



## **Expectations/Requirements for Certificate in College Teaching**

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**Teaching and Learning Center**  
**SB 1.01.02**

**Certificate Description:** The Certificate in College Teaching prepares new UTSA graduate teaching assistants for instructor, discussion leader, lab supervision, and grading duties. There are two specific components of the required training: (1) a three-day Orientation prior to the start of classes, scheduled in Fall 2009 for August 19, 20, and 21 and (2) 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. 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, participating in six or more threaded discussions, and conducting one additional observation of either a TA or faculty member will receive a **Certificate in College Teaching with Distinction**.

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

- (1) Support new graduate assistants in their critical 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) Do a competent job of preparing 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 Provost and the Dean of the Graduate School are requiring mandatory TA training for graduate students accepting TAs. They have designated the Teaching and Learning Center—which is committed to serving the teaching and learning needs of the UTSA community—as the unit that will organize, deliver content, track progress, and award Certificates in College Teaching.

**General Learning Outcomes:** Students who complete the requirements for this certificate 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.

### **Certificate Goals:**

Students will learn different pedagogical methods, with an emphasis on “best practices.”  
Students will learn applicable and relevant teaching and learning theory.

**Because this is only a one-semester program, we cannot expect all TAs to reach the mastery level outlined below, but these are the Core Academic Competencies TAs should be striving toward in addition to their discipline-specific competencies:**

### **Academic Competency (non-disciplinary)**

- Personal Academic Development
  - Maintains satisfactory academic progress in degree program
  - Participates in academic activities outside the classroom on own initiative
- Teaching Skills Development
  - Works with peer mentors to sharpen pedagogical knowledge
  - Attends teaching skills workshops

### **Knowledge of Instructional Methodologies**

- Group Facilitation Skills
  - Demonstrates appropriate small-group organizational ability
  - Effectively manages single and multiple simultaneous small-group classroom activities
- Instructional Technology Skills
  - Demonstrates competency in employing commonly-used classroom instructional technology systems
  - Demonstrates competency in employing commonly-used virtual learning environment (VLE) platforms
  - Effectively employs classroom and course management technologies as part of course curriculum

### **Instructional Planning and Design**

- Curricular Planning Skills
  - Incorporates student learning objectives
  - Designs course schedule to use time efficiently
  - Designs syllabus for optimal student comprehension
- Administrative Ability
  - Effectively manages student data (grading, privacy)
  - Effectively manages course attrition (“DFW rate”)

## **Instructional Skills**

- Communication Skills
  - Listens to others
  - Assesses student verbal and kinesthetic feedback
  - Speaks and writes effectively
  
- Student Development
  - Provides motivation to learn
  - Promotes individual knowledge and skill development
  - Promotes active learning
  
- Leadership
  - Promotes trust and collaboration among colleagues and students
  - Takes an active role in departmental affairs
  - Mentors peers

## **Classroom Evaluation Skills**

- Academic Evaluation Tools
  - Develops testing instruments that assess course material in the context of stated student learning outcomes
  - Develops and provides grading rubrics to students
  - Provides appropriate feedback for improvement
  
- Self-Assessment
  - Solicits student feedback
  - Acts upon feedback when it will improve teaching effectiveness

## **Requirements for Certificate**

Complete the three-day training/Orientation to be held Fall, 2009 on August 19, 20, 21, 2009 and the required follow-on activities through a Blackboard tool.

The three-day, practical orientation for newly appointed graduate assistants is the starting point for the certification necessary to be appointed as a TA. ***Full participation during all three days is required to be eligible for the certificate.***

Each college is responsible for any individual exemptions for the certificate requirement.

If you have questions or concerns about the certificate administration and requirements, please address them to Barbara Millis ([Barbara.millis@utsa.edu](mailto:Barbara.millis@utsa.edu) or 458-7374) or Terri Kadala ([Terri.kadala@utsa.edu](mailto:Terri.kadala@utsa.edu) or 458-7504).

## 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.

**Below are the required follow-on activities that each student should complete the same semester s/he participates in the TA Orientation:**

**Weekly or Bi-Weekly Threaded Discussions:** During the semester, you will have opportunities to participate in threaded discussions with the TLC faculty and staff, the Master Teaching Fellows, and your classmates on the Blackboard communication tool. These discussions may focus on short readings, video vignettes with teaching issues, trouble-shooting/problem-solving sessions, etc. To receive credit toward your certificate, for each threaded discussion, you must offer an original entry of two or more paragraphs and respond thoughtfully to the entry of at least one other participant. **You must participate in a minimum of three threaded discussions to receive credit toward your certificate.**

**Faculty Observation with Focused Discussions:** Each student will observe a faculty member in their discipline or a related discipline.

### 1. Preparation:

- a. Attend the “Conducting Effective Observations” workshop.
- b. Recommended advance reading from *Tools for Teaching*—available on reserve at the UTSA library and at the Teaching and Learning Center, SB 1.01.02 . Read Chapters II, IV, and VI. If you are visiting a class that uses instructional media, consider reading Chapter IX: *Instructional Media and Technology*.

### 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 members you select will discuss the class you observed with an emphasis on mutual feedback (e.g., what worked well and why; how could you 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). **(One submission required)**

**Graduate Assistant Observations with Focused Discussions:** Each student will observe one Graduate Assistants with teaching or lab supervisory duties.

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

2. **Procedure:**

a. Identify three to five GAs 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 GA will discuss the class or lab with an emphasis on mutual feedback (e.g., what worked well and why; how could you 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). **(One submission required)**

**Workshop Participation:**

1. You must attend **four (4) OR MORE TLC workshops or Brownbags, TOTALING AT LEAST SIX HOURS** of direct participation to qualify for a certificate.

2. Write a reflective summary on the appropriate form (available on Blackboard). **(Submissions required for a total of six hours of participation)**

**FERPA On-line Module:**

1. **Procedure:** Login to Blackboard and complete the course.

2. **You must complete the course to receive credit for your certificate.**

**End of Certificate Survey:** **You must complete the Teaching Certificate Survey on Blackboard to receive credit for certificate completion.** 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.