



# Faculty Handbook



Jud

2025

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## Preface

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### 1. The Purpose and Scope of this Handbook

The University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) *Faculty Handbook* is designed to provide faculty members with basic information about the university, its policies, and its procedures as well as faculty rights and responsibilities. Official UHD policies, University of Houston System Administrative Memoranda (SAMs), and state and federal regulations take precedence over statements in this handbook in the event of conflicting or omitted information. All University of Houston-Downtown administrative and business operations are subject to federal, state, Board of Regents, and University of Houston System laws and regulations, and to standards of good business and management practice.

This handbook does not constitute an employment contract with any employee. Nothing contained in the *Faculty Handbook* changes the employment at-will status of any employee or creates any additional rights, remedies at law, or expectations of continued employment.

The University of Houston-Downtown reserves the right to change, amend, or abandon any of the policies or procedures referenced in the *Faculty Handbook* at any time. UHD will attempt to make every effort to notify employees when an official change in policy or procedure has taken place; however, faculty members are responsible for remaining informed about all UHD policies, procedures, benefits, and working conditions.

The online version of the *Faculty Handbook* will be kept as current as possible. Information online will supersede that of any printed version available.

This handbook is not intended to be a comprehensive policy guide. Rather, it is complementary to other materials and resources available to faculty, including:

- UH System Administrative Memoranda
- UH System Board of Regents Policies
- UHD Policy Statements
- UHD Undergraduate Catalog
- Staff Handbook

Other resources available on the UHD website

### 2. Faculty Handbook Guidelines for Revision

- A. The *Faculty Handbook* must be reviewed for revision at least every three years.
- B. No later than the beginning of the Fall Semester in years whose last two digits are multiples of three (e.g. 2024, 2027, etc.), the Provost shall direct the Presiding Officer of the Faculty Council to initiate the review process.

- C. Pursuant to the directive from the Provost, the Presiding Officer of the Faculty Council shall form a Faculty Handbook Revision Committee to solicit proposed revisions from the Council, the standing shared governance councils, and the Deans' Council, . The Revision Committee shall include, when possible, a representative from the Office of the UHS General Counsel, a representative of the Office of the Provost, the Faculty Ombuds, and at least three faculty members appointed by the Council.
- D. If the Revision Committee finds that no substantive changes are necessary, its notification to the Faculty Council Presiding Officer will satisfy the review requirement.
- E. If the Revision Committee determines that changes may be necessary, it shall forward those suggestions to the Council and the Provost for consideration. The Council and/or Provost may seek review by other bodies on campus as appropriate.
- F. The Revision Committee shall refrain as much as possible from stylistic changes and will detail its suggested changes in its submission of recommendations. The Faculty Council Executive Committee shall review all changes and resolve problems by sending the changes back to the reviewing body for further consideration, by submitting the matter to the full Council, or by its own determination.
- G. Upon completion of the review, the *Faculty Handbook* with the proposed changes clearly indicated will be forwarded for review to the General Counsel and then for approval to the Provost and the President. If the recommendations are accepted, then the Provost will so notify the Faculty Council Presiding Officer. The General Counsel or Provost shall return the recommendations to the Faculty Council Presiding Officer if the recommendations are declined. The President of the Council will then notify the Revision Committee to determine further action.
- H. Normal access to the *Faculty Handbook* shall be through the [Faculty Handbook](#) website. Timeline: Suggested revisions by the primary review committee should be completed prior to May 31 of an odd-numbered year with a publication date of not later than August 1. Previous editions will be archived online.
- I. Nothing in this procedure shall preclude faculty governance bodies in their ordinary course of activities from considering changes in the *Faculty Handbook* in matters that pertain to their jurisdiction, including non-substantive changes such as updated hyperlinks, URLs, email addresses, or phone numbers. The procedures described herein only describe the mandatory review of the *Faculty Handbook* that takes place periodically.

### 3. Acknowledgments

#### The Inaugural Faculty Handbook Taskforce:

Austin Allen, Kirk Hagen, Michelle Moosally, Gene Preuss, Nell Sullivan, and Pat Williams

#### 2025 Update Taskforce:

Sandra Dahlberg, John Rountree, Jerry Johnson, and Judith Quander, Abraham Leija, Isaac Elking, Ryan Pepper, Casey Akins, Maria Benavides

#### Future Updates:

This handbook will be updated every three years by the Council. If you notice anything in the handbook that is inaccurate or needs to be updated, feel free to notify the Faculty Council Presiding Officer, who will archive suggestions for the next update committee. Emails can be sent to: [facultycouncil@uhd.edu](mailto:facultycouncil@uhd.edu)





## Welcome from the UHD President

Dear Faculty,

Whether you are a veteran faculty member or new to the University of Houston-Downtown, I offer you my sincere gratitude for extending your knowledge, talent, and service to UHD. It is an exciting time to be a part of our campus community. After a full year of celebrating our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, we are aggressively moving forward with plans that will continuously improve retention and graduation rates, increase our academic offerings to meet workforce demands, and expand our campus with a larger footprint and greater social, cultural, and intellectual impact.

Here at UHD, we take our mission quite seriously as a community of diverse faculty, staff, students, and regional partners dedicated to nurturing talent, generating knowledge, and driving socioeconomic mobility for a just and sustainable future. These words are more than a recorded mission; they are representative of our shared conviction as a Comprehensive Regional University in which 70% of our first-time in college students are first-generation, and 65% of the student population is economically challenged. For many of our students, we hold the key to breaking intergenerational cycles of poverty and promoting social mobility. Houstonians have long looked to our university as one that is affordable, accessible, and achievable. Thank you for joining us in this important, engaging work.

This Faculty Handbook outlines your rights, roles, and responsibilities as faculty, including information about such topics as compensation, rank, course evaluations, applicable laws, grievance protocols, and travel. I ask that you read the handbook carefully to familiarize yourself with current policies and procedures that impact your professional duties. If you are a veteran, please ensure that you are aware of any policy updates.

I encourage you to design robust and challenging courses that amp up learning and engage students in high impact practices, such as service learning, undergraduate research, and field experiences that connect them to professionals in their fields of interest. Doing so will go a long way in ensuring our students are ready to compete in the complex workforce when they complete their degree requirements. I also encourage you to engage in your own scholarship and/or creative activity, find your individual means of contributing to the community, and become an active member of the university.

Again, thank you for choosing UHD. I look forward to getting to know you as we co-labor in this very important work.

Sincerely,



Loren J. Blanchard, Ph.D.

President



## Section I: University Overview

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### 1. University of Houston-Downtown: Mission, Vision, and History

#### *Mission Statement*

The University of Houston-Downtown is a dynamic and welcoming community of faculty, staff, students, and regional partners dedicated to nurturing talent, generating knowledge, and driving socioeconomic mobility for a just and sustainable future.

#### *Vision*

The University of Houston-Downtown will be the university of choice for Houstonians seeking to contribute to the social, intellectual, and cultural lives of their communities.

#### *History*

The University of Houston-Downtown is a public university, offering undergraduate degrees and a limited number of master's programs. It was established in 1974, when the assets of the private South Texas Junior College were transferred to the University of Houston. By 1979, the Texas Legislature approved the new institution as a separate entity within the University of Houston System. In 1983, the name was changed to the University of Houston-Downtown (UHD). UHD's One Main Building was constructed in 1929 on the banks of White Oak and Buffalo Bayous as the Merchants and Manufacturers Building, now listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

During the late 1990s, the UHD's facility grew with the addition of the Academic Building—comprised of more than 40 classrooms and lecture halls, the Technology Teaching and Learning Center, the Wilhelmina Cullen Robertson Auditorium, and a food court—and the Jesse H. Jones Student Life Center, a building devoted to student recreation and fitness. In the early 2000s, the campus expanded with the construction of the Commerce Street Building, which houses the College of Public Service, and the acquisition of the renovated Willow Street Pump Station on San Jacinto Street, which serves as a meeting and exhibition space. The University opened the Shea Street Building in 2007 to house the College of Business. In 2015, UHD opened the new Girard Street Parking Garage and Welcome Center on the site of the former One Main Parking Garage. In 2019, UHD opened the Sciences & Technology Building (STB) as the first LEED Gold building in the University of Houston System along the White Oak Bayou. The STB houses research and teaching laboratories, as well as many private study and meeting spaces for students. The [Wellness and Success Center](#) opened January 17, 2023. The Department of Sports & Fitness was created to offer physical fitness and recreation opportunities to support student success and to enhance the collegiate experience.

The University's location in downtown Houston gives students, faculty, and staff easy access to METRO's light rail line and all of Houston's major freeways.

The University's first degree program was a bachelor's degree in criminal justice. Today, the degree inventory includes more than 50 degree programs, providing students a wide range of academic options for face-to-face, online, and hybrid instruction at the bachelor's and master's levels. UHD offers degree programs in its four colleges: the College of Business, the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, the College of Public Service, and the College of Sciences and Technology.



UHD is the second largest institution in the University of Houston System. UHD is nationally recognized for its outstanding academic opportunities, including accredited programs and productive community partnerships with local businesses, foundations, non-profit organizations, local school districts, community colleges, and universities.

With its technological innovations to enhance pedagogy and learning, UHD has also received national recognition for its wireless campus. The University prepares students to thrive in the global economy of the 21st century through innovative degree programs, nationally recognized technology, and interaction with its diverse student population, which is diverse in every sense of the word – in ethnicity, age, financial background, and life situation. *U.S. News and World Report* has named UHD one of the nation's most ethnically diverse higher education institutions. In 2014, UHD was of only five universities in Texas to receive the Carnegie Foundation's prestigious Community Engagement Classification. UHD Earns High Marks in **U.S. News & World Report** for Fifth Consecutive Year. For the 2024-2025 Academic Year, Online Programs Ranked Among the Nation's Best:

- No. 26 for Best Online Master in Criminal Justice Program.
- No. 55 for Best Online Bachelor's Programs for Applied Administration.

As defined by U.S. News and World Report, Regional Universities offer a full range of undergraduate programs and some master's programs and are split into four regions: North, South, Midwest and West. **UHD is considered a Top Regional University (West) with a ranking of 78.**

UHD is highly ranked in these lists as well:

- No. 40 among Top Public Universities in the West; and
- No. 27 among Top Performers on Social Mobility for Regional Universities (West).

UHD now appears in these listings for Regional Universities (West):

- Least Debt;
- Economic Diversity; and
- Ethnic Diversity.

## 2. Organizational Structure of the University of Houston System

University of Houston-Downtown belongs to [the University of Houston System](#) (UHS), which is governed by the UH Board of Regents and overseen by the UHS Chancellor, who also serves as the President of the University of Houston itself. In addition to the University of Houston, there are two other component UHS universities: University of Houston-Clear Lake (UHCL), and the University of Houston-Downtown (UHD). The UH System also includes two multi-institutional teaching centers, UH System at Sugar Land and UH System at Cinco Ranch. UHD offers programs at Lone Star College-Cy Fair, Lone Star College- Kingwood, and UHD Northwest located at Lone Star College- University Park. Each component university is distinct and has its own President, administration, faculty, mission, and degree programs.

## 3. Organizational Structure of the University of Houston-Downtown

### ***Overview of UHD's Executive Organization***

UHD's chief executive is the President, who is currently assisted by six Vice Presidents, each of whom represents one of the University's major divisions:

- Provost/Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs (AA)
- Vice President for Administration and Finance
- Vice President for Human Resources (HR)
- Vice President for Advancement and University Relations.

- Vice President for Enrollment Management
- Vice President for Student Success and Student Life

[The Organizational Charts](#) available on the UHD website illustrate the full scope of UHD's institutional organization.

### ***The Division of Academic Affairs***

For faculty, Academic Affairs is the most relevant division of the University. The division is overseen by the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs/ Provost.

[Academic Affairs](#) includes the four degree-granting colleges:

- [Marilyn Davies College of Business](#)
  - Department of Accounting & International Business
  - Department of Finance, Information Systems, Economics and Risk Management
  - Department of Management
  - Department of General Business, Marketing & Supply Chain Management
- [College of Humanities and Social Sciences](#)
  - Department of Arts and Communications
  - Department of English
  - Department of History, Humanities, and Languages
  - Department of Psychology
  - Department of Social Sciences
- [College of Public Service](#)
  - Department of Criminal Justice and Social Work
  - Department of Urban Education
- [College of Sciences and Technology](#)
  - Department of Computer Science and Engineering Technology
  - Department of Mathematics and Statistics
  - Department of Natural Sciences

Other areas of the Academic Affairs include:

- [W.I. Dykes Library](#)
- [Office of Research and Sponsored Programs](#)
- [Office of Data Analytics & Institutional Research](#)
- [Academic Advising](#)
- [Impact Learning Office](#)
- [Center for Community Engagement & Service Learning](#)
- [Study Abroad](#)
- [Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence](#)

## **4. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB)**

The Texas Legislature created the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) in 1965 to provide leadership and coordination for the Texas higher education system, and thus it has considerable impact on all UHD students, faculty, and staff. The Coordinating Board's eleven members are appointed by the governor and serve for six-year overlapping terms. The governor also designates the chairperson and vice chairperson of the Coordinating Board. To qualify, no

Coordinating Board member may be professionally employed in education or serving on the board of a community college. Members serve without pay and are appointed from various geographical sections of the state. Meetings are held quarterly in Austin and at other times when called by the chairperson. The Coordinating Board appoints the Commissioner of Higher Education to oversee the daily operations of the agency.

In broad terms, the Coordinating Board plans for statewide higher education needs, aggregates statewide data, and coordinates distribution of higher education resources. It has general authority in the areas of academic programs, finance, and facilities, and has been designated the administrator at the state level for federal educational programs. Its purview includes Texas public universities, community colleges, technical institutes, medical and dental schools, and other allied health units. The resources of the state's private colleges and universities also are considered by the Coordinating Board in its coordination efforts (though its regulatory powers are limited to state institutions). The Coordinating Board's specific responsibilities include the development of formulas for equitable financing of institutions of higher education, the review of requests to expand an institution's authority to plan degree programs in new disciplines, the authorization of elections to establish public community college districts, and recommendations concerning proposals for campus construction. It also serves as a central administrator for certain grant and student financial aid programs.

The Coordinating Board advises legislators about higher education and develops rules to implement legislative decisions. The Board compiles and analyzes legislative appropriations requests as well as financial, performance, and enrollment data from higher education institutions statewide to help lawmakers make policy and funding decisions.

In its regulatory capacity, the Coordinating Board collects, analyzes, and disseminates volumes of data on many aspects of higher education, including the number of degrees awarded, college applicants and acceptance rates, enrollment, developmental education needs, transfer-student success, post-graduation success, college costs, course inventories, degree-program inventories, physical facilities, space utilization, professional licensure, and graduation rates. A précis of each state institution's data is published as an institutional resume on the THECB website.

The Coordinating Board oversees the periodic review of the performance of degree programs. Reviews of undergraduate programs are based on both institutional self-reporting and federal data. Graduate degree programs undergo a review every seven years that begins with a self-study that is then reviewed by external consultants with expertise in the program's discipline.

Several advisory committees focusing on specific aspects of higher education aid the Coordinating Board in its work.

## **5. UHD Planning and Budget Development Process**

### ***Overview***

As part of UHD's Strategic planning process, the President works with faculty, staff, and students to develop long-range strategic goals that reflect the University's mission and align with the Board of Regent's approved UH System goals and strategic plan. UHD's current strategic plan, [\*UHD Strategic Plan 2022-2027\*](#), was developed in 2022 by the UHD Strategic Planning Group, a task force comprised of faculty, administrators, staff, and students. This plan is used as a guide throughout the annual planning and budget development cycle to ensure that the proposed short-term goals, strategies, and expenditures are consistent with UHD's long-range goals.

The annual planning and budget development process is how decisions are made about the

allocation of resources to address UHD's strategic priorities and initiatives. The process is "unit-based" in that plans and funding requests to support them are developed by operational units across the university. Individuals working in these units have opportunities to contribute to their units' plans. At each organizational level, plans from lower-level units are combined, refined, and submitted to next-level supervisors. For example, plans from a college's departments contribute to a college plan, which is then submitted to the Provost. Plans from the colleges and other units within the Division of Academic Affairs (e.g., Library, etc.) are combined by the Provost and submitted to the University Budget Advisory Committee Members (UBAC). The UBAC considers the plans submitted by the Provost and the other Vice Presidents for their divisions, and submits its ranked recommendations to the President. Once the President has approved the UHD plan and budget, it is submitted to the University of Houston System (UHS) for consolidation into the UHS Plan and Budget. Finally, the UHS Plan and Budget are submitted to the UHS Board of Regents for final approval.

### ***Steps in the Process***

The planning and budget development process begins in the Fall Semester when the President distributes guidelines for development of the budget for the next fiscal year, which begins the next Fall Semester. These guidelines describe the context within which plans and funding requests will be developed and emphasize that priorities should be assigned in accord with the university's mission and strategic plan.

Within the divisions, the Vice Presidents share the President's guidelines, focusing on the elements that are of relevance to their divisions. The same kind of communication is cascaded down to all levels of each division. In accord with these guidelines, faculty and staff develop plans for their units and requests for funding to support them. Within the colleges, disciplinary groups of faculty (e.g., the PSY faculty, NS faculty, CJ faculty) communicate their plans and requests to their Department Chairs. Based on this input and ongoing communication with faculty and staff in the department, the Department Chair assembles a department plan, which is sent to the Dean, who then assembles a college plan. The college plan is shared with the faculty and staff, and a college-wide meeting is scheduled for discussion and feedback. After considering this feedback, the Dean modifies the plan, schedules a second college-wide meeting to share it, and forwards the modified plan to the Provost. This begins a period of discussion between the Provost and the Deans and the heads of other units within the Division of Academic Affairs. These discussions and the final assembly of a division-level plan must be completed by the early part of the following Spring Semester (approximately the end of January).

In the Fall Semester of each year, the Provost appoints the Academic Affairs representatives to the University Budget Advisory Committee (UBAC), which serves as an advisory body to the President on matters related to the development, implementation, and review of the university's annual operating budget and capital budget. The committee promotes transparency, collaboration, and strategic alignment in financial planning, and ensures that budgetary decisions support the mission, values, and long-term priorities of the university.

The UBAC is chaired by the Vice President, Administration and Finance. The appointed members of the committee will serve renewable two-year terms. Members include the Faculty Advisory Council Presiding Officer, Staff Council President, Student Government President or Representative, Graduate and Professional Student Association President or Representative, Senior Vice President, Academic Affairs/Provost, Vice President, Administration and Finance, Academic Dean (rotate each college), Department Chair (rotate each department), Faculty member – Marilyn Davies College of Business, Faculty member – College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Faculty member – College of Public Service, Faculty member- College of

Sciences and Technology, Vice President, Student Life and Student Success or Designee, Vice President, Enrollment Management or Designee, Vice President, University Advancement and Relations or Designee, Vice President, Human Resources or Designee, and Director, University Budget.

The contextualization of requests requires units to include explanations of how the budget initiatives requested will contribute to the achievement of UHD's strategic goals. During the Spring Semester, the UBAC considers each Vice President's plan and initiative requests for the new budget. The UBAC's final responsibility is to recommend a unified plan and budget to the President for consideration by the end of the Spring Semester. The President will propose the university's plan and budget to the University of Houston System Chancellor, who will subsequently present the UHS budget to the Board of Regents. UHD's proposed plan and budget is presented to the Board of Regents by the end of the Spring Semester in years when the Texas Legislature does not meet, and later in the Summer in years when the Texas Legislature meets. In legislative years, the final UHS plan and budget approval may occur later than described above if there is a delay in the approval of the appropriations bill by the Texas Legislature. The Texas Legislature must finalize the appropriations bill before the UHS plan and budget is approved by the Board of Regents.

## **6. Official UHD and UH System Policies: Policy Statements, SAMs, and BOR Policies**

UHD is governed according to university and system-level policies, as well as by state and federal regulations, to which the university policies must conform.

### ***UHD Policy Statements (PS)***

At UHD, university practices are governed by policy. The university-level policies specific to UHD are the [UHD Policy Statements](#), also known as PS documents. These PS documents outline procedures, principles, and deadlines related to all university activity. They are divided into ten numbered categories, each corresponding to a specific aspect of the university:

<a href="#">1. Administration</a>	<a href="#">6. Grant Administration</a>
<a href="#">2. Personnel</a>	<a href="#">7. Property Management</a>
<a href="#">3. Academic Affairs</a>	<a href="#">8. Information Systems</a>
<a href="#">4. Student Affairs</a>	<a href="#">9. University Advancement</a>
<a href="#">5. Financial Affairs</a>	<a href="#">10. Faculty</a>

Faculty members should become familiar with the PS documents governing Academic Affairs (PS03), Grant Administration (PS06), and Faculty (PS10), which are particularly relevant to their instructional, curricular, research, and other professional concerns. The [HR Website](#) has a useful [Index of Terms](#) that is a valuable resource for understanding policy. Whenever possible, the Faculty Handbook refers to the particular PS documents relevant to each topic.

### ***UH System Administrative Memoranda (SAM)***

As part of the University of Houston System, the University must abide by the system-level policies, known as the [System Administrative Memoranda](#), or SAM. UHD Policy Statements are written to align and comply with SAM. If a conflict occurs between any UHD Policy Statement and the SAM, the PS document must be revised to conform to system-wide policy.

### ***UH System Board of Regents Policies***

As the governing body for the entire UH System, the Board of Regents (BOR) develops and enforces

overarching policies, the [UH System Board of Regents Policies](#), that regulate the workings of the UHS and the Board itself. All PS documents and SAM must comply with the Board of Regents Policies, which in turn must comply with state and federal law.

### ***State and Federal Regulations***

As an accredited state university receiving both state and federal funding, UHD must also conform to Texas laws and regulations, as well as to federal law and regulations. In all instances, state and federal statutes supersede system and institution policy. Any PS document, SAM, or BOR policy that conflicts with state or federal law or regulation must be revised to ensure legal compliance. The UH System Office of General Counsel may assist the UH System in complying with state and federal law by proposing policy language.

### ***Relevant Policies***

University of Houston-Downtown Policy Statements are available on the [UHD Policies Table of Contents](#) webpage.

The University of Houston System Administrative Memoranda (SAM) are available on the [UH System Policies](#) webpage.

The UH System Board of Regents Policies are available on the [UH System Board of Regents Policies](#) webpage.

## **7. Institutional Accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools**

University of Houston-Downtown is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges ([SACSCOC](#)) to award baccalaureate and masters degrees. University of Houston-Downtown also may offer credentials such as certificates and diplomas at approved degree levels. Questions about the accreditation of University of Houston-Downtown may be directed in writing to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, GA 30033-4097, by calling (404) 679-4500, or by using information available on SACSCOC's website ([www.sacscoc.org](http://www.sacscoc.org)).

## **8. Degree Program Accreditations by Disciplinary Organizations**

In addition to the university's accreditation by SACSCOC, some of UHD's individual degree programs have received accreditation from specialized disciplinary organization.

The Marilyn Davies College of Business' Bachelor of Business Administration and Master of Business Administration degree programs are accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB International, 777 South Harbour Island Boulevard, Suite 750, Tampa, FL 33602-5730; telephone: 813-769-6500; [www.aacsb.edu](http://www.aacsb.edu)). Accreditation documentation is available in the College of Business, Room B400, Shea Street Building.

The Computer Science and Engineering Technology Department's Bachelor of Science in Engineering Technology degree programs in Control and Instrumentation Engineering Technology, Structural Analysis and Design, and Fire Protection Engineering Technology are accredited by the Technology Accreditation Commission of the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, Inc. (ABET, 415 North Charles Street, Baltimore, MD 21201; telephone 410-347-7700; [www.abet.org](http://www.abet.org)).

The Urban Education Department's programs that lead to teacher certification (Educator Preparation Programs, or EPP) are accredited by the Texas Education Agency (1701 N. Congress Avenue, Austin, Texas, 78701; Telephone: 512-463-9734; [www.tea.state.tx.us](http://www.tea.state.tx.us)).



The Natural Science Department's Bachelor of Science degree program in Chemistry is approved by the American Chemical Society (1155 Sixteenth Street, NW Washington, DC 20036; telephone: 800-227-5558; [www.acs.org](http://www.acs.org)).

The College of Public Service's Bachelor of Social Work degree program is accredited by the Council for Social Work Education (1701 Duke Street, Suite 200 Alexandria, VA 22314; telephone: 703-683-8080; [www.cswe.org](http://www.cswe.org)).

## **Section II. Shared Governance**

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### **1. Overview of Shared Governance**

Shared governance, while a widely recognized concept across the academy, takes shape uniquely within each institution. Shared governance is a framework of shared responsibility and shared accountability in decision-making, and is built upon the foundations of consultation, transparency, and trust. At the core is an understanding that multiple constituencies must work cooperatively to achieve institutional success, usually through representative processes. At UHD, [PS 01.A.03-Academic Shared Governance Policy](#) establishes the framework for enacting shared governance in academic matters, with particular attention to defining how university policy statements can be created or revised with faculty, staff, and student input. Other policy statements address more specific responsibilities of faculty and administrators related to tasks such as annual evaluations and Tenure and Promotion.

Shared governance occurs at the department, college, and university levels. It is the responsibility of all members of the university to carry out their various roles and abide by the philosophy and structure indicated in policy. While faculty members are free to critique and seek alteration of official policies and practices through means established in PS 01.A.03, they cannot unilaterally suspend, alter, or ignore policies. Administrators and staff are similarly bound by the University's official policy statements and must seek to make changes only through the formal shared governance process. If faculty members have questions about the interpretation or application of policy, they are encouraged to speak with administration, the faculty ombuds, and/or Faculty Council leadership.

### **2. Faculty Council**

A faculty council means a representative faculty organization at one of the institutions of higher education in the UH System and can only be established by the Board of Regents.

A faculty council is advisory only and may not be delegated the final decision-making authority on any matter. UHD's Faculty Council shall represent the entire UHD faculty body and advise the institution administration and any system administration regarding matters related to the general welfare of the institution, including curriculum, faculty affairs, as well as research and scholarship. The UHD President appoints appropriate administrators to assist the faculty council in these areas.

There are 33 faculty representatives on the UHD Faculty Council. The president appoints one faculty representative from each college.

There are 4 elected non-tenure track positions (one from each college) with no more than 8 total non-tenure track faculty serving on the faculty council during the academic year. There are no more than two elected T/TT representatives from any one department in the college. College elections occur by April 1 and presidential appointments are completed by the third week in April.

### 3. Committees

Committee work counts as part of the T/TT faculty service commitment at UHD, and through the committee work, we carry out many of our shared governance practices. There are committees at the department, college, university, and occasionally the system level. All departments and colleges have mechanisms for selecting committee members to serve at those levels. Members of university-wide committees and councils are chosen according to the specifications of the relevant policy or Senate rules, depending upon the committee. Workload varies significantly among committees.

#### ***Eligibility/Membership***

For many committees, all members of the Faculty Assembly are eligible to serve. The Faculty Council Bylaws, Article Two, Section 2, defines the Faculty Assembly as “All university employees holding rank as full-time faculty [lecturers, clinical, and tenured/tenure-track]”. The faculty assembly excludes those faculty members with administrative appointments above the department chair. On some committees, membership is limited to T/TT faculty, and others require tenure (such as University Rank and Tenure Committee) or a certain number of years of service. When possible, efforts are made to match faculty to committees based on interest or expertise and to ensure representation of all colleges and/or academic departments.

Lecturers and Clinical faculty typically have fewer service obligations than T/TT faculty, and those are defined uniquely in each department or college and should be specified in annual appointment letters. Lecturers that assume significant service obligations should have their teaching course loads reduced by a comparable amount. Adjunct faculty are paid per course and so have no contractual service obligation, but they may serve on some departmental or college-wide committees on a volunteer basis.

Committees may have one representative from each department, one from each college, or simply one or more faculty representing the entire Faculty Assembly.

#### ***Receiving a Committee Appointment***

At UHD there are several mechanisms whereby faculty members are appointed to committees, most commonly the following: 1) nomination by the Department Chairs and the Deans, 2) election by members of the college or department, or 3) election/approvals by Faculty Council members. Notable exceptions are departmental Rank and Tenure committees, upon which all the tenured faculty except the Department Chairs serve; the University Rank and Tenure Committee, for which each department Rank and Tenure Committee elects a member; and task forces, advisory councils, etc., which may be appointed by division heads or the Faculty Council.

Since most university-level committees exist by approval of the President, the President’s Office, or Provost’s Office as a designee of the President sends out the official letters of appointment for these committees. Information about university-wide committees is maintained on the UHD [University Committees](#) webpage.

In most cases, committee members should consider themselves to be serving in representative roles. Except for committees considering questions of personnel or individual employment (e.g., hiring, evaluation, Tenure and Promotion), committee products, discussions, and processes are public, and committee members should feel free to share information with colleagues.

***Committee Member Responsibilities***

Most university committee appointments are for one or two years. Service constitutes part of full-time faculty duties for which faculty members are evaluated annually (see [PS 10.A.05-Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty Performance Evaluations](#)). Faculty who serve on committees are expected to attend meetings regularly, contribute to carrying out the committee charge(s), and keep their colleagues informed of committee activity and output.

If a faculty member is unable to carry out their responsibilities due to attendance challenges or other conflicts, they should ask to be replaced on the committee to ensure full representation and effort of the committee. Unless the committee has a predetermined meeting time, committees must seek a time which accommodates the majority; any member whose schedule is an outlier in that set of times should consider resigning from that committee.

**4. Meeting Protocols**

In the absence of specific protocols, committees operate under the general conventions of Roberts Rules of Order. Committee chairs should publish agendas to the members in a timely manner and make reasonable efforts to ensure that all members have opportunities to participate and contribute to agenda development. Standing committees must keep regular minutes that are reviewed and approved by the committee, and disseminated to the university community via the [UHD University Committees](#) website; other committees should keep minutes to ensure that institutional knowledge and decision-making processes are maintained. Committee decisions and recommendations are expected to be the product of a discussion/vote process, unless specifically identified as otherwise in the original charge or appointment.

**5. Staff Governance**

Parallel to the Faculty Council is the UHD [Staff Council](#). It is led by elected officers and also has a body of representatives who meet regularly to consider issues pertinent to the staff.

**6. Student Governance**

The student body has a representative voice at the university level via the UHD [Student Government Association](#) (SGA). This organization is led by elected officers and senators. The SGA nominates students to serve on university committees in the shared governance process and chairs the Council of Organizations, the representative body for student clubs and organizations. SGA also helps develop university policy through its participation in the shared governance process. The organization is supported by the [Division of Student Success and Student Life](#) (SSSL).

## **Section III. Faculty Appointments and Evaluation**

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### **1. Faculty Appointment Titles and Ranks**

At UHD, there are currently five types of faculty appointments: adjunct faculty, lecturers, visiting faculty, clinical faculty, and tenure-line (tenured and tenure-track) faculty (T/TT). The specifications for each type are outlined in [PS 10.A.19- Tenured & Tenure Track Academic Appointments](#) Policy and [PS 10.A.20- Non-Tenured & Non-Tenure Track Academic Appointments](#) Policy. Tenured Faculty that wish to ease into retirement may enter into a contract to undergo Voluntary Modification of Employment to reduce their workload before retiring, as described in [PS 02.A.06- Voluntary Modification of Employment](#) policy.

#### ***Adjunct Faculty***

Adjunct Faculty are part-time employees of the University whose workload consists solely of teaching and may not exceed 40% of a full-time equivalent (two courses), except in limited cases in which enrollment numbers or programmatic considerations necessitate increasing adjunct assignments. According to [PS 10.A.22- Adjunct Policy](#), “An Adjunct Faculty member is hired under a fixed term employment agreement not to exceed one academic term. This agreement is mutually renewable at the end of each term and is conditional. Specifically, the department's offer to teach a particular course may be withdrawn if the course is canceled due to insufficient enrollment or if the course is reassigned to a full-time faculty member.”

#### ***Clinical Faculty***

Clinical Faculty are full-time faculty. According to [PS 10.A.20 - Non-Tenured & Non-Tenure Track Academic Appointments](#), the appointment of clinical faculty supports academic programs with special programmatic or research needs such as client or field based programs, or specialized laboratory assistance. Clinical faculty will have substantial experience in non-instructional discipline-appropriate contexts, at minimum a master's degree, and other requirements established by the hiring department. Clinical faculty members are expected to be active practitioners in their field who bring to the curriculum current perspectives and practices in their field. Clinical faculty are able to be promoted to the next rank after a six-year period. The guidelines and procedures for the promotion of clinical faculty can be found in PS 10.A.21.

#### ***Lecturers***

Lecturers are full-time employees of the University but are not eligible for tenure. Their workload consists primarily of teaching, usually 5 three-semester-credit-hour courses (or 15 semester credit hours) per long-semester, or the equivalent. They have fewer service obligations than T/TT faculty, but a modest amount of service may be required as determined by the department or college and should be specified in the hiring contract and/or appointment letter. Exceptional lecturers who have served the University as a lecturer for more than five consecutive years with consistently high-performance evaluations, and want to be considered for the senior lecturer shall follow the procedures established in PS 10.A.21.

#### ***Visiting Faculty***

According to PS 10.A.20, §3.5.5, visiting faculty appointments are non-tenured/non-tenure track appointments typically made for one year that may be renewed for additional years at the discretion and approval of the faculty and Chair of the relevant Department and Dean. Visiting faculty may be appointed to honor their accomplishments as a scholar, artist, or professional to complete or assist with the development of research or creative projects (for external funding or otherwise), or for the purposes of teaching.

***Tenured/Tenure Track (T/TT) Faculty***

T/TT faculty include those tenure-eligible faculty members in their probationary period and tenured faculty members. The workload for T/TT faculty includes teaching, service, and scholarly and creative activities, but a significant portion of that workload is comprised of teaching. As specified by [PS 10.A.04- Faculty Teaching Workload Policy](#), “The standard course load for a faculty member during the combined long-semesters is 21 semester credit hours (9/12 or 12/9) of classroom instruction or the equivalent.” Tenure-line faculty must pursue Tenure and Promotion in rank according to the procedures outlined in [PS 10.A.01- Rank and Tenure System Policy](#). [P S 10.A.19 Tenured & Tenure Track Academic Appointments Policy](#) designates the following ranks:

- *Instructor*: The rank of instructor is intended to allow an individual completing their terminal degree to have a seamless transition into the rank of assistant professor upon awarding of their terminal degree. The rank of instructor is normally in the tenure-track with time spent as instructor counted in the probationary period. No instructor, however, is awarded tenure. Under special circumstances, the President may waive the inclusion of an instructor in the tenure-track by written mutual agreement. Time spent as an instructor is normally counted in the probationary period toward tenure (§3.5.1.1)
- *Assistant Professor*: a probationary, tenure-track faculty member who has the requisite terminal degree.
- *Associate Professor*: a faculty member who has been granted tenure and whose achievements as Assistant Professor merit promotion according to the procedures outlined in [PS 10.A.01](#).
- *Professor*: a faculty member who has been granted tenure and whose achievements as Associate Professor merit promotion per the procedures outlined in [PS 10.A.01](#).
- *Emeritus*: In addition to the four ranks specified for current T/TT employees, the University may also confer the rank of Emeritus upon retiring faculty members who have rendered ten or more years of distinguished service to the University of Houston-Downtown ([PS 10.A.10- Granting Emeritus Status to Faculty & Privileges of Emeritus Status Policy](#)). The Emeritus status is awarded at the rank the faculty member holds upon retirement (e.g., a retiring Associate Professor so honored would become Associate Professor Emeritus).

Tenure-Track faculty can be hired with years of experience towards tenure. While the UHS Policy, [06.A.09 Academic Personnel Policies](#) allows for a faculty member who was in the rank of assistant, associate, or full professor at another institution of higher education to be hired with up to 3 years of credit towards the probationary period, UHD typically awards no more than two years so as to allow the faculty member at least three years of service to UHD before going up for tenure and/or promotion. It is noted that the SAM also recommends a probationary period of no more than four years if a faculty member is appointed as an associate professor or professor without tenure.

The Rank and Tenure Process is discussed in detail in Section 3.5, below.

***Relevant Policies***

[PS 02.A.06](#)- Voluntary Modification of Employment

[PS 10.A.19](#) Tenured & Tenure Track Academic Appointments

[PS 10.A.04](#) Faculty Teaching Workload

[PS 10.A.10](#) Granting Emeritus Status to Faculty & Privileges of Emeritus Status [PS 10.A.22](#)

Adjunct Policy

[PS 10.A.22](#) Adjunct Policy

[SAM 06.A.09 Academic Personnel Policies](#)

## **2. Full-time Faculty Hiring Policy and Procedures**

[PS 10.A.13- Faculty Employment Policy](#) describes the hiring procedures for full-time faculty searches to fill T/TT positions must follow the protocols described in the “Procedures” section of the policy; these searches are national in scope and are usually conducted over the course of a semester or academic year.

### ***Relevant Policies***

[PS 02.A.21](#) Equal Opportunity Policy

[PS 10.A.13](#) Faculty Employment Policies

## **3. Full-time Faculty Annual Evaluation**

Regardless of tenure status, all full-time faculty members at UHD are evaluated on an annual basis. The results of performance evaluations are used to determine eligibility for merit raises, and they factor into Tenure and Promotion decisions for T/TT faculty and contract renewals for lecturers. Because the evaluation has immediate and long-term effects on their professional relationship with the institution, faculty members should take special care in preparing their annual reports, reviewing the appropriate policy and departmental criteria, and providing sufficient evidence for all accomplishments in all areas of evaluation. New faculty should consult their Chairs and departmental colleagues for examples of well written reports.

### ***Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty***

T/TT faculty are evaluated according to the terms of [PS 10.A.05- Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty Performance Evaluations Policy](#). For these faculty members, the three annual categories of evaluation include teaching, service, and scholarly/creative activities, the same categories used in Tenure and Promotion decisions. Faculty members should read the entire policy, keeping in mind the following:

- The current policy assigns a 50% weight to the teaching category, 25% to service, and 25% to scholarly and creative activities (§3.1.1).
- Specific evaluation criteria for the following year will be disseminated to the departmental faculty, the Dean, and the Provost no later than December 15 in the Fall Semester. These criteria, along with the corresponding assessment rubrics, are developed by the tenured/tenure-track faculty and the Department Chair (§3.1.2).
- The annual performance reports for T/TT faculty are due January 31 each



year (§3.5).

- By March 25 each year, the Chair responds to faculty members' annual performance reports evaluating their performance and explaining their scores. The report is based upon the evaluation performed by the Chair and a subcommittee of three members of the departmental Rank and Tenure Committee (see §3.1.2).
- Faculty members may meet with Chair to discuss their ratings (§3.1.9).
- Faculty members may appeal their ratings by requesting a performance review by a departmentally elected committee comprised of at least three tenured members of the department. The committee reviews the faculty member's performance and the Chair's evaluation and recommends a rating to the Dean separately from the Chair. Faculty members dissatisfied with the Dean's resolution of their appeals may file a formal grievance in accord with [PS 10.A.02- Faculty Grievance Policy](#) (§3.1.10).

### ***Lecturers and Clinical Faculty***

Lecturers are evaluated annually by processes outlined in [PS 10.A.21](#). Faculty should consult their Department Chairs for the criteria and rubrics by which they will be evaluated. These rubrics are submitted to the College Dean and Provost by December 15 for the following year (PS 10.A.21, §3.3.1). Faculty should consult their Department Chair or supervisor for specific guidelines for the format and content of the annual self-report. The report is due by January 31 of each year. By the second Monday in April Department Chairs/supervisors will provide written feedback and scores based on the established rubric (§3.3.3.1). Faculty may meet with the Chair/supervisor to discuss their ratings (§3.3.4.1). After consulting with the department Chair/supervisor, faculty dissatisfied with their evaluation scores may file a formal grievance in accord with PS 10.A.02, Faculty Grievance Policy (§3.2.1).

### ***Relevant Policies***

[PS 10.A.02](#)- Faculty Grievance Policy

[PS 10.A.05](#)- Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty Performance Evaluations Policy

[PS.10.A.21](#)- Non-Tenured/Tenure Track Full-Time Faculty Evaluation and Promotion Policy

## **4. Adjunct Faculty Hiring and Evaluation**

Adjunct faculty comprise a critical segment of the UHD faculty. They staff needed sections at times when enrollment outpaces the University's ability to hire full-time faculty in growth areas. As contingent faculty, that is, as faculty whose employment is contingent upon institutional and departmental needs from semester to semester, their hiring and performance evaluations are not addressed by the policies covering full-time faculty, but instead are governed [in PS 10.A.22- Adjunct Policy](#). Part-time instructors should read this policy in full, as well as all materials provided to them by their departments.

[PS 10.A.22- Adjunct Policy](#) includes important information about the roles and rights of adjunct faculty. A few key points include the following:

- According to §3.4.1 of the policy, "Adjunct Faculty must meet the requirements for hire set forth in [PS 10.A.20 Non-Tenure Track Appointments Policy](#)." To serve our students properly and to satisfy our accreditation agencies, the University must ensure that all faculty are qualified to teach the courses they are assigned.
- Adjunct faculty are hired under a fixed term, renewable employment agreement to teach by the course on a semester-by-semester basis (§3.2.1), and their employment is contingent upon enrollment.

Adjunct faculty are not tenure eligible.

- In accordance with [PS 10.A.20](#), an adjunct faculty's teaching assignment in a given semester should not exceed 40% of a full-time equivalent (6 semester credit hours, or 2 courses), except in cases in which enrollment numbers and a lack of available instructors necessitate increasing adjunct assignments.
- Adjunct faculty are compensated per course at a rate that is disclosed in the offer letter (§3.3) and set by the Chair and the Dean (§3.3.1 & 3.3.2). In practice, that rate has historically been consistent across departments in the same college. The doctoral rate is higher than the master's rate.
- Each department must supply the clerical, technical, and material support its adjunct faculty needs for instructional effectiveness (§3.4.4).
- The policy requires that each department "establish written policies and procedures regarding the Periodic Evaluation of its adjunct faculty." In addition, each department assigns a particular full-time faculty member the responsibility for supervising and evaluating adjunct faculty (§3.5.1). In some departments, that person is the Department Chair; in others, the Program Coordinator or Assistant Chair is responsible for evaluating adjuncts.

Adjunct Faculty may request copies of the policies and procedures from their Department Chair or from the departmental faculty member assigned to supervise them.

### ***Relevant Policies***

[PS 10.A.20- Non-Tenured & Non-Tenure Track Academic Appointments Policy](#)

[PS 10.A.22- Adjunct Policy](#)

## **5. Tenure and Promotion: Principles and Process**

The Rank and Tenure System policy statement [PS 10.A.01](#) concerns tenure-track (instructors and assistant professors) and tenured (associate professors and professors) faculty. The Rank and Tenure (R & T) process applies to tenured/tenure track (T/TT) faculty as well as to any administrators or professional staff who entered via a tenured or tenure-track position. Lecturers are considered full-time faculty but are not eligible for tenure or promotion under this policy.

All T/TT faculty should familiarize themselves with this policy.

The Board of Regents delegates authority to the UHS Chancellor to award tenure based upon the recommendation of a component university's President. The President's recommendation is based on review by the faculty member's departmental Rank and Tenure committee, Chair, and Dean, as well as the University Rank and Tenure Committee and the Provost, in accordance with the process established in the [PS 10.A.01](#).

The tenure-track probationary period is a maximum of seven years, and most tenure-track faculty members apply for tenure in the fall of their sixth year of employment. During the initial appointment process, a faculty member may negotiate with the Dean to apply up to three years' full-time teaching experience at UHD or a previous institution toward the probationary period, as per [SAM 06.A0.9-Academic Personnel Policies](#). A faculty member's appointment letter specifies the number of probationary years. Faculty hired at the rank of Professor (sometimes referred to as "full professor")

### ***Process***

During the probationary period, in addition to the annual reports submitted each January (governed by [PS 10.A.05- Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty Performance Evaluations Policy](#)), candidates submit interim reports in their second and fourth years; the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year reports offer feedback on their progress toward tenure based on published departmental criteria and university policy. If a faculty member is awarded years towards tenure, these reports may take place during the first or third year.

By **the first Monday in May** in the calendar year in which they will apply for tenure and/or promotion (in the fifth year for most assistant professors), candidates must inform their Department Chair, the chair of the department Rank and Tenure Committee, and their College Dean of their intention to apply for promotion and tenure by the first Monday in the following October. Upon notification of intent, the Dean will verify that the candidate is indeed eligible for promotion and tenure by the third Monday in May.

By **the first Monday of October** of that same calendar year, the faculty member submits a promotion and tenure portfolio for evaluation to all parties at the college level (department committee, Chair, and Dean).

By **the second Monday in December**, the department Rank and Tenure Committee and the Department Chair will submit their separate recommendations to the Dean.

By **the third Wednesday in January**, if at least two of the three recommendations from within the college are positive, the Dean will forward their recommendation, along with the department Chair's and department committee's recommendations, to the Provost.

The Provost convenes the University Rank and Tenure Committee by the fourth Monday in January and provides all candidate materials to the committee. By **the first Monday in March**, the university committee sends its recommendations, along with all earlier recommendations to the Provost/VPAA.

The Provost also reviews all candidate files and earlier recommendations. The Provost ensures that all materials and recommendations are provided to the President so that the President can inform the candidate of his decision by **April 1**. The President notifies the faculty members who will not be recommended for promotion and tenure that they will not be employed beyond the seventh year. The President's recommendation is considered by the Board of Regents during the Summer and, if accepted, the candidate is awarded Tenure and Promotion, effective September 1.

### ***Tenure***

Tenure is not guaranteed to faculty but is awarded based on a careful evaluation of the candidate's performance during the probationary period. According to university policy, if a tenure-track faculty member fails to meet the requirement for the appropriate terminal degree or other institutional requirements, the faculty member may receive a notice of non-reappointment during the probationary period. The policy and procedures for non-reappointment, along with the faculty member's rights to redress the issue, are found in [PS 10.A.07- Non-Reappointment of Probationary Tenure-Track Faculty Policy](#).

The general criteria for tenure, according to policy, include:

- an overall excellent performance to date in the areas of teaching, service, and research/creative activities;
- the likelihood of continued and enhanced performance for the benefit of the

- institution;
- the institutional need for the faculty member's field of expertise.

After several years at the Associate Professor level, a faculty member may apply for promotion to Professor. Although there is no minimum number of years a faculty member must serve as an Associate Professor before applying for promotion to Professor, at least six years is recommended.

### ***Tenure/Promotion Report Portfolios***

Candidates should organize Tenure and Promotion report portfolios according to the outline provided in [PS 10.A.01- Rank and Tenure System Policy](#). They should carefully craft a narrative that supports their candidacy and include sufficient evidence and relevant material to substantiate their claims. In all cases, the candidate should present evidence that demonstrates a high level of engagement in the professional field. Candidates whose files include substantive and clearly presented evidence of effective and sustained engagement at all levels have a greater likelihood of success.

Since Fall 2012, Tenure and Promotion portfolios have been submitted electronically. The Provost's Office provides all candidates for Tenure and Promotion with instructions for uploading portfolios.

### ***Criteria for Tenure and Promotion***

Within the scope of the university policy, each department develops its own specific criteria for determining qualifications for promotion and tenure within the disciplines. The chair of the departmental Rank and Tenure committee disseminates the departmental criteria to the Department Chair, the Dean, the Provost, and faculty members within the department. Candidates should request copies of the criteria upon entering the tenure track and keep abreast of any changes that may occur during the probationary period. The sections below offer some context for consideration in each of the three areas, but faculty should seek out department-specific interpretations of excellence in these areas.

***Teaching.*** For promotion to Associate Professor, the candidate must have a demonstrated record of excellence in teaching. In addition to classroom/on-line course instruction, there are many other ways of demonstrating a commitment to teaching, such as developing courses, participating in faculty development opportunities, participating in assessment activities, and developing course materials, student study materials, textbooks, and study guides. Faculty should consult their department's Rank and Tenure criteria and consult with their tenured colleagues to determine what their discipline's best teaching practices are and what constitutes convincing evidence of teaching success.

***Scholarship and Creative Activities.*** Candidates should demonstrate a record of achievement in research/scholarship/creative activities and publication, or other demonstrable creative activity related to their discipline, during the probationary period, as well as potential for sustained achievement after tenure/promotion has been granted. Evidence can also include honors and awards from regional and national organizations, grants written and awarded, exhibits, papers delivered at conferences, and letters of support from respected disciplinary colleagues from other institutions.

The candidate's publications or creative artifacts should be of high quality and clearly documented, although candidates should seek guidance from their Department Chairs and department Rank and Tenure committee on the number of publications and the types of publications (articles, books, single- or multiple-authors, and the types of journals) or creative artifacts that meet the departmental/disciplinary criteria. Usually, publications should be peer-reviewed, but individual departments and disciplines have their own criteria

for what constitutes legitimacy. In general, a “peer-reviewed” publication is one that has gone through a rigorous editorial process in which disciplinary experts evaluate the manuscript and verify its worthiness for publication. “Blind peer-review” refers to a process in which the reviewers do not know the identity of the author (s). Some recent issues have arisen over whether pay-to-print services count as legitimate publications, especially with the proliferation of on-line journals. Although in some disciplines publishing in these venues is acceptable, candidates should conform to the expectations of their disciplines and departments and ask their departmental Rank and Tenure committee for guidance.

***Service.*** Service can be performed at the community, professional, system, university, college, or department level, and includes the kind of labor that furthers the work and the reputation of the University. Examples include serving on professional, institutional, or community committees and boards. Service leadership may also be demonstrated by serving as an officer in a state, regional, or national organization; a conference organizer; or an editorial board member. Please note that to count as service for purposes of evaluation and tenure/promotion decisions, community service must be performed in one’s capacity as a disciplinary or pedagogical expert. For example, judging exhibits at the Houston Science and Engineering Fair is considered service, but taking a Boy Scout troop camping is not academic service (though doing so is commendable). All service activities should also be documented.

### ***Criteria Specifically for Promotion to Full Professor***

To be considered for promotion to Professor, the Associate Professor must demonstrate a sustained record of excellence in teaching, leadership in both service and professional activities, major contributions in scholarly/creative activities, and use of their talents to benefit the department and the University. Based on accomplishments as Associate Professor, and additionally on the promise of future accomplishments as indicated by work in progress, the applicant exhibits the potential for sustained continuation of excellence in teaching, leadership in service and professional activities, and major contributions in scholarly/creative activities after promotion to Professor.

### ***Stopping the Tenure Clock***

Under certain rarely occurring circumstances, probationary faculty may seek administrative approval to suspend the Rank and Tenure process for a specified period and extending the tenure clock. Such approval must be based on appropriate circumstances and carried out according to official university policy and procedures. The policy and procedures governing stopping the tenure clock are articulated in [PS 10.A.23- Extension of the Probationary Period for Tenure-Track Faculty Policy](#).

Faculty members should consult with their Department Chair to determine whether stopping the tenure clock is an appropriate option in their situation.

### ***Post-Tenure Review and Revoking Tenure***

Dismissal and revocation of tenure is governed by [PS 10.A.06- Faculty Dismissal Policy](#). Tenured faculty members can only be dismissed for cause, that is, for specific valid reasons such as “academic cause, moral turpitude, medical reasons, financial exigency, and elimination of degree programs or departments for reasons not mandated by financial exigency” (§2.1). The review of tenured faculty to ensure sustained levels of excellence (post-tenure review) is governed by [PS 10.A.16- Performance Evaluation/Post-Tenure Review of Tenure Faculty Policy](#).

In other words, post-tenure review would determine whether there is “academic cause” for dismissal and revocation of tenure. As indicated in that policy, the annual performance evaluation specified in PS10.A.05 is also used to perform post-tenure reviews. Tenured faculty members should familiarize themselves with all relevant policies.

### ***Additional Resources***

[Texas Education Code §51.922.](#)

Mandatory Retirement Prohibited.

[Texas Education Code §51.942.](#)

Faculty Tenure

[Texas Education Code §51.943.](#)

Renewal of Faculty Employment Contracts.

### ***Relevant Policies***

[PS 10.A.01](#)- Rank and Tenure System

[PS 10.A.05](#)- Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty Performance Evaluations

[PS 10.A.06](#)- Faculty Dismissal

[PS 10.A.07](#)- Non-Reappointment of Probationary Tenure-Track Faculty

[PS 10.A.16](#)- Performance Evaluation/Post-Tenure Review of Tenured Faculty

## **Section IV. Faculty Rights and Responsibilities**

### **1. Academic Freedom**

The faculty of UHD endorses and abides by American Association of University Professors’ (AAUP’s) [Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure](#). Students and faculty members of public universities enjoy robust protection of their First Amendment rights in their teaching and in their research. UHD faculty members are protected from institutional censorship, disciplinary action, and other adverse actions arising from speech that is constitutionally protected. This protection extends to political, religious, and social views that are unpopular or controversial. Faculty members are entitled to First Amendment protection in teaching, research, publication, and artistic performance and curating. Teaching is also protected by the First Amendment, but faculty members must take care not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter that has no bearing on their subject.

When speaking or writing in public forums, including their classrooms and in social media forums, faculty members should make it clear when they are speaking as private citizens and when they are speaking on behalf of the institution. When speaking or writing in any official capacity, faculty members should keep in mind that their speech reflects on the values of the university but may not represent those values. In such circumstances, faculty members should exercise due restraint and respect for others in their public pronouncements and publications.

When conducting official business within the shared governance framework, faculty members are free to engage in criticism of official university policies and procedures but may not unilaterally disregard official policy.

Academic freedom does not prevent departments, colleges or the university from establishing appropriate academic standards. For example, individual departments or units operating within the framework of shared governance policies have the right to establish common syllabi, tests, grading standards and so forth, so long as those decisions do not abridge speech that is protected by the First Amendment. Faculty members must also respect the rights of students and must not take any adverse action against any student who expresses views that are protected by the First Amendment rights.

The protection of academic freedom is guaranteed by UH System and UHD policy. As a component university in the University of Houston System, UHD is bound by all Board of Regents Policies



pertaining to academic freedom. The University's [PS 03.A.25- Academic Freedom Policy](#) recognizes the "clear and widely recognized principles of academic freedom" set forth by AAUP and incorporates these principles, echoing the language used in the [UH System Board of Regents Policy 21.03](#):

**3.2 Teaching.** The faculty member is entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing the subject matter, but the faculty member should be careful not to introduce into the teaching controversial material which has no close relation to the subject.

**3.3. Research and Publication.** The faculty member is entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of results, subject to the adequate performance of the faculty member's other academic duties; but research for personal pecuniary return should be based upon an understanding with the authorities of the university.

**3.4 Professionalism.** The faculty member is a citizen, a member of a learned profession, and an officer of an educational institution. When speaking or writing as a citizen, the faculty member shall be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but the faculty member's special position in the community imposes special obligations. As a person of learning and an educational officer, the faculty member should remember that the public may judge the profession and the institution by the faculty member's verbal or written comments. Hence, the faculty member should always strive for accuracy, exercise appropriate restraint, show respect for the opinion of others, and make every effort to indicate that the faculty member is not speaking for the institution.

UHD has a constellation of university policies ensuring that academic freedom is protected in university practices and procedures related to faculty. For example, [PS 10.A.02- Faculty Grievance Policy](#) gives faculty members recourse to the formal grievance process when they believe that their academic freedom has been infringed (§3.1.2). [PS 10.A.06- Faculty Dismissal Policy](#) confirms that dismissal cannot be threatened or used in order "to restrain faculty members in their exercise of academic freedom" (§2.1). Similarly, [PS 10.A.16- Performance Evaluation/Post-Tenure Review of Tenured Faculty Policy](#) suggests that tenure revocation cannot be used as a means to restrain academic freedom.

### ***Relevant Policies***

[PS 03.A.25- Academic Freedom Policy](#)

[PS 10.A.02- Faculty Grievance Policy](#)

[PS 10.A.06- Faculty Dismissal Policy](#)

[PS 10.A.16- Performance Evaluation/Post-Tenure Review of Tenured Faculty Policy](#)

[UH System Board of Regents Policy 21.03 Academic Freedom Policy](#)

### ***Other Relevant Documents***

["1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure with 1970 Interpretive Comments."](#) *AAUP Policy Documents and Reports*. Eleventh ed. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015.

## **2. Research and Creative Activities**

### **2a. Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects/IRB**

The Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS) is the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the University of Houston-Downtown. It operates under the auspices of the University's

[PS 03.A.23- Protection of Human Subjects Policy](#). The goal of the committee is to protect the welfare of persons involved in research, in accordance with federal regulations, and to ensure conformity with the ethical principles established by the [Belmont Report](#) of the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research. All UHD faculty, staff, and students proposing to engage in research activities involving the use of human subjects must seek approval from the CPHS prior to the initiation of the project. This requirement applies to both funded and non-funded research.

More information about the CPHS is available on the [UHD CPHS webpage](#).

- To apply for new research that involves Human Subjects, click on “[IRB Forms](#)” link from the CPHS website.
- To complete the Human Subjects Training offered by the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI), Click on the [CITI Human Subjects Training Link](#) from the CPHS website.

Applications for new research, renewals, and revisions should be completed and submitted to the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. From there, applications will be distributed to the CPHS committee chair so that it may be reviewed. In cases for which a full Board review is required, such as research involving minors or other at-risk populations, the committee will meet in its entirety and all committee members will review the application.

### ***Relevant Policies***

[PS 03.A.23](#) Protection of Human Subjects

[PS 06.A.07](#) Misconduct in Research, Scholarly, Creative and Government-Sponsored Activities

[PS 06.A.09](#) Financial Conflicts of Interest in Research and Scholarship

UH [Responsible Conduct of Research Policy](#)

### ***Other Relevant Documents***

[The Belmont Report: Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research](#). National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research. 18 April 1979.

## **2b. Internal Grants: ORCA, Faculty Development Project, and Long-Term Faculty Development**

Funds for research and professional development are available at all levels of the university.

### ***Department-level and College-level Grant Funding***

All colleges are allocated a certain amount of Maintenance and Operations funding (M&O) each year that can be used to support faculty research and travel to conferences. The University has a process for distributing funds to departments. Departmental methods of distributing funds to faculty members vary; for instance, in some, a fixed amount is assigned to each faculty member, while in others, faculty must request funds from the Department Chair. Faculty members should ask their Department Chair how research and travel funds are distributed in their department.

Colleges are also allocated a certain amount of Higher Education Assistance Funds (HEAF) funds

each year from the State to be used only for one-time purchases of material items and construction (paper, books, software, laboratory equipment, space redesigns, etc.). Distribution of HEAF funds is also at the discretion of the Dean and subsequently the departments. The Deans may reserve portions of M&O and HEAF funds to be awarded to faculty for various needs at the college level.

### ***University-level Funding***

There are three primary sources for university-wide funding:

**Organized Research and Creative Activity (ORCA)** funding is for research or creative activity. The use and distribution of these funds are governed by [PS 06.A.08- Organized Research and Creative Activities \(ORCA\) Program Policy](#), which limits eligibility for ORCA grants to T/TT faculty. The Research and Innovation Council oversees the ORCA program. A call is sent out once per year and proposals submitted each fall for the peer-review process. In 2025, \$118,000 was allocated and requests could not exceed 10% of the total pool. The awards may include course-reassigned time, as the project requires and funding permits. All funds for research must be approved and administered via the protocols established by the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs.

- **Faculty Development Project Grants** are governed by [PS 10.A.24- University Faculty Development Award Program Policy](#), and awards of up to 10% of the total funds available in that year for projects focused on professional and teaching development, in contrast to the research focus of the ORCA awards. The Faculty Affairs Council oversees this program. Each fall, faculty submits proposals which are then peer-reviewed. FDA does not cover course releases. For Academic Year 2025, \$105,000 in grants have been allocated.
- **The University Funded Faculty Leaves** are fully paid leaves awarded to T/TT faculty for purposes of research or creative activity. The distribution of these awards is governed by [PS 10.A.08- University Funded Faculty Leave Program Policy](#). Funded leaves are often for one semester, but the faculty member may choose to distribute their leave across two long-semesters at half-time upon request. A call is sent out once per year. As of 2025, there is funding available for six faculty members per year to receive a leave.)

### ***Miscellaneous Internal Grants***

Faculty may also have opportunities to apply for funds made available by various programs or divisions of the institution. Amounts and application processes will vary. For example, in recent years the Provost's Office has provided funding for courses or programs employing high-impact practices to promote student success and retention, and the Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning provides funding for courses or programs with service-learning components.

### ***Relevant Policies***

[PS 06.A.08](#) Organized Research and Creative Activities (ORCA) Program

[PS 10.A.08](#) University Funded Faculty Leave Program

[PS 10.A.24](#) University Faculty Development Award Program

## **2c. External Grants: Government-Sponsored and Private Foundation Grants**

The [Office of Research and Sponsored Programs](#) (ORSP) is the designated office for, and is responsible for the authorization and submission of all university proposals for external support for research and creative activities from all sources ([PS 06.A.06- Guidelines for the Administration of Sponsored Programs by the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs Policy](#)). The office is also responsible for fiscal administration of all externally funded projects and programs. The goal of ORSP is to provide high-level support to principal investigators, faculty, and staff about the

development, institutional review, submission, and fiscal oversight of extramural proposals receiving external funding.

The University distinguishes between a grant and a gift. The Division of University Advancement typically oversees gifts or donations (hereafter referred to as “gift”) to the University, which include a voluntary transfer of money, services, or property (including equipment, intellectual property) from a donor without any expectation or receipt of direct economic benefit or provision of goods and services from the recipient.

In contrast, a grant, contract, cooperative agreement, subgrant, subcontract, consortium agreement, purchase order, or memorandum of understanding (hereafter collectively referred to as “grant”) is an agreement formalizing the transfer of money or property from a sponsor in exchange for specified services (e.g., outreach, research, training, development, instruction) and will require specific deliverables such as documentation of itemized expenditures or technical reporting.

A simple rule of thumb for distinguishing between a gift and a grant at the proposal stage is to determine whether the sponsor will require any financial or technical reporting, whether the project will include specific deliverables, and whether the subsequent award will contain terms and conditions. If so, the proposal will result in a sponsored project or program grant.

Faculty that have questions about whether and opportunity constitutes a grant or gift mechanism should consult the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs.

### ***Governmental versus Private Foundations***

Governmental sponsors are federal agencies that make federal external funding available to institutions of higher education to support research, education, and creative activities. Private foundations offer private external funding to educational institutions, non-profits, and hospitals. Funds from private organizations follow a different set of compliance regulations.

### ***ORSP Support and Responsibilities***

ORSP has oversight of the Pre-Award, Post-Award, and Compliance functions of grants management. In the Pre-Award phase, ORSP provides high-level support to principal investigators, faculty, and staff about the development, institutional review, submission, federal regulations and compliance, and administration of extramural projects and programs. Other responsibilities of pre-award administration include: negotiating and accepting awards on behalf of the University; drafting, negotiating and executing subcontracts; ensuring institutional compliance with Federal and State regulations, sponsor policy and University rules; representing the campus while interacting with sponsors; coordinating pre-award and post-award actions that require either campus or sponsor prior approval; and troubleshooting problems related to the administration of sponsored projects. ORSP also has fiscal responsibility and oversight of awarded sponsored projects. Other post-award duties include creating new Facilities and Administration (F&A) cost centers, preparing invoices for reimbursement, approving requisitions and vouchers for reimbursements and travel, and handling time-and-effort certifications.

### ***Faculty Responsibilities***

The Principal Investigator (PI) or project director has the responsibility to carry out the technical work on behalf of UHD and to operate within the administrative, fiscal, and compliance terms and conditions imposed by the sponsor, UHD, the federal government, the State of Texas, and any other applicable entities. The PI authorizes all expenditures of grant funds within the required constraints and subject to approval by UHD and works with UHD to submit financial reports and audits.

### ***Compliance***

The government requires that all institutions of higher learning receiving research or sponsored-

programs funds maintain the most ethical environment possible and take prudent action to assure compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and sponsor guidelines. UHD fully supports a proactive approach to ethical business conduct and regulatory compliance. UHD provides training and support to faculty, students, and staff in regulatory requirements for research to promote and ensure the highest standards for research compliance university wide.

### ***Relevant Policies***

[PS 06.A.01](#) Debarment and Suspension Policy

[PS 06.A.02](#) Disclosure of Lobbying Activities Policy

[PS 06.A.03](#) Standards of Conduct in Government-Sponsored Research

[PS 06.A.04](#) Procurement Integrity Policy

[PS 06.A.05](#) Privacy Act and Freedom of Information Policy

[PS 06.A.06](#) Guidelines for the Administration of Sponsored Research

[PS 06.A.07](#) Misconduct in Research, Scholarly, Creative and Government Sponsored Activities

[PS 06.A.08](#) Organized Research and Creative Activities (ORCA) Program

[PS 06.A.09](#) Financial Conflicts of Interest in Research and Scholarship

## **3. Intellectual Property**

Intellectual Property is a complex issue that concerns all faculty who do research or produce creative artifacts. UHD does not currently have its own policy statement governing intellectual property; however, the [Board of Regents Policy Section III, 21.08](#) outlines rules for intellectual property ownership for all UHS faculty, staff, and students. In accordance with this BOR policy, [SAM 01.E.01](#) establishes the System's Office of Intellectual Property Management, which oversees issues of intellectual property for the entire UH System.

Board of Regents Policy 21.08.4.A specifies that “the University will not assert ownership of copyright developed by faculty, staff or students, unless separately contracted for, in any: 1. Books, journal articles, texts, glossaries, bibliographies, study guides, laboratory manuals, syllabi, tests, and survey instruments; 2. Lectures and unpublished lecture notes; 3. Musical works; 4. Dramatic works; 5. Works of visual art, such as sculptures and drawings; 6. Architectural works.” For the majority of UHD faculty, then, the University will not dispute the ownership of their intellectual products.

However, Board Policy 21.08.4.B specifies that “the University will assert ownership of copyright developed by faculty, staff or students, with regard to other types of works subject to copyright, namely, 7. Films, audiovisual works, slide programs, film strips; 8. Sound recordings and video recordings containing original performances; 9. Programmed instruction materials; 10. Computer programs, software, and documentation.” The policy enumerates the circumstances under which the University or UHS may claim copyrights for and ownership of such intellectual products.

Faculty members with questions or concerns about their intellectual property rights should consult their Department Chair and the [UH Office of Technology Transfer and Innovation](#).

### ***Relevant Policies***

[Board of Regents Policy Section III, 21.08](#) Intellectual Property [SAM 01.D.03](#) Trademark Management.

[SAM 01.E.03](#) Office of Technology Transfer and Innovation

#### 4. Peer Review and Publication

In the academy, publications that have gone through peer review are often valued more highly than others because peer review is how new knowledge and art is evaluated, legitimated, and added to disciplinary canons. Many journals and most university presses use a rigorous editorial process in which disciplinary experts evaluate the manuscript and verify its worthiness for publication. “Blind peer-review” refers to a process in which the reviewers do not know the identity of the author(s), a practice meant to eliminate bias in the review process.

Faculty members should consult the publication criteria established by their department for guidance on what constitutes adequate peer review and legitimacy for publication venues in their fields.

With the proliferation of online journals with much lower production costs than traditional hardcopy journals and books, questions have arisen about whether journals that charge fees for publishing articles count as legitimate publications. Although in some disciplines publishing in these venues may be acceptable, faculty should conform to the expectations of their own disciplines and departments and should always perform due diligence to avoid so-called “predatory journals.” There are many available resources that provide information about journal acceptance rates, peer-review processes, and editorial practices, such as [Cabell’s Directory](#) for business and some science and social science fields, or the [MLA Directory of Periodicals](#) for literature and language fields (the directory is available through [UHD Library Databases](#)).

#### 5. Faculty Online Profiles and Faculty Success

Faculty profiles are part of the directory made public on the [UHD Faculty website](#). At a minimum, faculty names, rank, department, email address, phone number, current course schedule, and office location will automatically be displayed; however, faculty have the option to add additional information including publications, service activities, awards, and a short biography. All information is fed from Watermark Faculty Success which faculty should update on a regular basis. Every faculty member has a Watermark Faculty Success profile which they can update on their own. Information on how to update their Faculty Success profile can be found on the [UHD Watermark Faculty Success Database website](#).

#### 6. Faculty Grievance Procedures

At UHD, when workplace disagreements or concerns rise to a certain level, after trying to address the concern informally, or if a faculty member believes that they have suffered some resulting injury, that faculty member may decide to file a formal grievance. When a grievance is filed at UHD, as at most universities, there are very specific processes and procedures that must be followed. These processes and procedures follow a very precise timelines and specific deadlines. UHD’s Grievance Policy [PS 10.A.02](#) provides a list of examples of grievable actions and circumstances. Before initiating a grievance, faculty members should consult [PS 10.A.02](#) for information on the processes, the timelines, and the grounds for grievances and the forms necessary to file a grievance.

##### *The Faculty Ombuds*

Before deciding whether to file a grievance, the faculty member may consider first consulting the [UHD Faculty Ombuds](#). The Faculty Ombuds (typically a senior faculty member who has experience and institutional memory in such matters) will be able to provide some counsel as to options, processes, deadlines, and perhaps even alternative methods of recourse before a faculty member files a grievance. Moreover, consultations with the Faculty Ombuds are entirely confidential and non-partisan. See Section IV17a of this handbook for more information about the Faculty Ombuds.

##### *The Grievance*



If, after all other avenues of recourse have been exhausted, the faculty member decides to file a grievance, the faculty member (henceforth referred to as the “grievant”) completes form “Exhibit A” of PS 10.A.02, signs it, and delivers it to the current UHD Grievance Committee Chair. The name of current chair can be found on the committee’s roster listed on the [Grievance Committee Webpage](#). The form may be hand delivered; however, electronic submission of the file may help expedite the process.

After the form is filed, all parties will be notified, and the grievant will be assigned a Hearing Committee Chair and a Hearing Committee (five members of the Grievance Committee from a different department than the grievant) by the Grievance Committee Chair. From this point forward, the grievant will work in concert with the Hearing Committee Chair to arrange the actual hearing. Details of this process can be found in PS 10.A.02.

### ***The Hearing***

The hearing allows the grievant to present their viewpoint on the matter and will allow the respondents (those being grieved against) to present their viewpoints as well. The hearing is recorded, there are very specific time allotments for the various parts of the hearing (measured in minutes, not hours), and the entire process is run by the Hearing Committee Chair. All the grievance hearing procedures are delineated in PS 10.A.02.

### ***The Grievance Decision***

The Hearing Committee conveys its findings and recommendations in writing to the Provost and the President, who in most cases is the final arbiter of grievances. The policy stipulates that “the President has final authority in all grievances, except in the dismissal of a tenured faculty member. In cases of dismissal of a tenured faculty member, the President makes a recommendation to the Chancellor of the University of Houston System. The Chancellor accepts or rejects the recommendation of the President, then presents the decision to the Board of Regents for approval or disapproval” (§4.8.4). In all non-dismissal cases, the President presents his decision in writing to the grievant, all respondents, the Hearing Committee, and the Grievance Committee Chair within fifteen days of receiving the Hearing Committee’s recommendation (§4.8.3).

### ***Legal counsel***

Grievants have the right to consult their own legal counsel if they wish. If a grievant secures legal counsel to serve as an adviser during the hearing, the grievant must include the legal counsel on the list of witnesses and advisers submitted to the Hearing Committee Chair (§4.6.6, 4.6.8), who must in turn notify the Provost (§4.6.7).

### ***Relevant Policy***

[PS 10.A.02](#) Faculty Grievance Policy

## **7. Confidentiality, FERPA, HIPAA, and the Texas Public Information Act**

Two of the most important federal laws that faculty members should know about concerning the privacy of students and the confidentiality of student records are the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974](#) (commonly called FERPA, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) and the [Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996](#) (or HIPAA, Public Law 104-191, 104th Congress, especially Sec. 264). One of the most important state laws concerning confidentiality and public records is the [Texas Public Information Act](#) (the PIA, Texas Government Code §552).

### ***Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)***

FERPA protects student educational records from disclosure to third parties not affiliated with an educational institution in which a student is or has been enrolled. For example, FERPA prohibits

universities and its employees from divulging information about a student's course schedule, academic or financial standing, grade history, course attendance, or any disciplinary actions taken against the student. Universities and its employees thus cannot legally divulge information to parents, employers, prospective employers, or law enforcement agencies without prior written consent to the student.

There are some exceptions to FERPA guidelines. For example, if a student is classified as a dependent under Section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code, universities may divulge educational records to parents. University employees can also disclose, without a student's consent, certain "directory" information like names, addresses, dates of attendance, and degree awards. At the same time, universities must allow students and parents (in the case of "dependent students") reasonable time to elect to have even "directory" information protected. Otherwise, faculty members must have prior written consent from the student before releasing the student's academic records.

Under FERPA, if a student requests a letter of recommendation, the student needs to fill out a [UHS Reference Request and FERPA Release Form](#) and return the signed form to the faculty member in question. Faculty should keep the release forms for their records for at least three years.

University employees, including faculty members, may access and divulge or access information without a student's written consent under the following conditions (this list is not exhaustive):

- When other school officials such as advisors have legitimate educational interest in reviewing student records;
- When schools to which a student is transferring request copies of academic records;
- When school officials are conducting audits or evaluations;
- When school officials are reviewing the financial aid eligibility of a student;
- When accrediting agencies are conducting audits of a university;
- When university officials must comply with judicial orders or subpoenas;
- When a health and safety emergency requires disclosure of student records.

In any case, faculty members as well as administrators and staff employees must first confirm with their supervisors or with UH System Counsel that exceptions apply before divulging information to parties who are not part of the University. Faculty members should assume and act as if all student records are protected from disclosure.

FERPA also prohibits universities from *withholding* certain kinds of information from students themselves. Students have the right to inspect any of their own educational records maintained by the university. Students also have the right to request changes to any of their own information when they believe that information is inaccurate or misleading.

The non-exhaustive list below includes common examples of when FERPA restricts information:

1. Professors cannot respond to e-mails from personal accounts if those e-mails include any request for information that is protected by FERPA. For example, you cannot e-mail a corrected copy of an essay to a student via personal e-mail. This is because the university cannot reliably verify the identity of the owner of a personal e-mail account. Even confirming that a student is enrolled in your class violates this law.
2. Professors can send information, such as course syllabi, that is already in the public domain to personal e-mail accounts and can inform recipients that professors can only

conduct official business via GatorMail accounts. Professors should insist that students contact them via official UHD e-mail accounts to discuss things like academic standing, absences, grade history, and so forth.

3. Professors cannot post grades in public places, nor leave corrected assignments that identify individual students outside their office doors, or in other public places.
4. Professors cannot respond to telephone or mail queries from prospective employers about a student's academic standing unless the student has consented in writing to the release of that information.
5. Professors and other university employees acting in the capacity of a retention officer can call students using phone numbers that are listed as part of a student's official record. However, if a parent, family member, or other third-party answers the call, professors may not divulge the nature of their call. In those circumstances, they should instead leave a message and ask the student to return the phone call.

### ***Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)***

HIPAA applies mostly to hospitals and medical clinics that maintain medical records. However, it does have implications for universities and their faculty members as well. For example, HIPAA includes privacy requirements that restrict an institution's ability to divulge medically-related information about its employees. In most cases, records that include medical or other health information about students are protected by FERPA laws and cannot be divulged to third parties, including other university employees.

When a university employee requests medical leave, the university may require documentation from caregivers or other healthcare providers as a means of verifying that the employee is eligible for leave. However, those university employees may not divulge that information to other university employees without the prior written consent of the person who has requested medical leave. Professors should never divulge any student's medical condition to any other student or university employee without prior written consent of the student.

### ***Texas Public Information Act (PIA)***

Faculty members at state-supported colleges and universities in Texas are state employees and therefore subject to the Texas Public Information Act (Texas Government Code Chapter 552). The law grants anyone access to state government records, including records maintained by universities, subject to the restrictions of other federal laws like FERPA and HIPAA. Other restrictions apply. For example, tests and quizzes that professors are planning to administer to classes are exempt.

On the other hand, the personnel files of faculty members, including job performance evaluations, letters of dismissal, demotion, promotion, or resignation, are considered open records under this law. The university may not legally deny access to this information to anyone. The PIA covers not merely written information, but information in electronic form, including e-mails, web browser histories and caches, and audio recordings. The PIA allows civil and criminal penalties for state employees who do not comply with open records requests. In some cases, state institutions may legally redact information of an intimate or embarrassing nature when the public has no legitimate interest in knowing that information. However, they may not do so on their own, without a ruling from the Office of the State Attorney General.

Three of the most important requirements of this law are:

1. Anyone may request access to state governmental records.
2. Public information officers are not allowed to ask any individual why he or she wants

access to public records.

3. All state government information is presumed to be public information unless it is specifically exempt or ruled exempt by the State Attorney General.

Under state law, there is no special form that an individual must complete to make a request for public information. Requests do not have to be in writing. Any inquiry from any person that can reasonably be interpreted as a request for information is covered by the PIA. For that reason, any faculty member who receives a request for information must immediately inform the office of UH System Counsel and refer the person making the request to that office. Requests that are received via e-mail or fax must be forwarded immediately to the office of UH System Counsel.

Once a state employee has received a request, he or she may not delete or otherwise destroy any records that have been requested. It is important to note as well that the law does not require state employees to create new records that did not exist when the request for information was made.

### ***Relevant Statutes***

[Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974](#) (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99. [Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996](#) (HIPAA), Public Law 104-191, 104th Congress, especially §264.

[Texas Public Information Act](#) (PIA), Texas Government Code §552.

### ***Additional Resources***

Texas Office of the Attorney General, [Public Information Act Handbook 2014](#)

Texas Department of State Health Services. [HIPAA at DSHS](#). Last updated November 20, 2012.

U.S. Department of Education. [The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Guidance for Eligible Students](#). Last updated March 2023.

## **8. Mandatory Training and Testing for University Personnel**

In accordance with the State of Texas ([Texas Labor Code, § 21.010.C](#)) and University of Houston System institutional compliance requirements, all UHS employees are required to complete the following training within the first 30 days of employment and annually thereafter.

- *Code of Ethics*. Explains ethical conduct requirements found in UH System policies, which apply to all employees.
- *Equal Opportunity*. Explains laws preventing discrimination and sexual harassment.
- *FERPA*. Sets forth requirements regarding the privacy of student records. FERPA governs: (1) the release of these records (known as education records) maintained by an educational institution, and (2) access to these records.
- *Fraud Awareness*. Explains the different types of occupational fraud, why they occur, and how to reduce the risk of fraud.
- *Secure Our Systems*. Educates employees on how to protect sensitive information.

UHD employees may be required to take additional trainings specific to their appointment or job title and are also required to read and acknowledge their understanding of the UHD Employee Compliance and Ethics Guide, and the State Office of Risk Management Workers' Compensation Physician Network requirements.

Full-time faculty members are also required to complete the Outside Activities Form, which is included within [SAM 02.A.08- Outside Activities/Interests Disclosures](#) and included as part of mandatory testing. See Section IV.11 of this handbook, "Compensation for External Employment," for more information about forms of employment that must be disclosed.

Human Resources (HR) informs employees of deadlines for annual training and testing via email. Employees who do not complete annual mandatory training by the published deadline will not have met their job expectations and will therefore *not be eligible for merit increases*, as outlined in [PS 02.B.12](#) and [SAM 02.A.06](#).

### ***Relevant Policies and Statutes***

[SAM 02.A.08](#) Outside Activities/Interest Disclosures

[PS 02.B.12](#) Staff Training and Development Policy

[SAM 02.A.26](#) Employee Development and Training

[Texas Labor Code, Title 2.A § 21.010.C](#) Protection of Laborers: Employment Discrimination,

## **9. Restrictions on Lobbying and Using UHD Resources for Political Activities**

[SAM 02.A.29](#) and [Texas Government Code §556.006](#) prohibit UH System employees (including employees of all component universities) from contacting state or federal legislators in their capacity as university employees, except in limited circumstances and when specifically requested to do so by administration. Employees may always contact their legislators as private citizens; however, they should clearly state they are acting as private citizens and do so on their own time and with their own resources. Faculty should not use UHD letterhead, UHD email addresses, or UHD telephones to contact legislators. Similarly, faculty members should not use university resources to work on political campaigns or use their “official authority or influence to affect the result of any election or nomination or to achieve any other political purpose” (SAM 2.A.29, §5.4.2). Contact the UHS Office of General Counsel (832-842-0949) if you have questions about this issue.

### ***Relevant Policies and Statutes***

[SAM 02.A.29](#) Ethical Conduct of Employees

[Texas Government Code §556](#) Political Activities by Certain Public Entities and Individuals

## **10. Use of Social Media**

Effective March 2015, [PS 09.B.04](#) is the UHD policy governing the use of social media. UHD recognizes the centrality of social media in contemporary culture, and it encourages members of the University community to make effective use of such media for university-related communication. However, under the terms of the UHD Policy, all official UHD social media sites must be marked “official” and will be monitored by University personnel to remove unlawful, defamatory, or obscene activity/posting. All such sites must adhere to applicable federal regulations and university policies, including [PS 08.A.01](#)- Review of Information Systems Resources Requests, [PS 08.A.04](#)- Computer Access, Security, and Use Policy, and [PS 08.A.06](#)- University Website Policy. [SAM 01.H01](#)- Social Media Policy governs all UH System campuses.

When using social media in the scope of their official duties or when presenting themselves as representatives of UHD or the UHS, faculty members should adhere to all relevant university/system policies and state and federal regulations, including FERPA, which governs student privacy rights. Faculty should be careful to distinguish between their professional and personal online media presences, and they should not attribute their own views and opinions to the University, to its constituents, to the UH System, or to any component thereof. As PS 09.B.04 advises, all faculty should be mindful of their association with UHD and should make their personal profiles and social-



media content consistent with “the manner in which they wish to present themselves” as professionals (§4.3). Under no circumstances should faculty members release or discuss confidential information on either official or personal social media sites.

### ***Relevant Policies***

[PS 09.B.04](#) Social Media Policy

[PS 09.A.01](#) Review of Information System Resources Requests

[PS 08.A.04](#) Computer Access, Security, and Use Policy

[PS 08.A.06](#) University Website Policy

[SAM 01.H.01](#) Social Media Policy

## **11. Use of University Computers, Email, and Telephones**

### ***Telephones and Faxes***

Faculty have office telephones to communicate with students and other faculty and staff. Faculty members should limit the use of the office telephone for personal calls. Occasionally, faculty members may need to make work-related long-distance calls. To do so, one must have a long-distance access code, which is issued by Information Technology. Making personal long-distance calls on university phones is prohibited.

### ***University Computer Use***

UHD computer systems exist to provide computing services to the University community and should be used in support of instruction, research, and other work-related activities. Occasional personal use of computers is permitted but should not interfere with professional duties and responsibilities. Employees should have no expectation of privacy when using the University’s computing resources, including university email accounts. Employees have a responsibility to use the University computing systems in an ethical and legal manner, and comply with the user agreements outlined in [PS 08.A.04](#)- Computer Access, Security, and Use Policy. Faculty members should note that university email is potentially discoverable in legal proceedings.

### ***Relevant Policy***

[PS 08.A.04](#) Computer Access, Security, and Use Policy

## **12. Compensation for External Employment**

According to [SAM 02.A.08- Outside Activities/Interests Disclosures](#), full-time faculty at UHD must seek *prior* written approval for any activity that includes “Outside paid professional activities, such as consulting...”.

Any such activities (e.g., teaching courses, paid book reviews, expert legal testimony, program reviews, editing services, tax preparation, etc.) require the full-time faculty member to complete an Outside Activities form and submit it for approval by the Department Chair and the Dean. (As part-time employees, adjunct instructors are exempt from this requirement.) The form is available as a link to [SAM 02.A.08](#) and to [HR’s Webpages](#). Compensation from a grant housed in another institution may constitute external employment, so faculty members should consult with their Chairs and their Deans to determine whether receipt of such grant money must be approved and disclosed. There are limitations on the amount of time that may be dedicated to outside activity as well as use of university resources. Faculty should read the System policy [SAM 02.A.08](#).



**Relevant Policies****[SAM 02.A.08](#)** Outside Activities/Interests Disclosures**13. Professional Misconduct**

To ensure the advancement of human knowledge through all forms of scholarship and artistic creation, those engaged in these scholarly and creative activities must command the highest respect. Reciprocally, all members of the University community engaged in these activities must uphold the highest ethical standards. It is the responsibility of faculty, staff, and students to engage in rigorous self-regulation to promote best practices and ensure academic integrity, as well as to identify cases where the integrity of the academy has been compromised by professional misconduct, so that the University can pursue appropriate disciplinary action.

UHD's [PS 06.A.07](#)- Misconduct in Research, Scholarly, Creative and Government-Sponsored Activities policy provides guidelines for handling cases of professional misconduct in creative activities, research, and other scholarly endeavors. The UHD policy identifies the broad categories of professional misconduct:

Misconduct is defined as fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, or other material deviation from practices commonly accepted in the academic and scientific communities for proposing, conducting, or reporting results from education, research, and scholarly or creative activities. Misconduct also refers to retaliation against a person who, acting in good faith, reports or provides information about suspected or alleged misconduct. ([PS 06.A.07](#), §2.1)

The University of Houston's [Responsible Conduct of Research Policy](#) provides a more specific list of core issues pertaining to ethical conduct in research and scholarly activities:

- Conflict of interest
- Human subjects, animal, and safe laboratory practices
- Mentor/mentee responsibilities and relationships
- Collaborative research
- Peer review
- Data acquisition, management, sharing and ownership
- Research misconduct
- Responsible authorship and publication
- Scientist as a responsible member of society

In addition to relevant university and system policies, many government agencies and private foundations have their own codes of conduct and ethical standards with which grant recipients must comply as a condition of funding. A number of these are discussed as part of the UH [Responsible Conduct of Research Policy](#).

To maintain the highest level of integrity in their professional activities, faculty members should abide by the provisions of [PS 06.A.07](#) and [PS 03.A.23](#)- Protection of Human Subjects Policy, and [PS 06.A.09](#)- Financial Conflicts of Interests in Research and Scholarship Policy, as well as the applicable ethical codes of their granting agencies and professional disciplinary organizations. The [ORSP Website](#) also has links to National Institutes of Health (NIH) and Collaborative Institutional Training

Initiative (CITI) training websites to promote responsible conduct of research in compliance with agency guidelines. For more information on the Committee on the Protection of Human Subjects, see also Section [IV.2a](#), above.

Faculty members who need more information about professional misconduct should contact the [Faculty Ombuds](#), the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, and/or their discipline's professional associations.

### ***Relevant Policies***

[PS 03.A.23](#) Protection of Human Subjects

[PS 06.A.07](#)- Misconduct in Research, Scholarly, Creative and Government Sponsored Activities

[PS 06.A.09](#)- Financial Conflicts of Interests in Research and Scholarship

UH [Responsible Conduct of Research Policy](#)

## **14. Drug and Alcohol Abuse Policy (PS 01.A.05) and Smoke Free and Tobacco Free Environment Policy (PS 01.A.09)**

In accordance with UHD's Drug and Alcohol Abuse Policy ([PS 01.A.05](#)), University of Houston-Downtown prohibits the unlawful use, manufacture, sale, distribution, dispensation, or possession of any illegal drug in the workplace, on campus, or as part of any campus activities. Alcohol is included in this policy unless it is formally approved for a specific activity at a designated time and location.

In accord with [PS 01.A.09](#), tobacco use is also prohibited inside UHD buildings, but it is permitted in designated smoking areas that are a minimum of 25 feet from entrances and doors.

Any employee engaged in the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs or alcohol on campus or at campus-sponsored events held off-campus will be subject to disciplinary action and referral to a drug and alcohol rehabilitation program, if deemed necessary. Disciplinary measures may include written reprimand, suspension without pay, or termination, depending upon the severity of the infraction. Employees referred for assistance must satisfactorily participate in a drug and alcohol abuse rehabilitation program, as agreed upon between the employee, Employment Services and Operations, and the University's Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

The University is committed to the maintenance of a drug-free environment, the dissemination of drug awareness information to the members of the campus community, and the enforcement of the provisions of the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, and the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989.

### ***Relevant Policies***

[PS 01.A.05](#) Drug and Alcohol Abuse Policy

[PS 01.A.09](#) Smoke Free and Tobacco Free Environment Policy

## **15. Nepotism Policy (Board of Regents Policy, 57.01.4 Nepotism)**

Nepotism in employment is a violation of state law, University of Houston System Board of Regents policy, and University of Houston System policy. The University strictly prohibits the employment of relatives within a supervisory chain. Relatives of University employees shall not be employed by the University in positions where an employee has the official authority to hire, recommend, or

approve the hiring, salary, or promotions of the relative. Relatives shall not be employed in the supervisory- subordinate relationship even if it results from marriage after the employment relationship was formed.

A relative is defined as anyone related to the employee within the second degree of kinship or the third degree of lineage and includes the employee's spouse, the employee or the spouse's natural and adopted children, parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, brothers, sisters, half brothers and sisters, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, first cousins, second cousins, and persons married to these.

#### **16. Sexual Misconduct Policy (SAM 01.D.08)**

UHD is committed to maintaining and strengthening an educational and working environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from sex discrimination of any kind. Sexual misconduct, a form of sex discrimination, is antithetical to the standards and ideals of the University. The University will take appropriate action to eliminate sexual misconduct from happening, prevent its recurrence, and address its effects.

[SAM 01.D.08](#), the UH System policy on Sexual Misconduct, addressed sexual misconduct. Sexual misconduct encompasses a range of non-consensual sexual activities or unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature, as outlined in SAM 01.D.08. This includes sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual intimidation, sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. The University applies these protections regardless of the sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression of the individuals involved.

Consistent with its commitment to addressing sex discrimination and harassment, UHD complies with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities, and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), which prohibits sex discrimination in employment. Sexual misconduct constitutes a form of sex discrimination prohibited by Title IX and Title VII.

The University aims to eradicate sexual misconduct through education, training, clear policies and serious consequences for violations of its policies. In addition to defining sexual misconduct, SAM 01.D.08 establishes a procedural mechanism for processing complaints of sexual misconduct. All members of the University are expected to: (1) adhere to the Sexual Misconduct Policy; (2) cooperate with the procedures for responding to complaints; and (3) report conduct or behavior that they believe to be in violation of this policy to the Campus Relations Officer (713-222-5366), who serves as UHD's Title IX Coordinator.

Harassment on the basis of sex is a violation of university policy and the law. Sexual harassment by a public official, including University faculty and staff, may also be a criminal offense. Any faculty member who violates the Sexual Misconduct Policy is subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the University policy, up to and including termination of employment.

UHD takes reports of sexual misconduct very seriously and will not tolerate retaliation against those who make such reports or participate in the investigatory or adjudicatory process.

Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any adverse employment or educational action taken for making a report of sexual misconduct, or for otherwise participating in the investigatory or adjudicatory proceedings relating to sexual conduct under this policy. Any actual or threatened retaliation, or any act of intimidation to prevent or otherwise obstruct the reporting of sexual misconduct or the participation in proceedings relating to sexual misconduct, may be considered a

separate violation of this policy and may result in disciplinary sanctions. Any person who believes that he or she has been subjected to retaliation should immediately report this concern to the Title IX/Equal Opportunity Officer.

### ***Relevant Policy***

[SAM 01.D.08](#) Sexual Misconduct Policy

## **17. Antidiscrimination Policy (SAM 01.D.07)**

UHD is committed to maintaining and strengthening an environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from discrimination and harassment of any kind. Discrimination and harassment are antithetical to the standards and ideals of the University. In accordance with [SAM 01.D.07](#), the UH System's Antidiscrimination Policy, the University will take appropriate action to prevent such acts from happening, prevent their recurrence, and address their effects.

All members of the University community must adhere to SAM 01.D.07, cooperate with the procedures for responding to complaints of unlawful discrimination and harassment, and report conduct or behavior that they believe to be in violation of this policy to the institution's Equal Opportunity Coordinator, who will coordinate its investigation and response as necessary with the appropriate individuals. The Title IX/Equal Opportunity Officer is responsible for conducting the administrative investigation of reports of discrimination or harassment and is available to discuss options, provide support, explain University policies and procedures, and provide education on relevant issues. UHD's Title IX/Equal Opportunity Officer is the Campus Relations Officer (CRO), who can be reached by phone (713-221-5771).

All UHD employees have the duty to act and are thus responsible for taking reasonable and necessary actions to prevent unlawful discrimination and harassment and for responding promptly and thoroughly to such claims. Upon learning directly or indirectly of conduct or behavior that might violate this policy, all persons shall report the conduct or behavior to the Title IX/Equal Opportunity Officer for advice and assistance on addressing the matter. A person who fails to act may be found to have violated this policy, even if the underlying event does not constitute unlawful discrimination or harassment.

SAM 01.D.07 defines harassment as subjecting an individual, based on her or his membership in a protected class, to unlawful severe, pervasive, or persistent treatment that is:

- Humiliating, abusive or threatening conduct or behavior that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group;
- Intimidating, hostile or abusive learning, living or working environment or an environment that alters the conditions of learning, living or working; or
- Unreasonably interference with an individual's academic or work performance.

Harassment that satisfies this legal standard includes, but is not limited to, epithets or slurs; negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating or hostile acts; denigrating jokes; and display or circulation (including through e-mail) of written or graphic material in the university learning, living, or working environment.

A protected class is defined as a class of persons who are protected under applicable federal or state laws against discrimination and harassment on the basis of race, color, sex, genetic information, religion, age, national origin, disability, veteran status, or any other legally protected status. Additionally, for purposes of this policy, the term "protected class" includes sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. Any UHD student or employee who believes that he or she

has been discriminated against or harassed based on any of the protected classes listed above, may file a complaint by contacting the Title IX/Equal Opportunity Officer.

The University takes reports of discrimination or harassment very seriously and will not tolerate retaliation against those who make reports or who participate in the investigatory or adjudicatory process. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any adverse employment or educational action taken for making a report of unlawful discrimination or harassment, or for otherwise participating in the investigation of such a report under this policy. Any actual or threatened retaliation or any act of intimidation to prevent or otherwise obstruct the reporting of unlawful discrimination or harassment or the participation in proceedings relating to unlawful discrimination or harassment, may be considered a separate violation of this policy and may result in disciplinary sanctions. Any person who believes that he or she has been subjected to retaliation should immediately report this concern to the Equal Opportunity Coordinator.

### ***Relevant Policy***

[SAM 01.D.07](#) Antidiscrimination Policy

## **18. Resources for Resolving Workplace Issues**

### **Faculty Ombuds**

The Faculty Ombuds acts as a resource for other faculty members who have questions about academic rights, interpretations and applications of university policy, and matters of interpersonal conflict with administrative personnel, colleagues, or other members of the university community. The Faculty Ombuds is a tenured faculty member selected by the Faculty Council in consultation with the Provost and appointed by the President.

The Faculty Ombuds position was established by [PS 10.A.18](#), which incorporates the principles and standards of ethical practice defined by the International Ombudsman Association. The four pillars for organizational ombuds, as articulated by IOA, are independence, impartiality, confidentiality, and informality.

- The Faculty Ombuds operates *independently* of the governance hierarchy of the University. While the Faculty Ombuds reports at least annually to the University President and to the Faculty Council Executive Committee, neither of those entities alone can remove the Faculty Ombuds from office if either dislikes the advice offered by the FO.
- The Faculty Ombuds' independence allows him to be truly *impartial*, considering the interests of the individual faculty member and the larger academic institution in balance. Many people mistakenly believe an ombuds should serve as the faculty member's advocate; however, according to the principles of the IOA, the Faculty Ombuds advocates the best solution for everybody involved in a dispute, without necessarily adopting the position of either party. Thus, alternative dispute resolution, outside the reporting structure of the institution, is one of the principle functions of the Faculty Ombuds.
- The ombuds protects the *confidentiality* of every visitor *to the extent allowed by law*, that is, unless the FO believes that the visitor is a threat to self or others. To protect confidentiality, those consulting the Faculty Ombuds should avoid using email. The Faculty Ombuds shreds all records of a consultation after one year unless required by law to maintain the records for a different period.
- Consultations with the Faculty Ombuds are *informal*; that is, they do not constitute

notice to the University that it must take action. The Faculty Ombuds takes note of issues and trends as visitors reveal them and reports them to both the University President, the Provost, and the Faculty Council Executive Committee—with all identifying information removed—at least once a year. This requirement of PS 10.A.18 allows the institution to correct problems identified and/or experienced by individual faculty members.

Additional information on the role of Faculty Ombuds at UHD is available in [PS 10.A.18](#) or the [Faculty Ombuds Webpage](#).

### ***Relevant Policy***

[PS 10.A.18](#) Faculty Ombuds Policy

### **Title IX/Equal Opportunity Officer**

The Title IX/Equal Opportunity Officer (EOO) provides support to faculty for issues and questions that fall outside the purview of the Faculty Ombudsperson, such as sexual misconduct, harassment, discrimination, and workplace/classroom harassment. The EOO may consult with and provide guidance to faculty regarding policies, procedures, complaints, options, and resolution for these concerns. The EOO also may develop and facilitate training programs for the campus community with regard to the rights of faculty to work in an environment absent of discrimination.

The EOO works in collaboration with other UHD departments, when necessary, in order to seek a fair resolution. Confidentiality is extremely important with all aspects of the EOO's duties, so information will be shared on a "need to know" basis only. No person shall be subject to retaliation for filing a complaint or assisting others in any Equal Employment Opportunity-related activity. Faculty who wish to inquire about seeking guidance or filing a complaint may contact the EOO at (713) 221-5771 to schedule an appointment.

### **Fraud & Non-Compliance Hotline**

If a faculty member would like to bring forward a concern about UHD or an employee, but does not wish to be identified, they can submit an anonymous report to the [Fraud and Noncompliance Hotline](#).

[Clearview Connects](#) is an external vendor-supported hotline to which individuals can anonymously report suspected fraud, harassment, or any other instance of non-compliance. Faculty members may submit reports via the Fraud and Non-Compliance Hotline website (<https://www.uhsystem.edu/fraud-non-compliance/>); or the toll-free number 1-866-843-4379.

The anonymous report will be forwarded to the relevant Vice President, who will work with the Vice President of Human Resources to assign someone to complete an investigation. The completed investigation will be submitted to the University of Houston System Internal Auditor, who will respond to the anonymous complainant.

### **Resources and Procedures for Accommodating Faculty with Disabilities**

Faculty members who are having difficulties performing one or more of their essential job functions may request a reasonable accommodation by contacting the University's ADA Coordinator. In accordance with [SAM 02.E.09](#), Reasonable Workplace Accommodations for Employees with Disabilities, the Campus Relations Officer is designated as UHD's ADA Coordinator and can be contacted by phone at (713) 221-8443.

### ***Obtaining a Reasonable Workplace Accommodation***

The first step in requesting a reasonable accommodation is the responsibility of the individual faculty



member. They should contact the ADA Coordinator and submit the [Request for Workplace Accommodation form](#), and then submit the original completed Request for Workplace Accommodation form to the ADA Coordinator and a copy to the faculty member's Chair. Chairs who receive a request for an accommodation from an employee shall immediately notify the ADA Coordinator.

Next, the faculty member must provide medical certification from a licensed health care provider documenting the disability, identifying the essential job functions that are impacted by the disability, and recommending possible reasonable accommodations. An essential job function is a job task that is fundamental, not marginal, to the performance of the position.

The ADA Coordinator will begin the interactive process with the faculty member and their Chair and/or Dean to identify possible reasonable accommodations. Reasonable accommodation requests are addressed on a case-by-case basis. In accordance with SAM 02.E.09, §6.5.D., the ADA Coordinator will issue a final recommendation in writing within ten (10) working days of receiving the required documentation.

If the ADA Coordinator does not receive the required documentation and information from the faculty member within 28 calendar days of being informed of a disability by the faculty member, the ADA Coordinator will notify the faculty member in writing and request that they submit the required documentation. If the ADA Coordinator does not receive the required information within ten (10) working days after the written notification to the faculty member, the request for accommodation will be cancelled for lack of necessary information. The faculty member will not be barred from filing another request for a reasonable workplace accommodation or restarting the reasonable workplace accommodation process. However, the ADA Coordinator cannot proceed with the accommodation process without the required documentation.

The ADA Coordinator has the authority to obtain, at UHD's expense, an independent medical opinion concerning the impairment for which a faculty member seeks an accommodation, including additional suggestions or recommendations regarding reasonable workplace accommodations. The failure of a faculty member to cooperate in obtaining such independent medical opinions will result in the cancellation of the request for accommodation.

A faculty member who believes that their request for a workplace accommodation has been unreasonably denied or otherwise disagrees with the ADA Coordinator's workplace accommodation response may file a written appeal with the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost within ten (10) working days of the notification by the ADA Coordinator.

If the Provost disagrees with the ADA Coordinator's recommendations, the Provost shall consult with the ADA Coordinator, the Department Chair, and/or the Dean to identify an alternative reasonable workplace accommodation. The Provost's decision on the matter is final and cannot be appealed.

### ***Relevant Policy***

[SAM 02.E.09](#) Reasonable Workplace Accommodations for Employees with Disabilities

## **Section V. Instructional and Curricular Issues**

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### **1. Academic and General Calendars**

#### ***Academic Calendar***

The University publishes the current [Academic Calendars](#) on its website. The online academic calendar includes all important dates and deadlines for a given semester, such as semester begin and end dates, registration dates, grade-entry deadlines, and holidays. The site also includes a separate calendar for the semester's final exam schedule.

Specific dates are listed in the online calendars, but the following general dates apply:

<b>August</b>	Fall Semester begins
<b>November</b>	Thanksgiving Break
<b>December</b>	Fall Semester final exams Fall Commencement Winter Term begins (3 weeks)
<b>January</b>	Spring Semester begins
<b>March</b>	Spring Break week
<b>May</b>	Spring Semester final exams, Spring Commencement, Summer 6 Week I begins, May Term begins (3-week term)
<b>June</b>	Summer I begins (5-week term) Summer II begins (8-week term)
<b>July</b>	Summer III begins (5-week term) Summer 6 Week II begins

***General Calendar: Other Important Dates and Deadlines for Faculty***

The following events and deadlines are not published in the official online Academic Calendar, but faculty should be cognizant of these dates.

<b>January</b>	Spring Faculty Retreat; Annual reports for full-time faculty, due January 31, per <a href="#">PS 10.A.05</a>
<b>April</b>	President's decisions on Rank and Tenure, due April 1, per <a href="#">PS 10.A.01</a> Faculty Awards Student Awards
<b>May</b>	Letter of intent from those seeking tenure and/or promotion in the coming academic year, due first Monday in May, per <a href="#">PS 10.A.01</a> ; Graduate Hooding Ceremony; Convocation
<b>August</b>	New Faculty Orientation, Fall Faculty Retreat
<b>September</b>	President's Convocation
<b>October</b>	Tenure and Promotion candidate portfolios, due first Monday in October, per <a href="#">PS 10.A.01</a>
<b>December</b>	Graduate Hooding Ceremony; Convocation

**2. Academic Honesty (PS 03.A.19)**

Academic honesty is a fundamental principle in American higher education; however, maintaining academic honesty standards has become more difficult with technological innovation and increased access to digital resources. Technology helps facilitate cheating in online and face-to-face courses, and the "cut-and-paste" integration of sources increases the risk of both intentional and accidental

plagiarism during the student's writing process. In addition, generative AI programs like ChatGPT might be utilized in unauthorized ways to help students cheat. To ensure the value of the university degree as a credential for professional and educational advancement, universities must strive to maintain academic integrity and instill in students the basic principle articulated in UHD's Academic Honesty Code: "Students must be honest in all academic activities and must not tolerate dishonesty" (PS 03.A.19, §3.1.1).

The UHD Academic Honesty Policy, [PS 03.A.19](#), governs the enforcement of academic honesty principles. It requires that students abide by the principle of academic honesty, that instructors know and enforce the policy itself, and that the University afford students due process when they are accused of academic honesty violations. All faculty members should familiarize themselves with the contents of PS 03.A.19 and adhere to the requirements of the policy.

### ***Reporting and Resolving Academic Honesty Violations***

When an instructor believes a student is guilty of an academic honesty violation (such as cheating or plagiarism), the instructor should follow the procedures outlined in PS 03.A.19. Students have three successive levels of appeals in the process: the Department Chair, the College Dean, and, as final arbiter, the Student Discipline Committee. The policy gives instructors latitude when recommending a penalty, which may include failure of the course, but the recommended penalty may be modified by the arbiters at the three levels of appeal. The University also reserves the right to pursue additional disciplinary actions when an academic honesty violation involves flagrant behavior or when a student has multiple violations.

### ***Relevant Policies***

[PS 03.A.19](#) Academic Honesty Policy

[PS 04.A.01](#) Student Rights and Responsibilities

## **3. Student Conduct Processes and Student Discipline**

Student Conduct Processes are governed by UHD's Student Rights and Responsibilities policy, [PS 04.A.01](#), and the processes are conducted by the University Student Conduct Officer. The student-conduct processes are defined for the "academic environment" (section 4.2) and the "university level" (section 4.3).

### ***Discipline in the Academic Environment***

According to the policy the classroom instructor is responsible for decorum in the academic environment. The instructor should address the problematic behavior to the student and attempt to guide the student to stop the behavior. If the behavior persists and is disruptive, the instructor may ask the student to leave the classroom and attend a meeting with the instructor and the Department Chair, before the student is allowed to return to class. If the student refuses to leave the classroom, the instructor may call UHD police. The instructor should document the incident using the [Student Incident Form](#) linked to the policy. If the student accepts responsibility for the behavior, he or she may return to class. If the situation cannot be resolved by following these steps, the matter must be reported to the Dean of Students in S380.

### ***Discipline at the University Level***

When a student conduct matter in the classroom cannot be resolved by following the steps in ([PS 04.A.01](#), Section 4.2) of the Student Rights and Responsibilities policy, or when any student conduct issue occurs outside of the classroom, the Student Conduct Officer will receive, investigate/review, and manage the reports. If the University believes that the student's presence on campus constitutes an imminent danger to persons or property, the Dean of Students may invoke "interim suspension," under which a student may be denied access to class, UHD computer networks, and or UHD property

during the Student Conduct Process. (PS 04.A.01, Section 3.4.1.10)

When a report is received, the Dean of Students, or their designee, will investigate and/or review the report. In most cases, the student will not be denied access to educational resources during the investigation/review. The steps for the Student Conduct Processes include:

1. Notification to the student of the report: The student will be notified in writing by the Student Conduct Officer that a conduct code violation was reported. The student will be required to attend a “procedural interview” (PS 04.A.01, Section 4.4) with the Dean of Students, or their designee. During the procedural interview, the student will receive a copy of the report and an overview of the Student Conduct process. In some cases, depending on the seriousness of the report, the matter may be resolved at this stage. If the matter cannot be resolved at this stage, the next step is an investigation/review.
2. Investigation/review: The Dean of Students will investigate/review the report. This may include interviewing the person who made the report, the student involved and possible witnesses. This will also include an examination of the policy to determine a specific policy violation. The Student Conduct Officer will arrange either an “Administrative Review” by the Student Conduct Officer or a Hearing with the Student Discipline committee, based upon which option the student chooses.
3. If the student is found to have violated any UHD or UH System policy, the Dean of Students or the Student Discipline Committee may impose a sanction. The possible sanctions, defined in detail in section PS 04.A.01, section 3.4 of the policy, include, but are not limited to:
  - a. A warning
  - b. Restricted privileges
  - c. Restitution
  - d. Disciplinary Probation
  - e. Withholding Transcripts
  - f. Non-Readmission
  - g. Suspension
    - If the university determines that a student’s presence on campus constitutes an imminent danger to persons or property, interim suspension may be invoked.
    - If a student is subjected to interim suspension, he or she may be denied access to class, UHD computer networks, and or UHD property during the Student Conduct Process.
  - h. Expulsion

A student may appeal any finding or sanction from the Student Conduct Officer or the Student Discipline Committee to the Dean of Students and/or the Dean’s designee.

### ***Relevant Policy***

[PS 04.A.01](#) Student Rights and Responsibilities

## **4. Classroom Access and Resources**

### ***Regular Classrooms***

All regular classrooms on campus are accessible to faculty via electronic key cards that are distributed to faculty members by their departments. Faculty have the responsibility to unlock and lock the classrooms before and after each use to ensure protection of university equipment

and resources. If the key fob does not work, faculty should contact the Police (x8065), and they can provide access. Faculty should report malfunctioning cards to their department's office staff, who will contact the appropriate university division about a replacement.

Classrooms are assigned automatically through UHD's room-scheduling program. Instructors who wish to change classrooms for a course they are teaching must consult their Department Chair, who has the authority to facilitate a room change.

Most classrooms are equipped with an instructor computer and projection system. Instructions are provided in each classroom. In addition, many classrooms now have HyFlex capabilities that allow them to facilitate interactions between those in the classroom and others on video conferencing software (e.g., Zoom). For rooms with HyFlex technology, cameras are installed in the front and back of the room, and microphones are in the ceiling to capture audio from the room.

### ***Computer classrooms and Other Specialized Instructional Spaces***

The computer classrooms in the TTLC (7<sup>th</sup> floor Academic Building) and on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor of One Main South require special access permissions. There are other rooms throughout the campus that are also restricted access such as music rooms and science labs. Faculty members who wish to access restricted rooms should consult their Department Chair.

### ***Equipment***

In each classroom is a phone that allows faculty to reach the Multimedia support staff as well as the Campus Police. Contact Multimedia if there are any equipment issues. If faculty would like to have equipment that is not already in the classroom, they must request it in advance via the [Multimedia](#) website.

### ***Emergency Classroom Notification System***

In the event of a fast-developing emergency situation, the University will contact faculty and students via the classroom notification system in addition to email and emergency-alert text messages. Each classroom is equipped with a notebook-sized electronic display located on the wall just inside the main door of each classroom. In an emergency, this device will sound a brief alarm before displaying messages relating to the event. The University police have the ability to remotely place all or selected classrooms into lockdown. Each classroom is also equipped with "panic button" capability that enables a faculty member to put their individual room into lockdown. When activated, this system automatically alerts the UHD Police Department to dispatch an officer to the scene. Training on what to expect in an emergency is provided through the University's [Office of Emergency Management](#), and all faculty members are encouraged to attend one of these sessions, which are held at least once each long-semester.

## **5. Off-Campus Sites**

For students who live or work in the suburban Houston areas, UHD offers programs at Lone Star College-CyFair, Lone Star College-Kingwood, and the UHD Northwest Campus. Department Chairs determine which faculty members will teach at these sites as part of their teaching assignments.

### ***UHD Northwest Campus***

The UHD Northwest campus serves western Montgomery County, Waller County, NW Harris County and the City of Houston in the Willowbrook area. At this location, UHD offers the upper-level and graduate courses leading to the degree. Instruction is delivered face-to-face with daytime, evening, and weekend scheduling options. Contact information:

12,  
20515 SH 249, Houston, TX 77070  
713-237-5400  
<https://www.uhd.edu/academics/off-campus/distance-northwest.aspx>  
Interim Director: [Maria Estrada](#), [estradam@uhd.edu](mailto:estradam@uhd.edu)

### ***UHD at Lone Star College-CyFair***

The University of Houston-Downtown's teacher education program at LSC-CyFair College offers students certification in elementary and bilingual education while earning a Bachelor's of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies. Contact information:

UHD at LSC-CyFair CASA  
109 K  
9191 Barker Cypress Road, Cypress, Texas 77433  
281-290-3435  
<https://www.uhd.edu/academics/off-campus/distance-cyfair.aspx>  
Coordinator/Academic Advisor: Kimberly Constantine, [constantinek@uhd.edu](mailto:constantinek@uhd.edu)

### ***UHD at Lone Star College-Kingwood***

The University of Houston Downtown's teacher education program at Kingwood College offers students certification in elementary education while earning a Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies. Contact information:

UHD at LSC-Kingwood  
SCC 113  
20000 Kingwood Drive, Kingwood, Texas 77339  
281-318-4339  
<https://www.uhd.edu/academics/off-campus/distance-kingwood.aspx>  
Coordinator/Academic Advisor: Mandy Danley, [danleym@uhd.edu](mailto:danleym@uhd.edu)

## **6. Online Education**

In higher education, online courses are typically described as those courses in which 80% or more of course content is delivered fully online ([Allen and Seaman, 2013](#)), typically by use of a learning management system. At UHD, online courses are those delivered fully online, through the University's [Canvas Course Management System](#). Hybrid courses are those courses consisting of 50% face-to-face and 50% online delivery. The policy governing online education at UHD is [PS 03.A.37](#)- Online Education Policy.

### ***UHD Online***

Department Chairs work with faculty members to determine who will teach online courses as part of their teaching loads based on student demand and programmatic needs. Most degree programs at UHD include some online courses, and in some degree programs, the demand for online courses is so robust that online teaching is a routine part of faculty members' workload. In addition, many degree programs have the option of being completed fully online. A list of some of these programs includes:

- The Marilyn Davies College of Business currently offers online versions of the B.B.A. in General Business, B.B.A. in Enterprise Information Systems, B.B.A. in Finance, B.B.A. in Insurance and Risk Management, B.B.A. in International Business, B.B.A. in Management, B.B.A. in Marketing, B.B.A. in Supply Chain Management, and B.A.A.S. in Applied Administration.



- The College of Humanities and Social Sciences currently offers online versions of the B.A. in Communication Studies, the B.A. in Humanities, the B.S. in Interdisciplinary Studies, the B.S. in Technical Communication, the B.S. in Psychology, M.A. in Strategic Communication, and the M.A. in Non-Profit Management.
- The College of Public Service currently offers online versions of the B.S. in Criminal Justice, B.A.A.S. in Criminal Justice, M.S. in Criminal Justice, and Master of Arts in Teaching.

### ***Resources for Instructors***

Online instruction often requires a pedagogical paradigm shift whereby instructors create online learning environments that encourage active engagement with course materials, ample communication between students as well as between students and the instructor, and opportunities for reflection, revision, and self-assessment.

The [Technology Teaching & Learning Center](#) (TTLC) and the [Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence](#) (CTLE) provides training for faculty new to online instruction, as well as for seasoned online educators seeking to master a new technology tool. In addition to providing internal training, the TTLC also assists faculty with instructional design.

For faculty seeking external training, the CTLE funds [Quality Matters](#) (QM) workshops and [Online Learning Consortium](#) (OLC). QM is a nationally recognized program that trains educators to apply a rubric for the purpose of self- assessment and/or peer-assessment of online course design. Completion of QM or OLC workshops will allow online instructors to acquire certifications in various topics related to online instructional design.

Faculty who teach online should also consult with their departments and colleges for department or college-specific resources for online teaching. For example, the College of Humanities and Social Sciences has developed the [CHSS Online Teaching Initiative](#) on the UHD Website.

### ***Further Information about Online Education at UHD***

For more information, see the [UHD Online](#) website.

### ***Relevant Policy***

[PS 03.A.37](#) Online Education

### ***Other Relevant Documents***

Allen, I. E. & Seaman, J. (2013). *Changing Course: Ten Years of Tracking Online Education in the United States*. Babson Survey Research Group. Retrieved from <http://www.onlinelearningsurvey.com/reports/changingcourse.pdf>

## **7. Educational Program Assessment**

### ***Overview***

Educational program assessment is a faculty-directed, ongoing process for understanding and improving student learning and program effectiveness by:

- making expectations explicit and transparent;
- collaboratively setting appropriate criteria and high standards for learning quality and program effectiveness;
- systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations;
- using the resulting information to document, explain, and improve performance.

The advantage of this systematic approach is that it clarifies the purpose and goals of the program by requiring those goals and expectations to be explicitly stated in the form of learning and effectiveness outcomes. The systematic gathering and analysis of data identifies areas of strength, pinpoints specific areas needing improvement, and allows the documentation of improvement over time. An essential component of good educational practice, program assessment promotes a reflective, scholarly approach to teaching and program improvement, and is consistent with contemporary approaches to higher education that emphasize the importance of engaging students in the learning process.

Program assessment is conducted for the sole purpose of improving learning and program effectiveness, and findings are not intended for use in personnel evaluations.

### ***Focus of Program Assessment at UHD***

UHD has a comprehensive system of continuous quality improvement. All units within the University participate in program assessment including co-curricular and administrative units. Within academic units, all educational programs, including degree programs, developmental education, General Education, non-credit programs, and academic centers are required to participate in program assessment.

### ***Faculty's Role in Program Assessment***

The faculty holds responsibility for curriculum and, by extension, responsibility for ensuring the curriculum's effectiveness and for improving student learning. Faculty responsibilities include:

- articulating program learning and effectiveness outcomes. Learning outcomes describe what every graduate of the program should know, be able to do and value. Effectiveness outcomes articulate key program performance indicators such as retention and graduation rates and are developed in collaboration with academic administrators;
- ensuring that course work and content are aligned with the stated learning outcomes of the program and that students have ample opportunity to learn and practice the skills and knowledge needed to achieve those outcomes;
- identifying specific strategies to measure the degree to which students are achieving the learning outcomes;
- collaborating with academic administrators to identify strategies to measure program effectiveness outcomes;
- establishing success criteria for each measure. Success criteria articulate the minimum acceptable level of performance;
- collecting systematic evidence which documents program effectiveness and the degree to which students are achieving program outcomes;
- using the information learned during the assessment process to identify and implement strategies which are designed to improve student learning and program effectiveness.

### ***Program Assessment Processes***

Each educational program must have an assessment plan that defines student learning and program effectiveness outcomes, strategies for measuring the outcomes, success criteria, and a schedule for data collection and reporting.

Annually, faculty work collaboratively with other faculty as well as administrators to collect and analyze data according to the scheduled laid out in the program's assessment plan. The faculty uses these data to develop an annual assessment report which includes:

- an overview of the data collection process;
- a summary and interpretation of the data and a statement of whether or not performance met established success criteria;
- strategies for improving student learning and program effectiveness when performance falls below the success criteria;
- strategies for improving the assessment processes;
- an update on progress made toward implementation of prior years' improvement initiatives;
- supporting documentation to include faculty meeting minutes where assessment was discussed, measurement instruments such as surveys, exams, interview questions, rubrics, etc. and a summary of data for each measurement.

Annual assessment reports are submitted to the Program Chair and Dean for review. Once finalized, the reports and supporting documentation such as faculty meeting minutes where assessment was discussed, measurement instruments which were used in the assessment (surveys, exams, rubrics, etc.) and a summary of data are forwarded to the Office of Assessment & Accreditation where they are reviewed and archived. The Office of Assessment submits & Accreditation a summary report to the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs/ Provost on an annual basis.

For due dates, see [PS 03.A.31](#).

### ***Relevant Policies***

[PS 03.A.31](#) Assessment of Educational Programs

[PS 03.A.39](#) Assessment of Co-Curricular & Operations Units

## **8. Program Development, Revision, and Elimination**

Both program and course development policy is established in [PS 03.A.12](#), Changes in Curricula, Courses, and Program Inventories. All course and program changes are initiated at the departmental level and move through an approval process.

Each department has a curriculum committee, established via department procedures. For programs that are interdisciplinary, committees are established via other processes such as those identified in [PS 03.A.35](#)- Academic Programs and Credentials Policy.

New courses and course changes are vetted through a hierarchical approval process. If the department curriculum committee approves a course change, it moves to the Department Chair or Program Chair and then to the Dean of the college. If approved by the Dean, the proposal moves to the University Curriculum Committee (UCC). It moves from UCC approval to the Provost.

Proposals for new majors or minors are similar to proposals for new courses, except that a majority of the relevant faculty members must approve the proposal before the department can send it forward to the Dean and then to UCC.

Each proposal must be submitted according to guidelines established by the UCC with appropriate documentation. The materials are submitted and reviewed via an electronic system called the Curriculog. Any faculty member may review the status of any proposal by logging into the Curriculog on the UHD [Curriculog website](#).

In rare instances, programs must be eliminated due to extremely low enrollments or academic restructuring. Sunsetting, or the elimination of programs, is currently addressed in section 2.6 of any proposal by logging into [Curriculog](#).

In rare instances, programs must be eliminated due to extremely low enrollments or academic restructuring. Sunsetting, or the elimination of programs, is currently addressed in section 2.6 of [PS 10.A.06](#), UH-Downtown Faculty Dismissal Policy and Procedures.

### ***Relevant Policies***

[PS 03.A.12](#) Changes in Curricula, Courses, and Program Inventories,

[PS 03.A.35](#) Academic Programs and Credentials

[PS 10.A.06](#) UH-Downtown Faculty Dismissal Policy and Procedures

## **9. Office Hours**

Faculty are required to hold regular office hours. Per [PS 01.A.17 Campus Presence Policy](#), faculty are required to hold in-person office hours each week. The amount should be proportional to the number of courses being taught with a minimum of two office hours per week “spread over at least two different days per week during the long and fall semester. “Additional virtual office hours may be scheduled in addition to the in-person office hours.

Faculty members must include their scheduled office hours in their course syllabi. They should keep those schedule office hours and inform students and department staff if they anticipate significant deviation from that schedule. Faculty should consult [PS 03.A.29](#)- Course Syllabi Policy for all syllabus requirements.

## **10. Disability Services and Accommodating Students with Disabilities**

The University of Houston-Downtown adheres to the mandates of the [Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#), the [American with Disabilities Act of 1990](#), and the [ADA Amendments Act of 2008](#), as applicable. The University is committed to ensuring that no student with a disability is excluded, denied services, segregated or otherwise treated differently than other students because of the absence of a reasonable academic adjustment/auxiliary aid.

Students who believe they need academic adjustments/auxiliary aids must register with the Accessible Education Center (AEC), located in GSB314 (call 713-221-5078 or email: [aec@uhd.edu](mailto:aec@uhd.edu).) Faculty should refer students who inquire about possible academic adjustments/auxiliary aids to the AEC. Faculty are not obligated to provide accommodations for students who have not registered with AEC. It is the student’s responsibility to provide the faculty member with documentation showing they have registered with the AEC and received an approved recommendation for an academic adjustment/auxiliary aid. Faculty have the responsibility to work with the AEC to provide reasonable academic adjustments to eligible students.

Each faculty member has an obligation to be aware of [SAM 01.D.09](#), the UH System Student Academic Adjustments/Auxiliary Aids policy regarding equal education opportunities for students with disabilities. Faculty may take advantage of frequently updated information disseminated by the AEC by visiting the [AEC Website](#). Faculty are also encouraged to contact the AEC staff with questions or concerns.

More information on ADA and EEOC compliance can be found at the following websites:

The Rehabilitation Act, <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/oasam/centers-offices/civil-rights-center/statutes/section-504-rehabilitation-act-of-1973>

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, <https://www.ada.gov/law-and-regs/ada/>

Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment Act of 2008,  
<https://www.eeoc.gov/statutes/americans-disabilities-act-amendments-act-2008>

### ***Relevant Policies and Statutes***

[Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990](#)

[Americans with Disabilities Act of 2008](#)

[The Federal Rehabilitation Act](#)

[SAM 01.D.09](#) Student Academic Adjustments/Auxiliary Aids policy

## **11. Syllabus Requirements**

Note: All UHD syllabi must be delivered to students and the public via the [SimpleSyllabus](#) platform. This system, and its organizational structure, is used in compliance with [HB 2504](#), the [Texas Education Code §51.974](#), and [UHD's PS 03A29](#).

Faculty should be sure to include the following information in the format specified in SimpleSyllabus. Some of this required information prepopulates in SimpleSyllabus, based on the databases such as the course schedule, the directory, and Follett bookstore orders. If there is an error with the PeopleSoft data feeds, contact your department office. If there is an issue with book orders, reach out to the Follett bookstore.

### ***Course Identification Information***

- Official Course prefix, number, and name (MATH, College Algebra)
- 5-digit class section number
- Semester and Year (Fall 2021)
- Credit hours (3 semester credit hours for most courses)
- Prerequisites and/or co-requisites
- Meeting time for the course (unless asynchronous)
- Classroom location if relevant (building and room number or online)

### ***Instructor Information***

- Instructor's Full Name
- Instructor's office room number
- Instructor's office hours (must be specific options beyond "by appointment")
- Instructor's office telephone number
- Instructor's UHD email address

### ***Basic Content and Evaluation Criteria***

- Course description as it appears in the UHD catalog
- Course learning outcomes (as approved for all sections of the course; consult dept chair for more info)
- Textbook(s) and other required materials
- Grading policy that clearly states:
  - How students' performance in the course will be evaluated (e.g., grading scale)
  - Weight of all course activities/assignments (e.g. oral report counts 15%)

***Course Requirements***

- Lecture topics to be covered
- Schedule (of readings, assignments, exams, etc.)
- Required Texts
- Recommended Texts
- If there are additional costs to students, such as supplemental materials/activities, the syllabus should clearly enumerate the extra expense. Testing service charges made to students must also appear in the course schedule.

***Expectations and procedures***

- A statement on AI use in coursework submitted for grades.
- Any course-specific information about potential penalties for Academic Honesty Violations
- Course Policies – “Each syllabus will state any additional policies that might have a significant impact on a student’s performance, such as:”
- Attendance
- Tardiness
- Acceptance of late work
- Make-up exams
- Safety rules for labs

**12. Canvas Course-Management System**

UHD uses a course-management system called [Canvas](#) to facilitate and enhance learning in on-line and face-to-face courses. Canvas is the mode by which on-line courses are delivered, but all instructors have access to Canvas shells for every course they teach. Instructors for all face-to-face courses have the latitude to choose how and to what extent they will use Canvas. Canvas is directly integrated with the PeopleSoft Student Records Management System so that Canvas courses are automatically created, instructors of record are given access to appropriate Canvas course sites, and student rosters are kept current.

There are several links to Canvas on the UHD website, but faculty and students can access it directly through this link to the [Canvas login page](#).

***Canvas Training and Assistance***

There are many sources of support for faculty using Canvas at UHD. All faculty are alerted via the [Technology Training Calendar](#) to a variety of training sessions offered throughout the year. There is also a [Faculty & Staff IT Resources Homepage](#) available on the IT webpage detailing the computer training courses available to UHD faculty. This website offers comprehensive training documentation including instructions for getting started in Canvas and for using a number of its advanced features. Faculty are also automatically enrolled in the online Canvas Orientation, available through the instructor’s Dashboard inside Canvas. The TTLC also offers drop-in faculty support from TTLC staff in A700. Faculty are also encouraged to direct specific Canvas questions to [Canvas Support and Resources](#) by phoning 713-221-2786 or by emailing [TTLCHelp@uhd.edu](mailto:TTLCHelp@uhd.edu).

***Essential Information about Canvas at UHD******Faculty login***

The Canvas username is the same username used to login to other UHD services, a concatenation of the last name and first initial, such as “smithj.” New faculty and staff are issued their initial computer account password through Human Resources. Users will be required to change passwords every 180 days thereafter following mandatory state guidelines.



### *About Canvas Course Shells*

A new Canvas course site will be automatically created within 24 hours of the official faculty assignment for each course section. All faculty will automatically be provided with a course site, but the course design and loading of content are the responsibility of the individual faculty member. Each faculty member has access to the Canvas UHD Faculty Training Course: Growing with Canvas at UHD. This course demonstrates Canvas's basic functions that can be used to design Canvas course sites.

All face-to-face Canvas course shells are fully viewable by the instructor, but unavailable to students until the instructor activates the course for students. However, all Canvas courses will become available to registered students on the first scheduled day of the course. Instructors can also choose to open their course early for students.

## **13. Student Course Evaluations**

In accordance with [PS 03.A.26](#) the University administers Student Course Opinion Surveys (also known as student course evaluations) for every course, no matter the instructor's rank or the course-delivery mode. These course evaluations are used by Chairs and adjunct supervisors as a tool for evaluating teaching performance annually, and they provide instructors with valuable student feedback. In Fall 2014, the University adopted IDEA online evaluations, which provide data on students' perceptions of their own achievement of the course learning outcomes. More information about IDEA can be found on the [Feedback & IDEA](#) webpage.

### ***Relevant Policy***

[PS 03.A.026](#) Student Course Opinion Surveys

## **14. Textbook and Courseware Orders and OER/No-Cost Notification**

It is critical that faculty submit their book orders to Follett in a timely manner, based on their circulated deadlines. Instructors must use the Follett order portal inside Canvas (the My Materials link) to indicate (1) textbooks required to be purchased for the class; (2) textbooks recommended for the class; (3) courseware required to be purchased for the class; and (4) if no commercial materials are needed for the course. [TEC §51.4521](#).

Because UHD has adopted the convention of bundling textbook charges into a single student fee (the [GTAP program](#)), it is vitally important that faculty notify Follett of their plans, even if they intend to use entirely no cost materials. The reason for this is twofold. First, the Follett database will let students know what their total textbook cost will be for all their classes, thereby giving them a sense of whether they should opt-in or opt-out of the optional GTAP fee. [TEC §51.4521 \(b\) \(3\) \(A\) & \(C\)](#). Second, UHS uses the Follett data to feed both the *OER* and *low cost* searchable database, required by [TEC §51.4521 \(b\) \(4\)](#).

Students are not required to participate in the GTAP student fee and are not required to buy their books from Follett. Nonetheless, we need faculty to supply their intent to Follett so that we can publish these data publicly, so that the students can make the best financial decision for them.

Given state law, faculty should keep the following in mind when submitting your book order:

- Instructors should confer with their Chairs and disciplinary coordinators to determine whether there are required texts for particular courses.
- Instructors are not obligated to order any textbooks for their courses. Nonetheless, **instructors must notify the bookstore that they will not be requiring a commercial textbook**, in compliance with Federal guidelines and [TEC §51.4521 \(b\) \(4\)](#). Students are not required to buy their textbooks from the UHD Bookstore ([Texas Education Code §51.9705](#)).
- Finally, the Federal [Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008](#) § 133 requires instructors to submit textbook order information to the university bookstore in a timely manner (see §133 (a-e)). This law also encourages (see §133 (f)) and the GTAP program necessitates that *no-cost sections* be identified through the Follett database, which UHS publicizes via the schedule along with the above-referenced federally mandated display of a course's commercial textbook requirements.

## 15. Faculty Advisors of Student Organizations

Student organizations are regulated by the [Office of Student Leadership and Involvement](#). . UHD currently has more than 50 recognized student organizations, most of which have faculty advisors. Advising a student organization is recognized as an important service activity on behalf of the University, one which facilitates student retention and success. Faculty members who serve as advisors to student organizations should abide by the policies and procedures established by the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement. For more information, contact the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement by phone (713-221- 8573) or email ([Sli@uhd.edu](mailto:Sli@uhd.edu)).

## **Section VI. Other Employment-Related Benefits and Procedures**

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### **1. The PASS System and Accessing Payroll Information**

#### ***People Advantage Self Service (PASS)***

People Advantage Self Service (PASS) allows UHD employees access to manage personal information online, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, in real time. Employees can make changes or updates to personal information or W-4s, and view/print pay history, earning statements, and benefits information. Employees can also request changes in name, marital status, and educational level online, but appropriate documentation is required before these changes are approved. PASS may be accessed through the AccessUHD tab on the UHD Homepage. To log in to PASS the first time, employees will need their date of birth, last four digits of their social security number, and their employee ID (commonly referred to as “Empl ID,” this number may be found on paystubs and other payroll documents or contact Human Resources if you are not sure of your Employee ID). After the initial log in, the system will require that users change their password. This password is PASS-specific and cannot be the same one used for other UHD logins.

To learn more about PASS advantages and how it works, log in through the AccessUHD tab on the UHD Homepage.

#### ***Paydays***

Faculty members are paid monthly on the first working day of the month, with the first payday of the academic year occurring in October. Full-time faculty members are on nine-month contracts and may opt to take their salaries evenly divided over 9 months or 12 months. Those who opt for 9-month salaries will receive paychecks October through June; those who opt for 12-month salaries will receive paychecks October through September.

#### ***W-2 Tax Forms***

The University offers employees options for receiving W-2 tax forms. An employee may choose to receive their W-2 form in the mail or electronically through PASS. Employees who choose to print their W-2 through PASS should complete the Electronic W-2 Consent Agreement in PASS each year. Employees will automatically receive a copy of the current W-2 form in the mail if an Electronic W-2 Consent Agreement is not submitted. Additional information on W-2 electronic printouts and withdrawal of consent is provided in PASS, accessed through the AccessUHD tab on the UHD Homepage.

#### ***Payroll Deductions***

By law, UHD is required to make certain deductions from an employee’s pay. These include the following:

- Federal Income Tax (FIT);
- Social Security (FICA);
- Medicare Tax;
- TRS or ORP retirement program (if required, based on employment status);
- Court-ordered garnishments (child support and IRS levy).

Employees have the option of requesting additional deductions, such as:

- Health insurance;
- Voluntary life, accident, and disability insurance;
- Dental insurance;
- State Employee Charitable Campaign;
- Annuities.

### ***Payroll Direct Deposit***

To reduce the costs and making progress toward achieving a paperless environment, UH requires all employees to have their pay deposited electronically to their personal bank account. Employees may sign up for direct deposit by logging on to PASS or completing a Direct Deposit Authorization Form and submitting it to the Payroll Department, located in S910.

There is no cost to employees for direct deposit and many banks offer free checking services to individuals who are paid via direct deposit. Direct deposit assures the employee will receive their pay expeditiously, especially in the event of a disaster such as a hurricane, and payments can be divided automatically among designated employee accounts.

Employees who do not want to enroll in direct deposit may have their pay deposited through the UHS PayCard program, sponsored by Bank of America. This is a Visa-branded card that will be issued in the employee's name. The PayCard will be loaded by electronic funds transfer with the amount of the employee's pay due on a standard pay day.

## **2. Teaching in the Non-Required (Supplemental) Terms: Winter, May, and Summer Terms and Overloads**

### ***Summer Teaching***

#### ***Winter and May Mini Terms***

Full-time and adjunct faculty who teach in the Winter or May Mini Terms are paid the adjunct rate.

#### ***Summer Terms***

During the summer terms (5-week, 6-week, and regular sessions), faculty are paid 1/12<sup>th</sup> per 3 SCH for the first 6 SCH (excluding courses paid at the pro-rated amount) and paid at the adjunct rate for additional SCHs. For example, if a faculty member is teaching two graduate courses, which count as 4.5 SCHs, they are paid 1/6<sup>th</sup> their salary for the first 6 SCHs and then the adjunct rate for the remaining 3 SCHs.

#### ***Teaching Overloads in the Fall and Spring Terms***

Last minute enrollment circumstances, faculty resignations, and curricular needs may occasionally require Department Chairs to assign willing faculty members courses in excess of their regular semester teaching load articulated. Policies and procedures relating to overload compensation in the form of remuneration or compensatory time are articulated in [PS 02.A.05](#), Additional Compensation for Faculty and Exempt Staff Policy.

### ***Relevant Policy***

[PS 02.A.05](#) Additional Compensation for Faculty and Exempt Staff

### 3. Insurance Programs

#### *Insurance Eligibility*

UHD offers a variety of insurance programs to benefits-eligible employees as part of its employment and compensation package. Employees may select benefits individualized to meet their needs and those of their dependents.

To be eligible, faculty must be employed at least one-half time (50% full-time equivalent).

New employees have a 60-day waiting period for medical insurance. The 60-day waiting period is waived for employees transferring directly from another state agency.

#### *Health Insurance*

A variety of insurance programs are available to University employees through the Texas Employees Group Benefits Program (GBP).

- **Full-time employees:** the state pays 100% of the employee's own medical premium and 50% of their dependents' premiums. Employees working thirty (30) hours or more per week will be considered full-time for insurance purposes and will receive a 100% state contribution on their own medical premium and 50% contribution on their dependents' premiums.
- **Part-time employees:** the State pays 50% of the employee's own medical premium and 25% of their dependents' premiums. Employees working less than thirty (30) hours per week are still considered part-time for insurance purposes and will continue to receive the same percentage rate of state contribution to medical premiums. If you are a part-time faculty member, the [Part-Time Faculty Benefits](#) webpage provides the information you need regarding your benefits eligibility.

Coverage must be selected by new employees within the first **thirty (30) days after their hire dates** and becomes effective the first day of the following month, excluding the medical insurance, which becomes effective the first day of the month following a 60-day waiting period. Current employees can add or make changes to their insurance plans during summer enrollment, which is usually during July and/or August of each year.

For questions about insurance providers and rates, please contact the Staff of [UHD Benefits](#) in Human Resources at [benefits@uhd.edu](mailto:benefits@uhd.edu). The [Benefits Module](#) of the New Employee Orientation Canvas course has the information you need to make the most of your comprehensive State of Texas benefits package.

### 4. Parking on Campus

UHD-designated [parking garages and lots](#) are accessible to University employees who purchase a parking permit. To obtain a permit, employees must present vehicle information (make, model, year, and license plate number), driver's license, and payment for the parking fee. Employees have the option of paying the fee through automatic payroll deduction. For more information regarding parking costs, locations, and permits, contact the [Parking and Transportation Services](#), by calling 713-221-8065. Current rates are shown on the [Parking Rates webpage](#).

An interactive parking map is available at the following url:  
<https://maps.uhd.edu/?id=1133#!ce/25333?ct/25343?s/>

## 5. Travel Reimbursement

UHD recognizes business travel as an essential aspect of its operations, and it seeks to fund such activities in a manner that is equitable to both travelers and the institution. The purpose of this section is to provide a general outline of the procedures that travelers must follow to be reimbursed. Faculty may find more information in UHD's Travel Policy ([PS 01.A.08](#)), which sets procedures for all UHD employees. Faculty should consult that document whenever planning conference travel or other university-related travel.

The general framework for travel is as follows:

- All travel requests funded by the University require prior approval, usually by the appropriate Chair and Dean. Foreign travel must have the approval by the President or the President's designee. Approval by the Governor's office may also be required in some cases. Significant changes in dates or costs of travel may require re-approval. Consult [PS 01.A.08](#), §§ 3.1.1 – 3.1.7 for details. [Travel Forms](#) are available on the Travel Office's website.
- IRS rules and university policy handle travel reimbursement differently when a trip combines business and personal travel. Consult section 3.2.1 for details.
- All travel arrangements should be made through the [UHD Travel Office](#).
- In cases where travel is to be paid by a third party, the traveler must still provide full disclosure of the nature and purpose of the travel.
- Prior approval of a [Travel Request Form](#) is required for all University travel, regardless of the source of funds. Even when not requesting reimbursement for travel, faculty members should submit a Travel Request Form to insure Workers Compensation Coverage during the work-related travel.
- Travelers must document all expenses on a State of Texas Travel Voucher. See [PS 01.A.08](#) §4.1 for details.
- Failure to comply with the Travel Policy will result in an inability to recover travel expenses. See [PS 01.A.08](#) §3.11.

The UH System has adopted the [Concur](#) application to manage travel and expenses for employees. Faculty should submit travel requests through Concur. Information about [getting started in Concur](#) is available through the travel office website.

### ***Relevant Policy***

[PS 01.A.08](#) Travel Policy  
[travel-card-guidelines.docx](#)

## 6. Room Reservations and Meetings

When faculty members are planning for committee meetings on campus, they must reserve a room to ensure that the meeting space is available at that time. Many departments have conference rooms of their own that departmental faculty can arrange to reserve through their departments. Similarly, Deans may have conference rooms available; check with staff within the college to reserve a Dean's conference room. However, the majority of meeting rooms are administered by the University's [Campus Event Space Reservations](#). Faculty can make reservations using the electronic [Internal Event Space Request Form](#) available on the [Campus Event Space Reservations](#)



website. This website provides processes and procedures for room use.

*Important note about classroom assignments:* classroom assignments for courses are generated automatically through UHD's room-scheduling program. Faculty members are not free to choose their own classrooms unilaterally. Those instructors who wish to change classrooms for a course they are teaching should consult their Department Chair, who has the authority to facilitate a room change.

## 7. Emergency Communications

In the event of an emergency on the UHD campus, the university community will be notified through several communication channels. The type of channel used will depend upon the nature of the emergency. Generally, the more severe the emergency, the more channels are used.

The following channels are used for emergency communications to faculty, staff, and students:

**Email.** All faculty, staff and students will receive an email notification sent to their UHD email address, their personal email address, or for students a Gator Mail address, stating the nature of the emergency and any action that should be taken.

**Phone Text Message.** A text phone message will be sent to faculty and staff cell phone numbers.

**Classroom Display Panels.** A message will be sent via the Emergency Classroom Notification System to the classroom display panels located on the wall adjacent to the main door of each classroom.

**UHD's Main Switchboard.** In the event that an emergency has caused the University to be closed or has caused a pending closure, a message will be left on UHD's main telephone line at 713-221-8000.

**Website.** The UHD homepage can be altered to communicate information on an emergency either via a rotating slide, or placement of a full-screen, static image.

**Social Media.** UHD's social media sites, including Facebook and X, will post updated information as it becomes available. These sites can be accessed at <http://www.facebook.com/Uhdowntown> or <https://x.com/uhdowntown>.

**External Media.** If necessary, television, radio, and *Houston Chronicle* online will be alerted. Please check these sites for updates.

### *Update Your Contact Information*

To maximize the efficacy of UHD's emergency communications system, it is important that all UHD employees keep emergency contact information updated in the UHD contact system, which can be accessed on the website via *MyUHD*. Select the "Faculty & Staff" options and click on [\*My Profile and Emergency Alerts\*](#) under *Faculty Personal Information*.

## 8. UHD Sports & Fitness

The UHD Wellness and Success Center (713-221-8225) provides faculty, staff, and students with programs and facilities that offer vigorous, fun-filled, health-promoting, physical activity conducive to wellness and personal development. Through a well-equipped recreational facility, fitness

programs, intramural sports, and club sports, members will be motivated to embrace a healthy lifestyle, which may ultimately enhance their quality of life.

### ***Membership***

The programs and services of Sports and Fitness are open to all UHD faculty and staff at minimal cost. Additional types of memberships such as UHD Alumni and Friends Memberships are available for a nominal fee. Membership rates can be found on the [Membership](#) webpage.

### ***Wellness and Success Center***

The Wellness and Success Center opened in January 2023. The 75,000 square foot facility offers weight and cardio training, indoor and outdoor training areas, a bouldering wall, three exercise class studios, an indoor running track, three personal training and massage therapy rooms, a demonstration kitchen, three courts for basketball, volleyball, and badminton, and large locker rooms with showers.

### ***Fitness Programs***

Fitness programs are offered at various times throughout the week from certified instructors. Programs include Aerobics, Zumba, Boot Camp, Pilates, Karate, Yoga, Hip Hop, and Latin Dance. Fees for classes and personal trainers are available on the [Personal Training](#) webpage.

### ***Intramural Sports***

Intramural sports programs are designed to provide opportunities for UHD members to participate in organized sports activities. Individual and team sports are offered in over 12 different sports. Leagues are created for competitive and casual participants alike, and there are several co-ed activities.

### ***Club Sports***

Club sports provide members with opportunities to pursue active involvement and improvement in an extramural sport or activity, such as baseball, basketball, soccer, volleyball, cheerleading, cycling, and powerlifting. Clubs teams are encouraged to represent the university at local, regional and national competitions. Eligibility for some club teams is limited to currently enrolled students, so contact Sports and Fitness for more information, including eligibility requirements.

### ***Sports and Fitness Awards Banquet***

The Sports and Fitness Awards Banquet is one of UHD's oldest and best traditions. At this annual event held each May, participants are recognized for outstanding involvement and contributions to the program.