EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

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Forward

Welcome to the College of Graduate Studies (CGS). The CGS is instrumental in supporting the university’s mission to guide, cultivate, and collaborate with a diverse community of scholars and stakeholders from all over the world. Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (TAMU-CC) offers more than 40 graduate degree and certificate programs. Our college is committed to providing accurate information, guidance, and support for graduate students as well as those serving graduate education endeavors.

With the motto “Inquire, Innovate, Impact”, CGS embraces and cherishes diversity. 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 who comprise the Island Community.

The College of Graduate Studies considers its employees to be its most valuable resource and strives to be a dynamic and rewarding place to work. The success of CGS depends
on the quality and excellence of service exhibited by the staff, 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 expectations in CGS as well as to provide a resource to excel academically and professionally. The information in this handbook does not override the policies and regulations implemented by 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, as well as Human Resources if needed.

Workplace Expectations

Quality Service

All members within CGS have the responsibility to provide excellent quality in 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

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:

1. Record hours worked daily on Excel Timetracker located on I drive under CGS Assistants/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, s/he 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 office hours are from 8am-5pm Monday-Friday. It is crucial that the office phones are properly covered by employees.** For scheduling purposes, CGS GAs and student workers are expected to submit their schedules to their supervisor for approval as soon as possible upon registration for classes and no later than two weeks before schedules take effect. 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 GA or 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. Breaks exceeding 15 minutes must be accounted for: student workers will punch out of Workday and Graduate Assistants will make up the time taken. 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 in order to 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 generally optional for full time staff (depending on position held); 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. 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.

Graduate Assistants and 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, s/he should notify the supervisor immediately.

Any concerns and issues regarding the work schedule, duties, and seating assignment (if applicable) should be discussed with your 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 Requests

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 CGS email (gradcollege@tamucc.edu). 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 Grooming

All CGS employees must project a professional image while at work by being appropriately attired. 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. Hair, including facial hair, must be neatly groomed. All CGS student employees and Graduate Assistants working in the GROW suite are required to wear their name tags during working hours. For CGS special events, such as an orientation, employees will be required to wear the designated clothing directed by their supervisor and the event coordinator.

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 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bottoms</th>
<th>Appropriate</th>
<th>Inappropriate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Well-fitted cotton, synthetic, wool, or flannel material slacks or pants, leggings with long tops</td>
<td>Loose or tight-fitting pants such as sweatpants, gym/exercise pants, overalls</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dresses, skirts, capris, and trousers
(Capris or similar pants should be knee-length or below.)

Shorts or skorts, excessively baggy pants, excessively short skirts/dresses. (Pants should be worn at or just below waist.)

**Tops**
- CGS shirts, CGS cardigans, blouses, informal business/dress shirts, well-fitted sweaters, polo shirts, turtlenecks. Suit jackets, sport jackets, and blazers.
- Strapless, tank, halter, sheer, or see-through tops. Sweatshirts and shirts with potentially offensive words, terms, logos, pictures, or slogans.

**Shoes**
- Well-kept athletic/walking shoes, boots, sneakers, loafers, flats, dress heels/shoes, and leather deck-type shoes
- Flip-flops, beach shoes, other footwear that would not be appropriate in an office setting

**Friday**
- 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.
- Jeans may not be torn, have holes, or be colored other than dark blue or black.

Confidentiality Agreement

Some positions within CGS will involve regular access to confidential information. As a CGS employee, one shall maintain any and all information acquired through job duties 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 matters is prohibited.

All employees are responsible for completing the university-required FERPA training. Remember to use discretion and adhere to FERPA policies when releasing confidential
information. Respect of confidential information about applicants, students, co-workers, and staff members is expected. Inquiries regarding application status or department decisions from someone other than the applicant or student should only be answered for business purposes. Graduate Assistants and student employees should check with their supervisors before responding to requests for information. Leaving documents with personal information in the printer and other areas unattended is prohibited. Copying, using, distributing, 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 that is focused on helping the employee achieve his or her best workplace results. It requires thoughtful planning, ongoing communication, and commitment. As part of the performance management initiative, yearly evaluations for personnel are performed.

Procedure for the evaluations

Staff: 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 employees’ supervisor will review and approve these desk manuals annually.

Student Employees/Graduate Assistants: Graduate Assistants and student employees will have at least one yearly performance review/evaluation by their immediate supervisor. These reviews will utilize the student evaluation form on the shared drive. This is a manual process and is not done through Workday. Supervisors will keep the evaluations on their desk top computers or hard files to maintain student’s employees’ confidentiality.

Department Resource Lists and Calendars

The CGS Employee Contact List, Emergency Call Tree, Birthday List, and Outlook Calendar appointments are updated and stored properly in the shared Graduate College Drive and department calendar respectively. The Dean’s Executive Assistant will be responsible for updating lists providing oversight of the department calendar. Employees are responsible for 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 CGS and/or otherwise performing work relate activities. The General Rules of Conduct are for protecting the interests and safety of all
employees and promoting morale and efficiency at 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, and
- 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 in order 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 listening to music; if it can be heard by others it is too loud,
• 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 CGS function effectively, and
• Adhering to rules and regulations set by 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 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

TAMU-CC 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, Dean, or Employee Development & Compliance Services Department (EDCS) staff. Although an employee is encouraged to resolve a complaint informally, they may file a formal complaint without first seeking informal resolution. EDCS will work with all parties to 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. An employee’s (includes 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 campus or toll free 888-501-3850), or online at System Risk, Fraud & Misconduct Hotline website.

**Use of System Resources** – System Policy 34.03

**Section 1 - General**

System resources should be used for work-related duties and may not be used for personal purposes except for incidental use in accordance with this policy. The incidental use of system resources for personal purposes must not:

- Result in additional expense to the system;
• Impede normal business functions;
• Be for non-approved private commercial purposes;
• Be used for illegal activity;
• Be used to intentionally access, create, store, or transmit obscene materials; or
• Be used to compete unfairly with private sector entities or private consultants (33.04–1).

Section 2 - Telephones and Other Information Resources Equipment

Incidental personal use of system computers (including but not limited to the internet and electronic mail), telephones, facsimile machines, and other means of communication must meet the requirements of Section 1 of this policy and must not unduly interfere with a system employee's assigned responsibilities or the normal functioning of an office. The use of system telecommunication, email, and internet services for any illegal activity or to intentionally access, create, store or transmit obscene materials, as defined in Texas Penal Code Section 43.21 (other than in the course of academic research), is strictly prohibited regardless of whether or not it results in an additional charge to the state.

Section 3 - System Vehicles

No system employee shall use any vehicle owned by the system for any purpose other than official business of the system. Employees may not use such vehicles in connection with any political campaign or for any personal or recreational activity including transportation to and from work on a daily basis; however, a vehicle may be driven to an employee's home and
retained overnight on specific occasions when doing so allows the employee to effect significant time or cost savings or meet a specific out-of-town appointment to conduct system business.

Section 4 - Credit/Procurement Cards, Petty Cash, Working Funds and Centrally Billed Accounts

No system employee shall use system credit cards, procurement cards, petty cash, working funds, or centrally-billed accounts for any purpose other than official business of the system. Employees may not use such accounts in connection with any political campaign or for any personal activity. An employee may use a state credit card to charge for items that, while they qualify as official business, are not fully reimbursable under state and/or system guidelines for reimbursement. An example would be a state hotel rate that exceeds the state rate. While such an expenditure may not be fully-reimbursable, charging the full amount to a credit card or procurement card would be appropriate, even if the system will not reimburse the entire expenditure, so long as the expenditure is a valid business expenditure.

Section 5 - Other System Resources

No system employee shall entrust state property or resources to any state official or employee or to anyone else to be used for other than state purposes. System employees shall not use system equipment, property, or resources for their own benefit unless:
(a) it also benefits the system and has been approved by the chancellor or designee(s) in advance and suitable arrangements have been made in advance for payment of the agreed upon value for use of such property or resources; or

(b) the property or resource consists of books from the library, recreational facilities and other such items of well-established usage that are authorized for such use by the chief executive officer of the system member concerned.

Drug and Alcohol Guidelines

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 CGS property and facilities. CGS Employees should report to work fit for duty and free of any adverse effects of illegal drugs or alcohol.

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 (34.02.01C1 – 1.1).

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. In accordance with the TAMU-CC Safety Manual, all employees will ensure they are:

- 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)

_____________________________________
The College of Graduate Studies