



Expectations / Requirements for a Certificate in College Teaching

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Certificate Description

The Certificate in College Teaching prepares UTSA graduate teaching assistants for instructor, discussion leader, lab supervision, and grading duties. There are three specific components of the required training:

- (1) a three-day Orientation prior to the start of classes, scheduled for Wednesday, January 5, 8:00am-4:15pm with lunch included; Thursday, January 6, 8:00am-1:00pm; and Friday, January 7, 2011, 1:00-4:15.
- (2) a mandatory three-hour microteaching commitment at the student's desired time on Friday morning, 7, 2011.
- (3) follow-on activities requiring specific actions such as classroom visits and workshop participation.

The follow-on activities will be tracked through a specially designed Blackboard communication tool. You will be mentored by one of the University Teaching Fellows. (See the full requirements below.)

Those who complete the basic requirements will receive a **Certificate in College Teaching**. Others who exceed the basic requirements by attending eight to twelve hours of workshops and conducting one additional observation of either a TA or faculty member will receive a **Certificate in College Teaching with Distinction**.

TAs who complete the requirements for the Certificate in College Teaching will have been exposed to some "generic" teaching related principles and will have had an opportunity to receive feedback on their teaching from peers and from a mentor TA. They will also have observed and reflected on the teaching practices of others. It is assumed that professional development for TAs will not stop with the Certificate. Departments should initiate discipline-specific training opportunities including workshops, discussion groups, and mentoring. Some departments also offer specific courses in teaching and learning that can build on the "basics" presented in the Certificate program.

Certificate Philosophy

The Provost, UTSA Deans, Department Chairs and Faculty Members believe that it is important for the University to:

- (1) Support graduate assistants in their key teaching roles so that they, in turn, can insure the quality of the undergraduate educational experience;
- (2) Develop a learning-centered culture where teachers and students work together;

(3) Prepare graduate students to join the academic community.

We believe that graduate students are self-directed learners who will conscientiously fulfill their professional obligations, seeking the best possible educational experiences.

Certificate Delivery

The Teaching and Learning Center—which is committed to serving the teaching and learning needs of the UTSA community—has been designated as the unit that will organize, deliver content, track progress, and award Certificates in College Teaching. We do make or enforce policies.

Academic Dishonesty

Scholastic dishonesty is a serious offense at the University (UTSA Student Code of Conduct, Sections 202 and 203 -- <http://www.utsa.edu/infoguide/appendices/b.cfm>). Any assignments that show evidence that they have not been completed directly by the student, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts will not be accepted and could result in your failure to receive the Certificate in College Teaching. Scholastic dishonesty also includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Academic misconduct makes the student subject to possible consequences from the University. Behavior that is not consistent with the guidelines presented in the SCC will be addressed by the instructors and referred to Student Judicial Affairs for review. Additional information and resources are available for students and faculty at <http://www.utsa.edu/osja/scholastic.cfm>

Requirements for the Certificate in College Teaching

Complete the TA Training/Orientation in Spring, 2011 on January 5-7, plus a three-hour microteaching module on Friday morning, January 7, 2011 and the required follow-on activities through a Blackboard tool. All requirements must be completed by the end of the Spring semester, 2011. We cannot carry over any records for incomplete certificates because we will have new University Teaching Fellows in the fall 2011. By request, we will be sending the department chairs a list of all those receiving the regular Certificate in College Teaching and the Certificate with Distinction. They will also receive an itemized list of those failing to complete the Certificate and their missing requirements.

The two-day, practical orientation for newly appointed teaching assistants is the starting point for the Certificate in College Teaching. ***Full participation during all-day Wednesday and half days on Thursday and Friday and during a three-hour microteaching module is required to be eligible for the certificate. TAs will be able to record their participation by scanning their UTSA ID card with their Banner ID.***

If you have questions or concerns about the certificate administration and requirements, please address them to Barbara Millis (Barbara.millis@utsa.edu or 458-7374), Jose Vazquez (Jose.Vazquez@utsa.edu) or Jackie Heiman (Jacqueline.Heiman@utsa.edu) at 458-7374.

Questions about any waivers for this certification should be directed to the Dean of your College.

Follow-on Activities for the Certificate in College Teaching

All students need to provide their full contact information, including banner ID, so that they can be added to a special Blackboard communication tool, labeled **TLC – Certificate in College Teaching**. This tool will:

- Serve as a means of communication for basic announcements and course forms
- Function as an educational tool for things such as threaded discussions
- Enable us to make available discipline-specific and generic teaching resources
- Allow you to document the “hands-on” activities you have completed.

You will use the communication tool to upload brief responses to each of the requirements, which are basically hands-on activities with reflection afterwards.

You will be assigned to a Mentor TA, one of the University Teaching Fellows funded through the Provost’s Office. They work closely with the Teaching and Learning Center and have been trained to offer expert advice and teaching observations, if requested. Each Mentor TA has a unique group number.

Below are the required follow-on activities that each student should complete the same semester s/he participates in the two-day face-to-face TA Training/Orientation, spring semester. They include (1) a faculty observation, (2) ONE TA observations, (3) workshop participation—7 hours, (4) successful completion of a FERPA module, and (5) completion of a Teaching Certificate survey.

(1) Faculty Observation with Focused Discussion

Each student will observe a faculty member in their discipline or a related discipline.

1. Preparation:

- a. Attend the “Conducting Effective Observations” module on Thursday, January 6, 2011.

2. Procedure:

- a. Identify faculty members to observe. These *cannot* be faculty in whose courses you are currently enrolled. Contact the faculty member early to find classes of interest at times when you can both observe the class and participate in the follow-on discussion. The follow-on discussion is an essential part of this requirement.
- b. After the observation: You and the faculty member you selected will discuss the class you observed with an emphasis on mutual feedback (e.g., what worked well and why; how you could use similar teaching approaches; what might be improved and how and why, etc.)
- c. Write a reflective summary on the appropriate form (available on Blackboard). If the reflection does not show sufficient depth, your mentor TA will ask you to resubmit.
(One submission required)

(2) Teaching Assistant Observation with Focused Discussion

Each student will observe ONE class or lab taught by a fellow Teaching Assistant.

1. **Preparation:** See Faculty Observation above.

2. Procedure:

- a. Identify three to five TAs during Orientation who might serve as peer mentors. Get their contact and schedule information with the idea that you will visit their classes before the midterm-point.
- b. After the observation, you and the TA will discuss the class or lab with an emphasis on mutual feedback (e.g., what worked well and why; how you could use similar teaching approaches; what might be improved and how and why, etc.)
- c. Write a reflective summary on the appropriate form (available on Blackboard). As with the faculty observation, if either reflection does not show sufficient depth, your mentor TA will ask you to resubmit. **(ONE submission required)**

(3) TLC Workshop or Brownbag Participation

1. You must attend **TLC workshops or brownbags** TOTALING AT LEAST SEVEN HOURS of direct participation to qualify for a certificate. Some teaching related workshops offered by the Graduate School or by the Tomas Rivera Center may substitute for TLC workshops, but **these must be cleared in advance with your mentor TA.**
2. Submit reflective summaries for each workshop or brownbag you attend on the appropriate form (available on Blackboard). You must respond in sufficient depth. **(Submissions required for a total of seven hours of participation)**

(4) Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) On-line Module

1. **Procedure:** Login to Blackboard and complete the FERPA module.
2. **You must complete the FERPA module to receive credit for your certificate.**

(5) Teaching Certificate Survey

While Blackboard tracks the individual names of respondents, the survey responses themselves will be anonymous. Feedback about your Certificate experiences is essential for improvement of the process. **You must complete the Teaching Certificate Survey on Blackboard to receive credit for certificate completion.**

General Learning Outcomes for a TA Qualified for Teaching Responsibilities

Students who are prepared to teach courses and laboratories will be able to:

- Identify the assumptions and conceptions that underpin their professional duties.
- Develop a critical appreciation of teaching and learning theory.
- Reflect upon their teaching and learning.
- Show sensitivity to diverse learning, communication skills, and sociocultural backgrounds.
- Effectively use University resources.
- Assist fellow graduate assistants in their professional development.