

**LAB INSTRUCTOR/ASSISTANT POLICIES  
SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES**

**General Information:**

1. **Pay Schedule and Paperwork** – All student employees must complete a departmental application each semester. Any new employee (not employed by SHSU in the past year) must fill out the complete State of Texas forms. A photocopy of your Social Security card and Driver's License must be on file. Please see Ms. Lauren Schrodtt in the main biology office, LDB 105. *Payroll checks are issued on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> days of the month to your BEARKAT ONE card. **Your time sheet must be signed or NO PAYCHECK will be issued.** Time sheets are maintained electronically by logging into your "My Sam" account; the biology office can give an efficient tutorial.*
2. **Mailbox** – Each graduate and undergraduate student will have an individual mailbox in the Life Sciences Building. All phone messages, general notices, and mail will be placed in these mailboxes. Your students will have access to these mailboxes. Therefore, anything of a sensitive nature will be given to you personally during prep.
3. **Tutoring** – Lab Instructors or Assistants MAY NOT tutor for pay any students in their lab sections or any student in other section of the same course. (Policy from SHSU Faculty Handbook.) Students needing help can stop by your *weekly office hour* for assistance.
4. **Dress** – Lab Instructors/Assistants should be neat, clean and modest and professional in appearance when in the classroom. *Please, no cleavage, shorts, short skirts, tank tops, or open shoes.* Shirts will preferably have a collar. **Lab coats are always a good idea.**
5. **Mandatory Prep Meetings** – All lab instructors are required to attend and actively participate in weekly prep meetings. This includes reading the exercise *before* the prep session and being prepared to answer questions and complete the lab exercise as your students will. There will be a sign-in sheet at each meeting. If you cannot attend a particular meeting, you **MUST** contact your Lab Coordinator to set up an alternate time to prep that week and sign-in. If you do not attend the prep meeting and fail to prep with your Lab Coordinator at an alternate time, the department will have to adjust your pay accordingly.
6. **Evaluations** – Your Lab Coordinator will observe one meeting of at least one lab section taught by a lab instructor each year/semester. The lab instructor and the observer will review a written copy of the evaluation before the semester has ended. The goals of this process are:
  - ☺ provide positive/constructive feedback on the lab experience,
  - ☺ help lab instructors accent the "positives" of their teaching style,
  - ☺ work towards providing a quality lab experience for all SHSU Biology Lab students,
  - ☺ assist the lab coordinator in preparing accurate recommendation letters with references to specific qualities and abilities of the individual lab instructor.

7. **Key Usage Policy** – Each of you will be assigned one or more keys to room(s) in the Lif Sciences Building. These keys are for your use only as lab instructors. **DO NOT allow any other students to use your keys for access to room(s).** Only the professor in charge of a lab room, etc. can give permission for students to use the room. Do NOT allow any of your students access to lab rooms without proper supervision. Your students should not be in the lab room unless you or another qualified instructor is there to supervise. **You will be held responsible for ANYTHING that happens when YOU unlock a door!** Do NOT use your keys to gain access to an area if you do not have any official business to conduct in that area.

### **Classroom:**

1. You are now a member of the teaching profession and represent our division and SHSU when you are in the classroom. The lab class is NOT an appropriate place to conduct personal business or deal with non-classroom issues; you should not use your cell phone during lab unless it is for emergency assistance. You should maintain a professional attitude and a student/instructor relationship. **Have your students address you as Mr., Mrs., Miss, or Ms.**

**Sexual harassment of a student or instructor is absolutely not permitted and is grounds for immediate dismissal!** Refrain from becoming too friendly or “buddy-buddy” with your students. Under no circumstances should a Lab Instructor/Assistant date a student in their class. Remember that if a remark or action is “perceived” as sexual harassment, it is sexual harassment. Your weekly office hour should be held in a location where you can leave the door open or another lab instructor or student is present; this protects you and your students. Be very careful when interacting with your students in the classroom or ANYPLACE!

2. **If you must be absent or late to teach your assigned lab class, call your Lab Coordinator**

(Name: \_\_\_\_\_)

Office Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Home &/or Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_)

**well in advance.** *Lab classes cannot be canceled by a graduate or undergraduate student lab instructor.* If you arrange for someone to teach your class for you due to your unavoidable absence, please notify the lab coordinator in writing (email is fine) and have the courtesy to either compensate the substitute monetarily for their time or return the favor for them. Habitual absence from your assigned teaching time(s) is grounds for dismissal.

**During the first two weeks of lab** (while you’re getting accustomed to your new schedule) please be sure to check in with your Lab Coordinator prior to your lab time. **Always** be sure to arrive 5 to 10 minutes before your class begins. This will allow you time to check your lab room before your section begins.

3. **Only registered students may attend class.** NO spouses, friends, siblings or children or students or lab instructors are allowed to remain in class. This is necessary due to safety and liability issues.

4. **Classes must meet for the entire prescribed lab period.** Do not short change your students by cutting short their time in lab. Do not rush your students. If students finish a lab exercise early they should review current or previous material! Under NO CIRCUMSTANCES should a lab instructor take it upon themselves to dismiss a class with an “at home assignment” etc. **Classes must meet!**
5. **Leave the lab room as you would like to find it!** All areas are to be clean and materials returned to their proper location. **Make certain there are enough reagents and supplies for the next class!** Ascertain that all microscopes have been turned off and properly stored. Turn off the lights if there is not a class immediately after yours and Lock The Door!

☺ **Keep the Coordinator and/or Prep Assistant informed of equipment that needs attention, supplies that need to be replaced, what works well and what needs to be changed!**

6. **Grading for the course is determined by the Lab Coordinator for that particular course. Upper division course grading will be determined by the professor in charge of that course.** Follow the grading policies of your supervisor (they are listed in the lab syllabi). Do not offer extra credit assignments or bonus questions on quizzes and exams unless this has been discussed in the weekly prep meeting and all sections are being offered the same “deal.” This is a matter of consistency in grading and following the syllabus. It IS a Legal Issue!

**Grades cannot be posted or given out over the phone or email!** (FERPA) Please, do NOT even think about posting grades in any fashion! Use the course BlackBoard grade center to post any grades; students will have confidential access to their own grades.

**Lab Instructors MUST use the electronic grade sheets/spreadsheets provided by their Lab Coordinator or Professor.** Please, do NOT “freelance” your own version. Once again, this is a matter of consistency. When you are gone, we must still be able to decipher the grade sheets.

7. **Read the school policy on Cheating** in the Student Handbook. This is also available on-line. A NO TIME is it appropriate for a lab instructor to accept money from a student! Do NOT attempt to sell anything to your students. ***Do NOT even hint or joke that you will accept any money or other courtesies in exchange for an increase in points or grade! This is grounds for immediate dismissal!!!!***
8. **Students with a complaint about a lab class or instructor should first talk with the lab instructor and try to resolve the problem or misunderstanding.** If it is not resolved, then go to the lab coordinator in charge of the lab and finally to the Department Chairperson for the formal grievance procedure.
9. **Check your SHSU email frequently!**
10. **Keep a positive attitude about yourself, your teaching and your students!** Remember that your attitude, your willingness to follow directions and attend ALL required meetings, your punctuality, your efficiency in recording/maintaining/turning-in grades are very important! *When your potential future employers call S.H.S.U. to ask about your performance as a lab assistant, we want to be able to give you a glowing recommendation!*

## **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY:**

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance should register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Lee Drain Annex (telephone 936-294-3512, TDD 936-294-3786, and e-mail [disability@shsu.edu](mailto:disability@shsu.edu)). They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Services for Students with Disabilities and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Services for Students with Disabilities. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/documents/aps/students/811006.pdf>

If one of your students presents you with a valid SSD Accommodations Form, please review the form with the student and determine which accommodations will be most helpful to the students, then complete the following:

1. Graduate students on teaching stipend are responsible for signing and retaining a copy of the form and providing the Laboratory Coordinator or Professor with the form. The Lab Coordinator or Professor will make every effort to help you meet the appropriate accommodations.
2. Hourly Lab Instructors are responsible for setting up an appointment to meet with the student and Lab Coordinator to review the accommodations and discuss implementation. The Hourly Lab Instructor and Lab Coordinator will BOTH sign the form and maintain a copy.
3. ALL Lab Instructors must keep the Lab Coordinator informed regarding accommodations for the student. If the student requests a deviation from the agreed upon accommodations, please be sure to get it in writing from the student or the SSD Office.

**Early Alert** enables Sam Houston State University faculty and staff to refer students whose in- or out-of-class performance demonstrates a need for academic support.

Reasons for referring a student might include the following:

- Low test scores
- Missing, incomplete, or poorly completed assignments
- Frequent or unexcused absences
- Other performance measurements indicating academic jeopardy (i.e., lack of interest in academics, expressing a disconnection from the institutional environment, demonstrating potential for failing/dropping out, etc.)

As lab instructors, your involvement in Early Alert is critical to increase support of our students by identifying those at-risk, so that they can be offered needed help.

Referrals are accepted throughout the semester; however, it is important to note that **referring early in the semester is most helpful for the student**, especially when the referral is made prior to the Q-drop deadline. That way, our intervention can be more effective.

The sooner at-risk students are identified and referred, the sooner they can be helped and access appropriate resources, ultimately increasing their chance of success.

A timely referral can mean the difference between a student failing and succeeding.

The process is simple.

Step 1: Student misses lab the first time or flunks the quizzes etc. What do you do?

Step 2: Student misses a second consecutive week and/or flunks the quizzes etc. What do you do?

Step 3: No response from student? What do you do?

Step 4: Notify your Lab Coordinator with the student's name, cause for concern, and lab course CRN.

Your Lab Coordinator will submit the referral to the Early Alert system.

Once the referral is received, Early Alert will promptly notify the Lab Coordinator and initiate outreach to the student(s). The Lab Coordinator will be notified of the outcome, even if the student(s) cannot be reached.