Department Heads and Supervisors MUST report incidents of sexual harassment involving students or employees to OIE. Sexual harassment is any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature. It can include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment also may include inappropriate touching, suggestive comments and public display of pornographic or suggestive calendars, posters, or signs where such images are not connected to any academic purpose. All forms of sexual and sex-based
harassment and discrimination are considered serious offenses by the University. For additional information, please see titleix.uconn.edu or call OIE.

Offices to Contact

- Contact OIE at 860-486-2943 as soon as possible to make a report (within 24 hours of receiving a disclosure). As part of your discussion, ask OIE if reporting any information to your course supervisor is warranted in the situation. The appropriate offices on campus will decide whether a supervisor or department head should be informed of the situation and will handle contacting these individuals.
- Call 911 immediately if you witness a criminal event or you believe there is an immediate threat to the campus community or the safety of any person.

Course Registration and Enrollment Management

Undergraduate enrollments are handled through the Student Administration (Peoplesoft) course registration system, the same as for graduate students. As a TA, your involvement with course registration is limited to encouraging students who inquire directly to you about enrolling in your course to get on the waiting list for the course if it is full (which can only be done if the student meets the course prerequisites). Neither faculty nor TAs may give out permission numbers. Katie D’Antonio and Joel Nebres are the two undergraduate staff advisors for the department. Katie D’Antonio manages all waitlists and permission numbers for the department.

(The Peoplesoft website is available at http://studentadmin.uconn.edu/. TAs use their NetID and password in order to get access to the system. Detailed instructions and an explanation of the menus, grading, etc. can be found at https://studentadmin.uconn.edu/help/instructors-and-advisors/.

Course Registration Overview

The first opportunity available to students who would like to register for your course is during pre-registration, which typically takes place in October (for Spring semester) and March (for Fall semester). This is a period in which students can begin adding courses into their “shopping cart” but cannot “check-out” until their enrollment appointment time. Undergraduates register in reverse order of their semester standing, such that students with 8th semester standing or higher register first and incoming first year students register last. Most seats for COMM classes, except 1000 and 1100, are reserved for declared Communication majors. Beginning with registration and continuing through the first two weeks of classes, some students may try to contact a teaching assistant directly to ask for permission to enroll in a course. Most inquiries will be from students who are not majors or who have not met the prerequisites. **We do not waive prerequisites under any circumstances for any students other than those who are graduating seniors in the Honors or University Scholar program.** Just before the start of the semester, if a course and section do not have students on the waitlist, the advising staff will make unfilled reserved seats available for non-majors. If you have an extraordinary case, talk to your course supervisor and the advising staff – never give out a permission number yourself.

**You must respond to course enrollment request emails in a timely manner** to direct them to the department advising staff (see sample wording below). When students contact an instructor about a
course and do not receive a prompt response, the students then contact the department office or Department Head, so please respond to these messages as soon as possible. Send an e-mail telling students to get on the wait list and that they will be given permission numbers after all majors have had a chance to enroll or as soon as space becomes available if they are majors.

Here is a sample message:

Dear (name of student),

Thank you for your message requesting enrollment in (number/name of course).

Please put yourself on the waiting list for this course in Peoplesoft (StudentAdmin). Permission numbers will only be given to those on the wait list. You will need to have taken all the prerequisites for this course (see the University Catalog for prerequisites) in order to sign up on the waiting list.

The department’s advising staff will give permission numbers from the waiting list when space becomes available. Note that we give priority to Communication majors, and most of the seats are reserved for them at pre-registration time. Other criteria considered include a student’s status as a Communication minor, the school or college in which a student is majoring, and a student’s semester standing.

Again, I do not give out permission numbers – that is the job of the department’s advising staff, who manage the course waiting lists. I appreciate your interest in the course, and I hope to meet you in the future.

Sincerely,

(name of TA)

Course Supervision
All TAs are assigned a faculty course supervisor. Once you receive a teaching assignment, your course supervisor can inform you of the required and recommended textbooks and provide you with assistance in designing the course syllabus. He or she may also have additional course materials or teaching resources. Before the semester begins, you should discuss with your course supervisor his or her teaching expectations and sign the GA Description of Duties form. Your course supervisor is also an important resource for helping with student issues, grading, and classroom management questions throughout the semester.

Obtaining Feedback about Teaching Performance
There are a number of ways teaching assistants can get feedback about teaching performance in order to improve in teaching style and course content. First, all courses are evaluated by students towards the end of each semester (see Student Evaluation of Teaching). This information is generally available a few weeks after the SET surveys are closed. All instructors receive a numerical report and the anonymous comments from students.
Second, the course supervisor will give feedback by reviewing the syllabus, assignments, and exams, and by attending at least one of the lectures during the semester. It is sometimes difficult to schedule course evaluations with course supervisors – we encourage you to initiate this scheduling process. Course supervisors will discuss their observations with the instructor after the classroom visit and will provide a written evaluation that summarizes their feedback. This information will be used during the graduate student review process.

Third, all instructors can take advantage of help provided by the Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning [http://cetl.uconn.edu/for-teaching-assistants/](http://cetl.uconn.edu/for-teaching-assistants/). This office offers many valuable services, including seminars, classroom visits, video recording, and feedback on teaching performance. Instructors who are found to be struggling in the classroom are often referred to CETL for support and remediation.

**Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET)**

Student evaluation of course instructors is mandated by the University Senate. All classes are evaluated using an online system. Evaluations can be done in class or outside of class, using smartphones, tablets or laptops. Individual summary rating reports will be made available to each instructor.
Appendix A – Academic Integrity in Undergraduate Education and Research

The following policy on undergraduate academic integrity was originally formulated by the University of Connecticut Scholastic Standards Committee. It was adopted by the University Senate on March 31, 2008 and modified by the University Senate in December of 2012.

This appendix of The Student Code describes the types of acts that shall be considered academic misconduct by undergraduates, and it presents the process for resolving complaints of academic misconduct.

Cheating – Student Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is dishonest or unethical academic behavior that includes, but is not limited, to misrepresenting mastery in an academic area (e.g., cheating), failing to properly credit information, research or ideas to their rightful originators or representing such information, research or ideas as your own (e.g., plagiarism).

A. Instructor’s Role

1. Instructors shall take reasonable steps to prevent academic misconduct in their courses and to inform students of course-specific requirements.
2. When the instructor of record or designee (instructor) believes that an act of academic misconduct has occurred s/he is responsible for saving the evidence in its original form and need not return any of the original papers or other materials to the student. Copies of the student’s work and information about other evidence will be provided to the student upon request.
3. When an instructor believes there is sufficient information to demonstrate a case of academic misconduct, s/he shall notify the student in writing of the allegation of misconduct and the academic consequences that the instructor will impose. The appropriate academic consequence for serious offenses is generally considered to be failure in the course. For offenses regarding small portions of the course work, failure for that portion is suggested with the requirement that the student repeat the work for no credit. The written notification shall also inform the student whether the case has been referred to the Academic Integrity Hearing Board (Board) for consideration of additional sanctions. The instructor shall send the written notification to the student with a copy to the Office of Community Standards (Community Standards) within five business days of having discovered the alleged misconduct. At the Regional Campuses, a copy shall be sent to the Office of Student Affairs (Regional Campus Student Affairs). Cases that are purely technical in nature, without any perceived intent to achieve academic advantage, may be reported at the discretion of the instructor.
4. In certain cases, the Dean of a school or college or designee may become aware of alleged academic misconduct and may bring a complaint forward to the Board.
5. The student has five business days from receipt of the written notice to respond to the instructor and/or to request a hearing (see “Academic Integrity Board”). If the student does not respond within the allotted time the instructor’s sanctions shall be imposed. If the student requests a hearing the instructor shall forward the request to Community Standards or the Regional Campus Student Affairs. If the student and the instructor reach a mutually acceptable resolution of the case the instructor shall notify Community Standards (or Regional Campus Student Affairs) of the agreement. The instructor shall also notify Community Standards (or Regional Campus Student Affairs) if s/he withdraws the allegation of misconduct. A student who has been notified that s/he has been accused of academic misconduct may not withdraw from the course in which the alleged misconduct has occurred without the approval of the instructor and the appropriate
dean. If a student withdraws from a course during a pending academic misconduct case, any academic sanction imposed will overturn the withdrawal.

6. If a semester concludes before an academic misconduct matter is resolved, the student shall receive a temporary “I” (Incomplete) grade in the course until the instructor submits the appropriate grade.

B. The Academic Integrity Hearing Board

1. The Academic Integrity Hearing Board, which is administered by Community Standards, is comprised of two faculty members, two students, and a nonvoting chairperson, all of whom are appointed by the Director of Community Standards. At each Regional Campus, a designee working in conjunction with Community Standards is responsible for the organization and administration of their Academic Integrity Hearing Board. Hearing procedures will be in accordance with the hearing procedures described below. Community Standards will ensure that appropriate Dean(s) and Faculty are kept informed of the status of misconduct cases in a timely fashion.

2. The respondent or the accusing instructor may refer a case of alleged academic misconduct to Community Standards for it to be adjudicated by the Board. Community Standards will review all academic misconduct cases as they are received to determine if a case needs to be heard by the Board to determine if additional sanctions need to be considered. After receiving written notification of the academic misconduct from the instructor, Community Standards may meet with students to discuss additional sanctions outlined in The Student Code to determine if an agreement about additional sanctions can be reached. If an agreement cannot be reached between a student and Community Standards, the case will be heard by the Board.

C. Hearing on Academic Misconduct

1. An essential component of any academic integrity hearing is the determination and the weighing of the facts that pertain to the allegation(s). Therefore, it is vital that personal statements and other information be presented clearly and factually. All participants are expected to be respectful of each other’s purpose in the hearing process and to conduct themselves according to the direction of the Board.

2. Normally, an academic integrity hearing will be conducted within fifteen (15) business days of the accused being notified of the hearing.

3. The complainant (instructor or designee), any alleged victim and the respondent shall each have the right to:
   a. Be notified of all alleged violations. This will typically be done through the University e-mail system. Students are responsible for checking their University e-mail and following the instructions contained within the e-mail.
   b. Review any written complaint(s), as permitted by law, submitted in support of the allegation(s).
   c. Be informed about the process.
   d. Submit a written account, a personal statement regarding the incident and/or any relevant documentation or records. All documentation must be provided by the date established by the non-voting chairperson. Documentation will not be accepted past the established deadline and failure to provide documentation by the established deadline will not be an acceptable reason for an appeal. The decision to not present information is not an admission of responsibility.
   e. Provide the names and contact information of incident witnesses, those who have direct knowledge of the incident, and provide a list of questions for any incident witnesses,
including the involved parties. This information must be provided by the date established by the non-voting chairperson. Failure to provide witness information by the established deadline will not be an acceptable reason for an appeal. The non-voting chairperson will make every effort to interview those witnesses with direct knowledge; however, the witness cannot be compelled to speak with the non-voting chairperson.

f. Be notified of the identity of witnesses, as permitted by law, who have been called to speak at the hearing or who have been asked to provide additional written information by the Board.

g. Be accompanied by a support person. A student should select a support person whose schedule allows attendance at the scheduled date and time for the meeting(s) because delays will not be allowed due to the scheduling conflicts of a support person. A student is only allowed one support person.

h. Be present at the pertinent stages of the hearing as indicated by the Board. The deliberations of the Board are private.

i. Present a personal or community impact statement to the Board upon a finding of “Responsibility”.

j. Following the hearing, the Board shall advise the respondent in writing of its determination and of the sanction(s) imposed, if any.

4. An academic integrity hearing shall be conducted by the Board in accordance with the procedures listed below:

a. Formal rules of process, procedure, and/or technical rules of evidence, such as are applied in criminal or civil court, are not used in these proceedings.

b. A hearing shall be conducted in private.

c. Admission of any person into the hearing room shall be at the discretion of the Board. The Board shall have the authority to discharge or to remove any person whose presence is deemed unnecessary or obstructive to the proceedings.

d. When a hearing involves more than one respondent, the Director of Community Standards or designee may, at his or her discretion, permit the hearing concerning each student to be conducted either separately or jointly.

e. If a respondent, after receiving notification, does not appear for a hearing, the hearing will proceed without the student.

f. The support person shall limit his/her role in a hearing to that of a consultant to the respondent or the complainant.

g. The respondent and the complainant will each have an opportunity to provide a response.

h. The Board may request certain witnesses to provide additional or clarifying information to the Board.

i. Any opportunity for additional, clarifying questions to be asked during the hearing is at the sole discretion of the Board.

j. All documentation to be used for consideration by the Board must be submitted according to the deadline established by the non-voting chairperson.

k. Information presented by a student during a hearing that indicates a potentially egregious violation of The Student Code may be adjudicated at a future time.

l. The Board shall determine whether the accused student has violated the Academic Integrity in Undergraduate Education and Research Policy. The Board’s determination shall be made on the basis of whether it is more likely than not that the accused student violated the policy.

m. When a respondent has been found “Responsible” for any violation, the Board shall examine the student’s academic transcript and student conduct history, accept impact statements by both the respondent and complainant, and then impose the appropriate sanction(s).
n. All procedural questions are subject to the final decision of the Board.

5. If the Board finds that the student is “not responsible” for the alleged misconduct, the Board shall not impose any sanctions and the instructor must reevaluate the student’s course grade in light of the Board’s finding.

6. If the Board finds that the student is “responsible”, the instructor’s grading sanction shall be imposed. The Board does not have the authority to change or influence the grading sanction imposed by the instructor.

7. Upon consideration of a student’s record of misconduct and/or the nature of the offense, the Board may impose additional sanctions. The Board should apply these sanctions in proportion to the severity of the misconduct. These sanctions may include any sanction as described in The Student Code.

8. All administrative hearings will be recorded and the University will maintain the audio recordings as required by Connecticut state law and are the property of the University. Participants are prohibited from making their own recording. Upon written request, a respondent or complainant may review the audio recording and make appropriate arrangements for it to be transcribed on University premises. Arrangements for a transcriber and all associated costs involved in the transcription will be the responsibility of the requesting individual.

D. Hearing Appeal

1. The decision of the Board may be appealed to the Provost or his/her designee. An appeal is not a new hearing. It is a review of the record of the hearing.

2. An appeal may be sought on three grounds:
   a. On a claim of error in the hearing procedure that substantially affected the decision.
   b. On a claim of new evidence or information material to the case that was not known at the time of the hearing.
   c. To determine whether any additional sanction(s), not including academic consequences, imposed by the Board were appropriate for the violation based on the student’s conduct history and/or significance of the violation.

3. Appeals on such grounds may be presented, specifically described, in writing within five business days of the announcement of the Board’s decision.

4. The decision of the Provost or his/her designee is final. There will be no further right of appeal.

5. The Provost or his/her designee shall have the authority to dismiss an appeal not sought on proper grounds.

6. If an appeal is upheld, the Provost shall refer the case with procedural specifications back to the original Board who shall reconsider the case accordingly.