



**TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
GALVESTON CAMPUS®**

GRADUATE STUDIES FACULTY HANDBOOK 2024-2025



HOWDY!

Welcome to Texas A&M University at Galveston (TAMUG)! The Graduate Studies is a unit of the Research and Graduate Studies Office (RGSO). We help facilitate processes and procedures for graduate students, graduate faculty and the many offices that graduate faculty and students interact with on a regular basis. We hope this resource guide will assist you build your graduate student research team from recruitment to current student support. Please contact us if you have questions or concerns. Our student-centric office supports graduate student success.

Graduate Studies Office Mission Statement

"Graduate Studies supports student success and the academic mission of the graduate community at Texas A&M University at Galveston. We foster broad collaborations with graduate studies stakeholders to expand knowledge, enhance skills, and champion personal and professional development. We strive to continually create new opportunities for graduate students to become global thinkers and their success is determined by their enduring commitment and ownership to their educational experience."

Research and Graduate Studies Office (RGSO)

RGSO houses Research Operations, Graduate Studies, and the Sea Life Facility. We help support the research mission and overall mission at TAMUG. Our staff is dedicated and ready to serve.

Our Staff

Dr. Pete van Hengstum, Interim Senior Associate VP for RGSO

Dr. van Hengstum manages all operations within RGSO.

vanhenp@tamug.edu 409-740-4919

Graduate Studies

Ms. Holly Richards, Director for Graduate Studies

Advises – Current students with last starting from A-M

richardh@tamug.edu 409-740-4957

Mr. Andrew Reitberger, Assistant Director for Graduate Studies

Advises - Current students with last starting from N-Z

areitberger@tamug.edu 409-740-4941

Ms. Teckla Coven, Academic Advisor II
Advises prospective students until they matriculate
tecklacoven@tamug.edu 409.740.4937

Research Operations

Ms. Patty Gonzales, Director for Research Operations
She works with PIs on grant proposals and coordination.
gonzalepa@tamug.edu 409-740-4748

Vacant, Grant Administrator II

Ms. Peyton Adams, Grant Administrator I
pradams@tamug.edu

Marianne Terrell, Program Coordinator II
marianneterrell@tamug.edu 409-740-4479

Jennifer Mayfield, Program Coordinator
jmayfield@tamug.edu 409-740-4722

We are located on the fourth floor of MAIN Academic Building in suite 409.
Graduate Studies <https://www.tamug.edu/grad/>
Research Operations <https://www.tamug.edu/rgso/>

Recruitment Resources

Working with Prospective Research Students: Best Practices Before the Student Applies

- Communicate clearly with prospective students to let them know if you are willing to consider them as a mentee for the semester they want to start (even if it's a no). Many students are from out of state or international, so consider having a Zoom call with them to get to know them better before arranging a campus visit.
- We offer funds for prospective students to travel. Please contact us for more information.
- Keep Graduate Studies in the loop when working with a prospective student. Some students' first point of contact will be you, so it's important to refer them to Andrew Reitberger (areitberger@tamug.edu) to ensure they have the most up to date information on the application requirements, process, and deadlines.

During the Application and Decision Process

- Try to time campus visits so that both you and the applicant have ample time to decide if your team is the right fit before the application deadline. You may also consider coordinating with our office so we can be part of your student visit.
- Do your best to meet deadlines for admissions decisions. This helps us get official offer letters out timely so we can be competitive with a high-quality applicant's other admissions offers.
- If at any time you decide not to accept a student who has submitted a complete application, please reach out to them personally to let them know about your decision and reasoning prior to official decision letters being sent. At your request, we will gladly delay sending the official letter to allow you time to make personal contact with the student.
- If a student suggests deferring their start term to Summer, please keep in mind that the student may experience difficulties because of logistical challenges during the summer and their inability to attend orientation until August. Summer entry can be particularly difficult for international students given the cost of transportation off campus and the closure of campus dining services during some parts of the summer months.

Funding Resources

RGSO has limited funds for grad students throughout their time here at TAMUG. There are deadlines to apply so please be mindful and if you have questions, please contact us. To see a list of all of our funding awards, please visit <https://www.tamug.edu/grad/Incoming-Students/Student-Financial-Support.html> Below is a brief description of each award.

TAMUG Graduate Student Awards (1- and 2-Year Awards for Incoming Students)

Purpose: These funds are to help TAMUG graduate faculty recruit grad students into TAMU and TAMUG grad programs. Recipients will receive a Research Assistantship along with payment of tuition and most fees.

Erma Lee and Luke Mooney Graduate Student Research Travel Grant

Purpose: These funds help promote graduate students to travel to conferences and present their research.

Erma Lee and Luke Mooney Graduate Research Excellence Award

Purpose: This prestigious award is given to two students, one at the master's level and one at the doctoral level, at the conclusion of their thesis or dissertation for excellence in marine-related research.

Graduate Student Boost Funding

Purpose: This award for Ph.D. students only is to provide a boost for finishing their degree. Recipients will receive a one-year award in the form of a Research Assistantship. Students must be a Ph.D. candidate to be eligible for this award.

Mentoring Resources

Faculty Mentoring Academy

This year-long series allows faculty to enhance their mentoring skills by using the seven evidence-based mentoring competencies developed by the Center for Improvement of Mentored Experiences in Research (CIMER). Texas A&M University's Center for Teaching Excellence leads graduate stakeholders through these seven competencies:

- 1) Maintaining Effective Communication
- 2) Aligning Expectations
- 3) Assessing Understanding
- 4) Addressing Equity and Inclusion
- 5) Fostering Independence
- 6) Promoting Professional Development
- 7) Articulating Your Mentoring Philosophy and Plan. This program is ideal for any faculty member wanting to further develop their mentoring skills.

[https://cte.tamu.edu/Communities,-Programs-and-Models/Mentoring-\(1\)/Faculty-Mentoring-Academy](https://cte.tamu.edu/Communities,-Programs-and-Models/Mentoring-(1)/Faculty-Mentoring-Academy)

Research Compact

The Research Compact was developed by graduate stakeholders for faculty mentors to use with their graduate students. It is a management tool that helps to outline your expectations within your research group/team. Some faculty use the Compact as a basis to create a mentoring syllabus with their graduate students.

<https://vpr.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/TAMU-Faculty-Student-Compact-Fillable-Form-Sept-2015.pdf>

Graduate Student Management Suggestions

Based on feedback from our graduate students, here are the top suggestions for a successful graduate student team.

- Having a funding strategy for each member of your team. Commit to funding each graduate student from start to finish.
- Create a structured time weekly or biweekly to meet with your graduate students (either one on one or as a group).
- Encourage senior graduate students on your team to lead incoming graduate students how your research team functions.
- Set clear expectations with your incoming graduate students. Some faculty mentors use a research syllabus to list these expectations. The Compact is a great place to start to build these expectations [5](https://vpr.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/TAMU-</div><div data-bbox=)

[Faculty-Student-Compact-Fillable-Form-Sept-2015.pdf](#)

- Set up communication preferences outside of meetings (examples include email, text, chat).
- Promote professional development opportunities for your research team, and help your graduate student make network connections.
- Support the work life balance of your research team. Build opportunities for connections with your graduate students (examples include meals, parties, encouragement for their hard work, show that you care about the graduate student as a whole person).

According to our graduate students, unhealthy research teams look like the following:

- Lack of communication or frequent miscommunications
- Lack of management skills from the faculty member which translates to lack of structure (in other words no formalized research meetings). It is “if you need me, come find me”.
- Lack of expectations and/or no onboarding process for entering your research group.
- Not encouraging collaborations among your graduate students. Lack of community among members of your research group.
- Different expectations or favoritism of one graduate student over another.
- No work life balance. Constantly asking graduate students to come in on weekends to work.
- Shaming, aggressive, abusive behavior.

Other Resources

Ombuds Services

Our office offers Ombuds services to our graduate students to navigate issues regarding their student experience.

The Ombuds Officer *can*:

- Listen and help achieve a greater understanding of the problem.
- Help a student find information applicable to their situation and identify possible solutions to their problem.
- Explain University policies and procedures and how they apply to the student’s specific case.
- Help a student identify options for resolving conflicts with colleagues, staff, faculty, and advisors.
- Help a student achieve fair and equitable solutions to problems.
- Facilitate and/or mediate communication among people in conflict.
- Provide other types of assistance to help a student resolve a problem informally.
- Refer a student to formal grievance or appeal procedures if you wish to engage in a formal process.
- Identify trends or patterns of complaints that might be systemic.
- Offer recommendations for changes to policies/procedures that appear outdated or problematic, while maintaining confidentiality.

The Ombuds Officer *cannot*:

- Advocate for the University or the student, or any point of view.
- Make or change University decisions, rules, or policies.
- Set aside a decision or supersede the authority of another University official.
- Participate in formal grievance procedures.
- Provide legal advice.
- Conduct formal investigation

Aggie Honor System Office

It is the Mission of the Aggie Honor System Office to serve as a centralized organization established to educate students, faculty, and staff about the Aggie Code of Honor, respond to potential academic misconduct by Texas A&M students, and facilitate remediation efforts for students found responsible for violations of the Aggie Code of Honor.

<https://aggiehonor.tamu.edu/>

Grade Disputes

At times, graduate students dispute grades earned in courses. When students use Rule 48 <https://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule48/> and 59 <https://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule59/>, they will contact you in writing about the grade dispute and the final grade reflects a capricious, arbitrary, or prejudiced academic evaluation. When a student contacts you in writing about this, it is important to provide a written response in a timely manner.

Hiring a Graduate Assistant

Graduate students can be hired as Teaching Assistants and Research Assistants. All teaching assistants are coordinated through the academic department leadership. All research assistants are coordinated through your research grants and the Business Coordinator.

- These assistants are paid monthly.
- Assistants who are Ph.D. students will receive an out-of-state tuition waiver and payment of all tuition and **most** fees.
- Assistants who are master's students will receive an out-of-state tuition waiver.
- Position is benefits eligible (i.e., health insurance).
- To receive these benefits above, the assistant must be hired at 50%, meaning the assistant is working 20 hours per week.

Additional Hours

The assistant cannot work additional hours without permission. To seek permission to work more hours, please reach out to us and allow enough time to make this request. We cannot backpay students. Upon permission,

- Domestic graduate assistants can work up to an additional 9 hours per week (fall and spring)
- Domestic and International assistants may work up to an additional 20 hours per week in summer
- Domestic and international graduate assistants may work up to an additional 20 hours per week during periods when classes are not in session

New Teaching Assistantship Considerations

- 1) New teaching assistants must complete the Center for Teaching Excellence Teaching Assistant Institute prior to teaching. <https://cte.tamu.edu/graduate-student-support/teaching-assistant-institute>
- 2) International students from non-English speaking countries must be English certified to teach. <https://grad.tamu.edu/academics/academic-success-resources/elp>