

Policies of the University of North Texas	Chapter 6
15.2.4 Safety in Instructional Activities	Faculty Affairs

Policy Statement. The purpose and scope of the policy are to assure a safe teaching environment at the University of North Texas and to establish a review procedure by which safety in instructional activities will be achieved.

Application of Policy.

All Faculty and Staff

Definitions.

None

Procedures and Responsibilities.

Safety in the Teaching Environment.

All university administrators, faculty and staff are expected to be continuously and actively concerned about safety in the teaching environment. The University Safety Policy mandates compliance with federal and state laws and adherence to the National Life Safety Code with respect to the operation of the physical plant of the university, but it is the responsibility of those directly involved in academic instruction to evaluate critically specific courses and the immediate environment in which instruction occurs. Teaching faculty and administrative supervisors must routinely strive to:

1. Promote an awareness of safety considerations and develop positive attitudes toward safety among students, faculty and staff;
2. Fully explain applicable safety considerations to students at the beginning of each term and reiterate such considerations as appropriate throughout each term;
3. Demonstrate safety procedures and identify potential hazards before students begin their work;
4. Post and/or distribute written directions or warnings when appropriate about the safe handling of materials and equipment used in instruction;
5. Monitor the immediate teaching environment for potential safety hazards; and
6. Actively supervise students to assure that safe procedures are followed.

Review of Instructional Activities

It shall be the responsibility of department and division chairs to review periodically the instructional activities within their academic units with regard to the safety of students, teaching staff and other participants. The review should include consideration of the conduct of classes and allied instructional activities. Attention should be given also to non-traditional activities such as mini-courses and non-credit or optional activities associated with a course. The procedure to be followed in the review is best determined by professionals in a particular academic unit, within the following general guidelines:

1. New courses and courses under revision should be reviewed critically with regard to safety by departmental and college curriculum committees. The forms for all new courses (undergraduate and graduate) submitted for approval through regular curriculum channels will include a section that indicates that a safety review has been completed resulting in a determination of the appropriate course safety category. For all Category 2 and 3 courses, a completed Course Safety Evaluation Form will be attached;
2. Existing courses within each program, department or division should be periodically reviewed with regard to safety. The Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will be responsible for formulating a rotational review plan for existing courses. The actual reviews will be conducted by the department/division chairs working with appropriate faculty; they will also be responsible for making a report through their deans to the Office of the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs. The Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will be responsible for forwarding copies of the Course Safety Evaluation Forms for all Category 3 courses to Risk Management Services - Chemical Hygiene Officer (CHO). This data will be entered into the Risk Management Services (RMS) Compliance Management database;
3. The department or division chair should discuss safety considerations with new faculty members when they are assigned to certain existing courses or with experienced faculty members when they are assigned to courses which they have not taught at this institution;
4. The chair shall have primary responsibility for the conduct of safety review for his/her academic unit but may assign the function to an individual or a committee;
5. The chair of the academic unit, the designated individual, or the chair of the responsible committee shall consult persons with special expertise when such expertise is needed and is not available within that department or division.

Compliance with the Policy

The chair of a designated departmental committee will review on a regular basis, all courses of that unit in the inventory in light of the following criteria (Categories 1, 2, or 3):

1. Courses in which students are not exposed to any significant hazards and are not likely to suffer any bodily harm. (An example of this category is a course in English literature requiring only classroom instruction.)
2. Courses in which students are exposed to some significant hazards but are not likely to suffer serious bodily injury. (Examples of this category are a physical education class in which the students learn to play tennis or basketball, a freshman chemistry laboratory and a ceramics class using a kiln.)
3. Courses in which students are exposed to significant hazards which have the potential to cause serious bodily injury or death. (Examples of this category are an advanced science laboratory dealing with dangerous substances or equipment, or any class using power tools.)

Definition of Hazard

A hazard is a condition or situation that creates or increases the chance of bodily injury or death from a given cause.

The review process shall include a consideration of the hazard(s) involved in relation to the benefit(s) derived from each activity. In all cases, hazards are to be eliminated or minimized to the extent possible without compromising important educational benefits. It is recognized that there are certain dangers inextricably associated with specific activities. The important principle is to identify those hazards and to evaluate them in the educational context.

Courses determined to fall in category 1 do not require any further attention. The chair of each department shall complete a course safety evaluation form for each course in category 2 or 3. Information provided in the form should contain (1) an explanation of the hazards associated with the teaching of the course and (2) a description of measures which have been taken to reduce those hazards. These should be maintained in the departmental files and updated every five years. Copies of the material related to category 3 courses should be forwarded to the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs (undergraduate courses) and the Dean of the Graduate School (graduate courses) who in turn will provide copies to the Chemical Hygiene Officer (CHO). The Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will plan a rotating, systematic five-year safety review of all existing courses and initiate it through the deans and department/division chairs. This review will entail a review of all existing courses which have not been approved within the previous five years and the completion of a Course Safety Evaluation Form for all courses determined to be Category 2 or 3. Following the completed reviews and the report to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs by the department/division chairs through their deans, copies of the evaluation forms for all Category 3 courses will be forwarded to the Risk Management Services the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Informing Faculty and Staff

The University-wide Orientation for New Faculty will include a review of the University Policy for Safety in Instructional Activities. New faculty members will be informed of the university's responsibilities with respect to safety through the inclusion of University policies concerning fire, health and safety, and the university procedures in the areas of instructional safety, proper handling of chemical and biological hazards, radiation safety and human subjects research in appropriate university information and policy statements including the Faculty Handbook. The vice presidents will inform appropriate staff members whom they supervise concerning safety considerations related to instructional activity. In each academic unit with Category 2 or 3 courses, the department/division chair or his/her designee will review safety procedures for such courses with those new faculty teaching these courses.

References and Cross-references.

None

Forms and Tools.

[Course Safety Evaluation Form](#)

Approved: 1/1/1985

Effective:

Revised: 3/91; 8/96*; 8/00; 5/01; 11/05*; 4/08

*Reviewed with no changes made.

5/2011 format only