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Forward

Welcome to the College of Graduate Studies (CGS) at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (TAMU-CC). The University offers more than 40 graduate degree and certificate programs. The CGS is committed to providing accurate information, guidance, and support for those serving graduate education endeavors.

With the motto “Inquire, Innovate, Impact”, the CGS embraces and cherishes diversity. The CGS is committed to enriching the public good through graduate education. Our mission is to guide, cultivate, and collaborate with a diverse community of scholars and stakeholders providing expertise, oversight, and resources that generate and disseminate higher education excellence in South Texas and beyond. The CGS is honored to serve administration, faculty, staff, students, and alumni that comprise the Island Community.

The CGS considers its employees to be its most valuable resource and strives to be a dynamic and rewarding place to work. The success of the CGS depends on the quality and
excellence of service provided by our staff members, including student employees and graduate assistants.

To accomplish the college’s goals of providing the best service to graduate students, staff, and faculty, each employee is expected to present themselves in a confident and professional manner and always be welcoming and willing to assist.

This handbook is written to serve as the guide for all employees to understand the college’s expectations as well as provide a resource to help students excel academically and professionally. The information in this handbook does not override the policies and regulations implemented by Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (TAMU-CC). All CGS employees are encouraged to speak to their supervisors if they have any questions about the handbook or consult the TAMU-CC Rules and Procedures and the Texas A&M University System (TAMUS) Policies and Regulations, available on the website. In addition, the CGS employees should consult with Human Resources if needed.

Workplace Expectations

Quality Service

All members within the CGS have the responsibility to provide excellent quality service by:

- Treating all customers with respect,
- Maintaining a neutral and fair attitude toward all people,
- Demonstrating an appearance and behavior that reflect our professionalism and high standards, and
• Focusing on the visitor’s needs and providing the necessary services and support.

Attendance and Punctuality

The CGS employees are held accountable for the jobs assigned to them. Patterns of absenteeism or tardiness may result in disciplinary actions. Full-time employees must adhere to the rules and regulations set by TAMU-CC and the Human Resources department.

All CGS non-administrative staff and students are required to track their time. Student workers who are paid hourly are to utilize Workday to check in and check out. Graduate Assistants track their time through an Excel time tracker. For student workers, checking in and out must be done using a CGS workstation computer. Using any other device for punching in/out is prohibited. Employees who regularly forget to record their time via their prescribed method may be subject to disciplinary action.

Student employees must:

1. Record the hours worked in the TAMUS Single Sign On (SSO) Workday System.

2. Verify that the recorded working hours are correct. Any inaccuracies must be reported to your supervisor immediately. Supervisors are authorized to correct the recorded hours of student employees.

3. Submit the TAMUS SSO timesheet(s).

4. Print, sign, and submit the Workday timesheet to your authorized supervisor.
Graduate Assistants must, each week:

1. Record time on Excel Timetracker located on I drive under CGS Assistantships/Time
   Trackers/Time Tracker FYXX.

2. Verify that the recorded working hours are correct. Report any inaccuracies to
   supervisor immediately.

3. Submit the Timetracker timesheet to authorized supervisor at the end of each month to
   ensure total hours for month are accounted for.

   Note: The supervisor is responsible for maintaining excel timesheets.

Call-in Procedures

In the case of an illness or other unforeseen reason that prevents a CGS employee from
reporting to work at the regular expected time, they must call the main line (361-825-2174) or
email gradcollege@tamucc.edu as soon as it is evident that they will be late for or absent from
a scheduled shift. When calling the main line, inform the call taker or leave a voicemail
regarding the reason for missing work along with any essential responsibilities that need to be
reassigned for the day. Employees should also be provided with their direct supervisor’s phone
number and notify them immediately when they are running late or will be absent.

Scheduling Work Hours

The CGS Faculty Center office hours are from 8am-5pm Monday-Friday. The GROW
Suite office hours vary, normally between 10am-7pm depending on student need and library
hours. During these hours it is crucial that the office phones are properly covered by
employees. For scheduling purposes, CGS student workers and graduate assistants are expected to submit their schedules to their supervisor for approval as soon as possible upon registration and no later than two weeks before schedules take effect. Supervisors are charged with ensuring student work schedules cover office hours. Requests to change the schedule must be approved by the appropriate supervisor.

All employees are responsible for adhering to work schedules and performing assigned duties. All employees must get prior approval for any changes to the assigned schedule. Employees are responsible for communicating with their supervisor to request rescheduling or rearranging the assigned duties. Graduate assistants and student employees are advised to take their lunch before or after their assigned shift. If a student employee is scheduled to work 5 or more hours, a 30- to 60-minute lunch break is recommended but not required. If an unscheduled break is needed, student employees should ask their supervisor to take a break for up to 10 minutes. If the break exceeds 15 minutes, employees will be required to punch out during this time. In order to eliminate damage to computers and official documentation, eating at desks is discouraged. Eating at the front desk is not allowed. This office promotes healthy living and encourages drinking water while at work, including at the front desk. Containers must be capped.

Full-time staff members have a one-hour lunch break to be taken between 11:00 – 1:00 or as approved by supervisor. The lunch break is not mandatory; however, lunch hours may not
be skipped so employees can leave early. Any variation from the regular schedule must be approved in advance by the employee’s supervisor.

Occasionally, mandatory weekend work will be scheduled for employees; this is usually on a specified Saturday between 10am and 2pm. Weekend work is optional for full-time staff; however, staff with access to the building are able to come to the office on the weekend as deemed necessary to meet work responsibilities. Staff who want to work on weekends must get approval from their supervisor in advance. The CGS also schedules events throughout the year; these events may require staying on campus after 5pm. Specific duties will be assigned, and times will be provided in advance.

Student employees may be scheduled in both the Faculty Center and GROW suites and must report to the assigned area set and approved by their supervisor. If there is a reason that prevents a student employee from performing assigned tasks, they should notify the supervisor immediately.

Any concerns and issues regarding the work schedule, duties, and seating assignment (if applicable) should be discussed with the supervisor. Please keep in mind that all training must be done during scheduled work hours; this includes training sessions assigned through the TAMUS SSO TrainTraq System.

**Time Off Request**

Time off requests must be submitted to the supervisor in a timely manner, preferably a week in advance. Leave during the holidays should be discussed well in advance as to ensure
coverage in the office. Upon approval, a calendar invite should be sent to the supervisor and gradcollege email. All employees requesting time off should propose a plan of action which includes a list of assigned duties, their status, and who will be available to cover them in their absence. Staff employees must also submit leave requests through the TAMUS SSO Workday System.

Attire and Appearance

All CGS employees **must project a professional image** while at work by being appropriately attired. The CGS employees are expected to be neat, clean, and well-groomed while on the job. Clothing must be consistent with the standards for a business casual environment and must be appropriate to the type of work being performed. All CGS student employees and graduate assistants working in the GROW suite are required to wear their name tags during working hours.

For CGS events such as an orientation, employees will be required to wear the designated clothing directed by their supervisor and the event coordinator. In regard to grooming and accessories, the CGS requires that hair color be modest and facial hair groomed and neat in appearance.

The CGS is confident that employees will use their best judgment regarding attire and appearance. All employees are expected to be business appropriate in order to best represent the CGS. Overall appearance should not be distracting or unprofessional. Any questions about
the appropriateness of clothing, hair color, hair styles, or accessories should be addressed with the supervisor.

Any employee who does not follow the required dress code will be verbally warned and in severe cases may be sent home to change clothes. Continued disregard of this policy will be cause for disciplinary action.

Examples of Appropriate and Inappropriate Attire

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Appropriate</th>
<th>Inappropriate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bottoms</strong></td>
<td>Well-fitted cotton, synthetic, wool, or flannel material slacks or pants, leggings (with long top)</td>
<td>Loose or tight-fitting pants such as sweatpants, gym/exercise pants, overalls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dresses, skirts, and capris (skirts should be at knee length or below).</td>
<td>Skirts or dresses which are shorter than 2 inches above knee and any skorts or shorts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tops</strong></td>
<td>CGS shirts, CGS cardigans, blouses, informal/business/dress shirts, well-fitted sweaters, polo shirts, turtlenecks. Suit jackets, sport jackets, and blazers.</td>
<td>Strapless tops, tank tops, halter tops, sheer, or see-through tops. Sweatshirts and shirts with potentially offensive words, terms, logos, pictures, or slogans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shoes</strong></td>
<td>Walking shoes, boots, sneakers, loafers, flats, dress heels/shoes, and leather deck-type shoes</td>
<td>Flip-flops, beach shoes, clogs, clog shaped crocs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Friday</strong></td>
<td>Wearing a well-fitted, well-kept pair of dark jeans and TAMU-CC sweatshirts/t-shirts are approved only on Fridays and certain specified days approved by the supervisors. Athletic shoes/sneakers.</td>
<td>Jeans may not be torn, have holes, or be colored other than dark blue or black.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you are not certain about the appropriate attire, ask your supervisor.
Confidentiality Agreement

Some positions within the CGS will involve regular access to confidential information. All CGS employees, shall maintain all information acquired through job duties as confidential. It is expected that such information will not be discussed with relatives, friends, or others outside the university or in the public areas of the university. Confidential information may be discussed with other employees only when it is necessary for the performance of the job. In some instances, release of information is governed by specific laws. Accessing Banner, Laserfiche, Argos, Degree Works, and other security sensitive information for non-work related matter is prohibited.

All employees will be responsible to complete the university-required FERPA training. Remember to use discretion and adhere to FERPA policy when releasing confidential information. Respect of confidential information of applicants, students, co-workers, and staff members is expected. Inquiries regarding application status or college decisions from someone other than the applicant or student should only be answered for business purposes. Leaving documents with personal information in the printer and other areas unattended is prohibited. Copying, using, distributing, or seeking unrequired information, or any other misuse of confidential information is prohibited and may result in immediate termination of employment.
Personnel Evaluations – Staff/Students

Performance management is an ongoing process of communication between a supervisor and employee, focused on helping the employee achieve their best workplace results. It requires thoughtful planning, ongoing communication, and commitment. As part of the performance management initiative, yearly evaluations for personnel are performed. The procedure for the evaluations for staff and students are described further.

Staff Procedure

Workday is the online performance management module used by the university to facilitate the employee performance review. Employees will log into Workday to complete their self-evaluation during the performance review period. Supervisors will fill out an evaluation and schedule a meeting with the employee to discuss the evaluation. The employee will have an opportunity to add additional comments after the supervisor submits the evaluation. Each full-time employee is responsible for creating and maintaining the position’s desk manual. The CGS Dean and/or employee’s supervisor will review and approve these desk manuals annually.

Student Employees/Graduate Assistants Procedure

A minimum of one yearly evaluation will take place where students will undergo a performance review by their immediate supervisor using the student evaluation form on the shared drive. This is a manual process; it is not done through Workday.
Department Resource Lists and Calendars

The CGS Employee Roster, Emergency Call Tree, Contact List, Phone Guide and Etiquette document, Birthday List, and Outlook Calendar appointments are updated and stored properly in the shared Graduate College Drive and college calendar respectively. The Dean’s Executive Assistant will be responsible for updating lists providing oversight of the department calendar. Employees are responsible for getting approval in a timely manner and informing their supervisor of changes needed to be made on these lists and calendars.

General Rules of Conduct and Workplace Integrity

The CGS has adopted the following General Rules of Conduct to ensure orderly operations and provide the best possible work environment. The CGS expects its employees to follow these Rules of Conduct while on the premises of the CGS and/or otherwise performing work-related activities. The General Rules of Conduct are intended to protect the interests and safety of all employees and promote morale and efficiency in the CGS. Though it is not possible to list all forms of behavior that are unacceptable in the workplace, the following are examples of behavior that would be considered infractions which may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

- Behaving in a discourteous or disrespectful manner towards coworkers, faculty, callers, or visitors
- Refusing to carry out reasonable instructions or general insubordination
- Sleeping or any other unauthorized leisure activities during the working hours
• Creating unsafe conditions
• Stealing, removing, or unauthorized use of property belonging to the university or others
• Loss, damage, or destruction of property belonging to the university or others
• Unwillingness or inability to work in harmony with others, discourtesy, or conduct which creates discord
• Failing to comply with policies and procedures of the university and those specific to the department

In addition, CGS employees are expected to demonstrate high standards of professionalism to encourage and promote workplace morale. The responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

• Treating all with courtesy and respect,
• Providing all necessary services and being accountable for assigned job tasks,
• Working as a team member and helping other employees,
• Being punctual,
• Using earphones when necessary to keep noise level minimal in the office,
• Keeping the workplace safe and productive,
• Maintaining a well-groomed and business casual appearance by adhering to the dress code policy,
• Improving knowledge and skills in order to help the CGS function effectively, and
• Adhering to rules and regulations set by the CGS and TAMU-CC.
The CGS strives to be the very best in what we do, both in the eyes of those we serve and especially within our team. We promote a healthy work-life balance which can be highly motivating and productive. It is the goal of the CGS to have a team who believes in one another, supports one another, and works collaboratively toward a common goal.

Additional University Policy

Resolving University Matters

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi is committed to creating and maintaining a campus environment where all individuals are treated with respect and dignity and where all are free to participate in a lively exchange of ideas (08.01.01.C1 – Summary).

Addressing workplace matters may be resolved through informal discussions between an employee and supervisor, department head, or Employee Development & Compliance Services Department (EDCS). Although an employee is encouraged to resolve a complaint informally, they may file a formal complaint without first seeking informal resolution. The EDCS will work with all parties in a complaint to seek satisfactory resolution (32.01.02.C0.01 – 1.1).

If alleged or suspected discrimination, sexual harassment, and/or retaliation is experienced or observed by, or made known to, an employee, the employee is required to report that information as outlined in this rule. An employee’s (including student employees) failure to report alleged or suspected discrimination may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment (08.01.01.C1 – 2.2).
Complaints/reports can be made in person at the Department of Employee Development & Compliance Services/Title IX Coordinator (Corpus Christi Hall 130), by phone (361-825-5826), via the campus online Complaint Resolution webpage form, or anonymously via the Texas A&M University System Risk, Fraud & Misconduct website Hotline (1.800.892.8348).

Use of System Resources – System Policy 33.04

The Texas A&M System has specific policy regarding the use of system resources. The policy includes specific areas employees may not have considered; however, employees are responsible for abiding by the policy. Failure to do so can have serious consequences, all CGS employees should become familiar with this policy.

Drug and Alcohol Guidelines

The university is committed to educating employees and students about alcohol and drug issues, deterring the irresponsible use of alcoholic beverages, and prohibiting the unlawful manufacture, use, possession, or distribution of controlled substances. The university will act to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989, the Drug-Free Work Force Rules for Department of Defense (DOD) Contractors, the Department of Transportation and other regulatory bodies, and applicable state laws for employees and students (34.02.01.C1 – 1.1).
The CGS is committed to providing a safe and productive work environment. Alcohol and drug abuse pose a threat to the health and safety of employees and to the security of the CGS property and facilities. The CGS employees should report to work fit for duty and free of any adverse effects of illegal drugs or alcohol.

In addition, all members of the university community are expected to abide by applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations pertaining to controlled substances and illicit drugs. Standards of conduct strictly prohibit the unlawful manufacture, distribution, possession, or use of controlled substances or illicit drugs on university property, at university-sponsored activities, and/or while on active duty. Individuals may use prescriptive medications that are medicinally necessary and prescribed for them by a licensed medical practitioner (34.02.01C1 – 4.1).

**Workplace Safety**

The CGS values its high standards for workplace safety and productivity. All faculty, staff, and students are required to comply with the TAMU-CC Safety Policy and protocols by:

- Performing their jobs in the safest prescribed manner,
- Eliminating and/or reporting workplace hazards, and
- Reporting accidents, incidents, and unsafe practices or conditions to supervisors.
Employee Handbook Acknowledgement and Receipt

I have received the handbook and acknowledge I have read it. I understand that it is my responsibility to comply with the policies and procedures contained in this handbook and any revisions made to it.

_________________________
Employee’s Signature

_________________________
Employee’s Name (Print)

_________________________
Date (valid through 1 year)

_________________________
College of Graduate Studies - representative