

DEPARTMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

DEPARTMENT OF PHYSIOCS, ASTRONOMY, AND GEOLOGY

VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY

This manual can also be found on the department home page.

I. Department Operating Policies

A. Department Business:

Department members, whenever possible, should initiate all communications affecting the operations of this department at the Department Head level and from there proceed via the chain of command, i.e., Department Head, Dean of the school of Arts and Sciences, Vice President for Academic Affairs, etc., or until resolution is met.

Department policy will be determined by 2/3 majority at department meetings in which at least two thirds of the faculty are present.

B. Department Committees

The Department will operate through the recommendations of the following committees.

I. Tenure and Promotion and Retention Committee

The committee consists of all tenured faculty tenure review. The committee makes recommendations to the Department Head about faculty members. The Vision Committee also addresses pre and post-tenure.

II. Planning Committee

The vision committee will gradually evolve into the Department Planning Committee. The function of this committee will be to develop procedures for implementing those changes suggested in the departmental Vision Statement which are approved by the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. In particular, the Vision Committee will implement measures to improve recruitment and retention of majors in the department, including preparation of departmental brochures and other literature.

III. Policy and Procedures Committee

The Policy Committee makes recommendations to the Department Head about department policies and procedures.

IV. Area Committees

The area committees are appointed by the department head for the areas of Astronomy, Engineering, Geography, Geology, and Physics. All faculty teaching in these areas or cognate expertise are eligible to serve on these committees. The area committee is responsible for making recommendations concerning curriculum, academic matters and budgetary priorities in the specific area. The responsibilities of the committee include the selection of texts, lab manuals, course objectives, and course policies for core curriculum courses.

These committees will be named by the Department Head who is an ex-officio member and will report directly to the Department Head. Committee chairs will call meetings and may vote on all matters before their committee. The chair is responsible for reporting the results of the committee to the department faculty. The Department Head has the power to appoint ad-hoc committees for a stand purpose to last a limited period of time.

C. Allocation of Student Workers

The Department Head or designee is responsible for the assignment of all student workers. During semesters where funds are available, the Department Head will ask interested faculty members to submit a request for a student assistant.

The priority for the assignment of student workers is:

1. Lab assignments for core courses the CAD lab and the GIS lab
2. Planetarium operators
3. Tutors
4. Assistants or graders

Students performing tutoring will keep a log of the students served. The faculty member responsible for a student worker will initial the time sheet and the Department Head will sign the sheet.

D. Audio-Visual Equipment

Audio-visual equipment is provided to enhance instructional quality. At no time should equipment other than overhead projectors be stored in an unlocked classroom. Equipment should only be used by faculty or by students who are under faculty supervision. Do not leave equipment unattended in the halls or in classrooms. Additional equipment, or equipment unavailable in the department such as camcorders, can be obtained through Media Services in the library. Equipment needed for classes should be reserved as soon as possible in order to ensure that it will be available. The volume level A-V equipment should be set as low as possible so that it does not interfere with other classes.

E. Scientific Equipment

Laboratory Equipment

Laboratory equipment should be stored properly immediately after a lab unless it will be used again for another class and there are no intervening day or evening classes scheduled in the laboratory. Broken equipment should be set aside with a signed note explaining the problem.

Equipment may be checked out if there is no departmental need for the equipment during the time it will be checked out. A form should be filled out by the person borrowing the equipment which should include the person's name and social security number, the items borrowed, the data borrowed and the date for return. If the equipment is borrowed for a course the name of the instructor should be included.

Field Equipment Check-Out Procedures

Field equipment may be checked out by students for student research purposes only. The only limitations on checkout include that the equipment is not required for another course during the check-out time, and that the equipment be returned in the same shape as it was when checked out. The appropriate faculty member in charge of the equipment will issue the item.

To check out equipment, a student must provide the following:

- 1) Name, phone number, and student ID number;
- 2) Course number or faculty member associated with project;
- 3) Date and time of return

Upon check-in, the student should notify the faculty member of any problem with or defects in the equipment.

Check- Out Form

Name: _____

Phone number: _____

ID number: _____

Equipment description:

Return date: _____

F. Computers

1. Computer Supplies

Supplies for Department Computers must be ordered through the Department Office and must be approved by the Department Head. These supplies are for Department business only.

2. Journals, Electronic Journals, and Databases

Faculty members should weigh the benefit to students of the journal as well as the cost of the journal as they make the decision to order or retain subscriptions.

G. Library Ordering Procedures

1. Books

Each Fall Semester, faculty members will receive notice of the Department Library Book Allocation. Normally this amount is evenly divided among all areas of the department. The Department Library Liaison is responsible for the actual ordering of the books.

2. Journals, Electronic Journals, and Databases

Faculty members should weigh the benefit to students of the journal as well as the cost of the journal as they make the decision to order or retain subscriptions.

H. Authority to Travel

Whenever a faculty member travels on official business (for classes, research or professional reasons) , the faculty member must submit a Request for Authority to Travel. This form must be submitted regardless of when the travel occurs (weekends and breaks included). The form is to be submitted at least two weeks prior to the travel. Moreover, if a faculty member travels for personal/medical reasons when classes are in session and such travel requires the faculty member to be out of town during normal business hours, the faculty member should also submit a Request for Authority to Travel. This provides legal and insurance protection for the faculty member. The department allocates travel funds each year for faculty travel. Also refer to section IV D for further information on travel subsidies.

I. Field Trips

Students are required to utilize the transportation provided by the university. Vans should be reserved through the vice-president's office at the beginning of the semester it at all possible. It is recommended that there be one faculty member for every 24 students. The following field trip brochure and letter to colleagues are included to serve as a model.

JEKYLL ISLAND FIELD TRIP

Departure: The bus/vans will leave from the Oak Street Parking lot at 7:10 a.m. sharp.

Return Time: We will leave Jekyll Island no later than 3:00 p.m., which should put us back at VSU between 5:00-5:30 p.m.

Clothing: Tidal flats are **muddy**, and the beach can be **cool, wet and windy** (even when it is sunny in Valdosta). Dress appropriately!! Bring a raincoat. Do not wear nice shoes. A change of shoes and socks is a good idea for the ride home.

What To Bring: Everyone will need a pencil and a clipboard. Other items you might want to bring are insect repellent, sunscreen, sunglasses, a camera, and plastic bags for collecting samples.

Food: We will stop at a fast-food restaurant (around 8:20 a.m.). Lunch will be in a picnic area that is within walking distance of several stores, so you can either bring a lunch with you, or buy food and drink at these stores. No alcoholic beverages are allowed during the trip.

Trip Cancellation: In the event of steady rain we will postpone the trip. To check whether the trip has been canceled call Dr. Leak's office (247-7932) after 5:30 a.m. the morning of the trip. No answer means that we're going.

(sample letter should be sent out early in the quarter.)

Dear Colleague,

Each quarter the geology faculty leads one all-day field trip to Jekyll Island for students in Geology 106. This field trip is the only opportunity VSU students have to observe directly many of the phenomena we discuss in the class, and we therefore strongly encourage them to participate. The date of the field trip this quarter is Friday, March 12. If possible, we would appreciate your excusing of the absence on this date of any GLY 106 students enrolled in your course so that they may attend the trip. This request for an excused absence is made with the understanding that any obligations for your class are fulfilled by the student. Please notify me at 5758 if there are any problems with this arrangement.

Sincerely Yours,

Edward E. Chatelain
Head

J. Photocopying

The copy code is the last three digits of your social security number. Only department faculty, staff, student assistants, and work-study students are allowed to copy materials in the Department's budget. Please do not send other students into the Department Office with requests for copying. The department cannot afford the copying of articles or books for distribution to students in any class. Faculty should use the reserve reading procedures in the library for student reading assignments. Transparencies are expensive and should only be utilized if they are necessary for instruction. Copying for core courses or for grants should be done under the appropriate code.

Faculty should not run multiple copies of copyrighted material without appropriate authorization from the author or publisher.

The use of the copiers is reserved for material that is directly related to an employee's work at Valdosta State University. Any copying for personal or business purpose (not directly associated with VSU) is not authorized.

While the department encourages research and professional activity, the use of copiers for these purposes should be limited. A faculty member who needs to copy substantial amounts of material should apply for a research grant through the Dean of Graduate Studies.

K. Security

Because of problems with security, faculty members should lock their office door when they leave. Also, please report to the Department Head any doors that have been left open by a custodian or other persons.

Any faculty member who opens the building (Nevins Hall), any office, laboratory, or computer room is responsible for the security of that office or lab. Faculty members are therefore responsible for supervising any students using the facilities and for relocking the room.

L. Class Scheduling (Classes, Times, Locations):

The Department Head is responsible for all class scheduling and any modifications of class schedules. The Department Head will circulate a draft schedule and any problems should be reported immediately. Faculty members with special needs should consult the Department Head.

M. Academic Advising

1. After their first year, all faculty members are expected to help with advising either department majors or other students.
2. It is the responsibility of each advisor to maintain an active file on each major advisee. The folder for LAS students are kept in the LAS Advising Office and may be obtained by the student. Changes of major should be processed through the Department Office. Students should be encouraged to complete any CPC deficiencies, Core Curriculum requirements, and the Regent's Test as soon as possible. Ultimately, it is the student's responsibility to adhere to the curriculum requirements.

N. Space Utilization and Office Allocation

The Department Head with recommendations from the Space Utilization Committee determines the space necessary for classroom, lab, office and administrative use. Faculty offices are assigned by the Department Head on the basis of the following criteria:

1. Programmatic needs of the department
2. Rank of the faculty member
3. Seniority of the faculty member

II. Department Office Policies

A. Supervision of the Department Secretary and Student Workers

The Department Head is responsible for the supervision of the Department Secretary and student workers assigned to the Department Office. Faculty is not to ask the Department Secretary or student workers to do work which would take them away from the Department Office, except as specified below. The secretary may check roll for an absent faculty member, but cannot show films. In an emergency, the secretary can administer a test. (Other faculty can substitute for an absent faculty member, but it is the responsibility of the faculty member to make arrangements relative to missing classes.)

Work for student workers and the Department Secretary should be given to the Secretary and instructions should be attached.

The Secretary of the student workers are authorized to work only on University related business (teaching, research, and service.)

Work for the Department Office staff should be submitted in a timely fashion in order to ensure its completion as requested by the faculty member. Tests that need to be typed and copied should be submitted 72 hours in advance. Tests that only need to be copied should be submitted 24 hours in advance.

Any questions and/or problems regarding the office staff should be brought to the attention of the Department Head.

B. Mail

Faculty members are provided with a department mail box. Please note that use of these boxes is restricted to university business.

Office mail boxes and email should be checked once per working day during the semester since important information is disseminated both through the department mail boxes and by email. Circulating memos should be passed on promptly.

C. Phones

Phones in the Department Office are for use by the office staff and faculty, Students are not permitted to use the phones in the Department Office. Students may use the pay phone on the second floor of Nevins Hall. Students should use phones only in the case of emergency or as approved in advance by the Department Head. Local calls may be placed by dialing 9, and long distance calls by dialing 8. Faxes may be sent and received from the department office. The number is 229-219-1201. Long distance calls should deal directly with university business and be made from the faculty member's office. Calls handled from the Department Office should be kept to a very short duration so that the Department Office line is not tied up. The Department Head monitors items such as the monthly long-distance phone call bill. Abuse by a faculty member may result in the loss of privileges, even if this loss affects the level of performance of the faculty member.

D. Textbook Ordering Procedures

1. Due Dates for Each Semester

The VSU Bookstore has set the following dates for when textbook orders are due back to them:

Fall Semester:	March 15
Spring Semester:	October 15
Summer Terms:	February 15

2. A copy of the order should be given to the Department Secretary. If not text is used for a course a form should be filled out anyway in order to inform the bookstore.
3. The textbooks for multiple sections will be chosen by the area committees. Texts normally will be used for at least two years and changed in the Fall Semester.

III. Teaching Policies

A. Teaching

The primary goal of the University and the Department is teaching. In order to help the faculty member improve their teaching, teacher valuations will be completed at least once per semester. Each semester these evaluation forms are distributed to the faculty by the Department Head, and the faculty members are required to conduct the evaluation in the appropriate manner. Faculty members must leave the room during the evaluation and the faculty members should not see them evaluation forms until after the end of the semester. It is the responsibility of the faculty member to meet with the Department Head regarding these evaluations.

B. Peer Evaluations

A faculty member or the Department Head can request an evaluation at any time. Peer evaluations of the new faculty members will be evaluated in the spring semester of their first year and in the fall semester of their third year. The evaluations will be performed by two members of the Department, one chosen by the faculty member being evaluated, and the other chosen by the Promotion and Tenure Committee. The evaluators and evaluatee will arrange a mutually acceptable class meeting for the evaluation. Prior to this evaluation a course syllabus and self-evaluation of teaching should be submitted to the evaluators. If possible, both a lecture and laboratory class will be evaluated. The evaluation will be in written form and the evaluators will discuss the results with the evaluatee. The purpose of this evaluation is to help to improve teaching, and to give the faculty member feedback on how the Department perceives the quality of their teaching. A copy of the evaluation will be retained in the department personnel file. A faculty member has the right to have a response filed in their department personnel file.

The second evaluation will be conducted in the fall semester of the third year. Prior to the second evaluation a course syllabus and self-evaluation of teaching should be submitted to the Tenure and Promotion Committee. The evaluators will be chosen by the same procedure and preferably will be the same people. The results of this evaluation will also be discussed with the evaluatee and go on record in the department personnel file. The second evaluation will also become part of the tenure and promotion document.

C. Syllabi

Faculty members are expected to provide a syllabus for each course which they teach. Syllabi should be handed out during the first class meeting of each semester. At a minimum, a syllabus must include the classroom and meeting times, required texts or materials, the method of grading, and the attendance policy. The syllabus should also contain the final exam date, office hours and office room number, and the Special Services Statement.

D. Class Attendance

Faculty members are required to teach scheduled classes on a punctual basis. After finishing each class, the blackboards should be erased, and the classroom vacated in enough time for the succeeding class to meet on time. When a faculty member is unavoidably delayed from a class, the faculty member will immediately notify the Department Head or the Department Secretary who shall convey instructions from the faculty member to the class. In cases where there is no message from the faculty member, students are expected to wait ten (10) minutes, then they may leave. For classes which meet only once per week (usually four and one half hours), students are required to wait thirty (30) minutes before leaving. In all cases, the

faculty member must notify the Department Head of the reason why class was not met. Days missed because of sickness or personal reasons will be charged against sick leave. The amount of time charged is 8 hours per day. Sick leave is accumulated at a rate of 8 hours per month.

E. Class Cancellation

Prior to the cancellation of any regularly scheduled class, the faculty member must attain authorization from the Department Head.

F. Office Hours

All faculty members are responsible for maintaining a minimum of five office hours per week during a regular semester; these hours should be scheduled so as to accommodate student consultation needs. Office hours shall be posted on the office door by the first week of class.

Anytime circumstances necessitate a faculty member's absence during regularly scheduled office hours, a note or explanation should be posted on the door.

G. Posting Grades

It is the faculty member's right not to post grades. However, if faculty wish to post grades (so as to comply with the Buckley Amendment to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act), they should notify their classes via syllabus that they are going to post the grade of each student (using their social security number or student number as means of identification). The student has the right to present the faculty member with a written objection to this procedure, in which case the grade should not be posted. Faculty members should retain final exams and material not returned to students for at least one year, and grade books indefinitely.

H. Valdosta State University Policy on Incomplete Grades

An incomplete grade may be given to a student when non-academic circumstances which are beyond the control of the student, e.g. a medical condition, have interfered with the student completing all required course-work. Faculty must submit a note with the final grade sheet which explains the circumstances surrounding the assignment of the incomplete grade. The faculty member should obtain the student's signature on a letter specifying the student's obligations in order to remove the incomplete.

I. Department Policy on Cheating

Department faculty feels strongly that academic cheating violates the integrity of the classroom environment. The Student Handbook discusses Academic Irregularity in Appendix A (p.44):

Appendix A

Considerable confusion has been experienced in recent months concerning cheating and plagiarism. Under the normal process, this violation of Section A of the Student Conduct Code is handled academically (between the student and the concerned professor). The most severe action that may be administered by a professor in a course is the grade of "F" in that particular course. It is pointed out that this is an academic, not disciplinary sanction.

In cases where a student continues to violate Section A after he or she has been warned or sanctioned by one or more professors, he or she then, may be referred to the Dean of Students Office where more severe penalties may be administered and/or hearing may be held. The following is a direct quote from the Faculty Handbook: "Penalties for academic dishonesty may range from a reduced grade on the particular work in question to permanent suspensions from the University."

Section 1: Student Conduct

A. Academic Irregularity:

1. No student shall give or attempt to receive or give assistance not authorized by the instructor in the preparation of any essay, laboratory, report, examination or other assignment included in any academic course.
2. No student shall take or attempt to take, steal, or otherwise procure in an unauthorized manner any material pertaining to the conduct of a class, including but not limited to tests, examinations, laboratory equipment, and roll books,
3. No student shall sell, give, lend, or otherwise furnish to any unauthorized person material which can be shown to contain the questions or answers to any subsequent date in any course of study offered by the University, without authorization from the University.
4. Plagiarism is prohibited. Themes, essays, term papers, tests, and other similar requirements must be the work of the student submitting them. When direct quotations are used, they must be indicated, and when the ideas of another are incorporated in the paper they must be appropriately acknowledged. VSU policy is that under the established process a violation of Section A may and should be handled by the professor, the student and possibly the Department Head or Dean concerned with the offense. However, the most severe sanction that may be administered through this process is to give a grade of "F" in a course. If a stronger sanction is felt to be needed, or if an agreement cannot be reached between the above parties concerning the incident, it is no longer a matter that addresses itself to the academic school or division. In such cases where a student may continue to violate Section A after he or she has been warned or sanctioned by one or more professors, he or she should then be

referred to the Dean of Students where official charges may be drawn up and the student subjected to the established disciplinary process.

VSU policy is that under the established process a violation of Section A may and should be handled by the professor, the student and possibly the Department Head or dean concerned with the offense. However, the most severe sanction that may be administered through this process is to give a grade of "F" in the course. If a stronger sanction is felt to be needed, or if an agreement cannot be reached between the above parties concerning the incident, it is no longer a matter that addresses itself to the academic school or division. In such cases...[the student] should be referred to the Dean of Students where official charges may be drawn up and the student subjected to the established disciplinary process.

IV. Miscellaneous Policies

A. Merit Pay

Each faculty member is to submit to the Department Head a completed Annual Evaluation Form, in order to facilitate equity in evaluation. Specific reference should be made to those areas of accomplishment over the rating period which he or she feels should influence his or her merit pay rating. The pay raises are determined by allocating part of the raise money (2.5%) on a straight percentage basis. The remaining portion is allocated on a dollar basis based on the current year's Faculty Evaluation Forms weighted by the percentages in the Arts and Sciences guidelines (50% for teaching, 25% for professional development, 12.5% for academic achievement, and 12.5% for service). In addition equity raises may be requested for those faculty members whose evaluations are above the department mean, but whose salaries are below the mean for their rank. These requests are not automatically granted by VSU.

B. Promotions and Tenure

The School of Arts and Sciences have specific policies and procedures relative to tenure and promotion. It is the faculty member's responsibility to comply with these policies and each faculty member should consult the Faculty Handbook regarding these matters. Please note that faculty members should retain all supportive material which may be used as evidence of excellence (student evaluations, published papers, program announcements, etc.).

C. Research and Professional Participation- Release Time:

Faculty and strongly encouraged to publish in professional journals, write scholarly books, and present papers at professional meetings. Such activities can add to the teaching effort. Consideration for reassignment for research (teaching release time) should be submitted in writing to the Department Head,

along with one page explanation documenting the need for the reassignment. AN interim report is due at the end of the semester, and a final report is due at the end of the semester and a final report including resulting publications is due within one year of the end of the semester.

Requests for Release Time should be submitted to the Department Head on or before the date that the effected class schedule is required. The schedule is due at the following times:

Spring- end of Fall Semester

Winter- end of the Summer semester

Fall- March 15

D. Institutional Grants

The University provides funds for faculty research, publication, and paper presentation costs. These funds are granted on a competitive basis and there are funding application deadlines. Faculty is encouraged to utilize these grants in order to obtain funds over and above what the Department can provide. Research monies can be applied for through the Faculty Research Grant Committee which is administered through the Dean of the Graduate Studies.

Publication and paper presentation costs, as well as monies for faculty development, can be applied for through the Center for Faculty Development and Instructional Improvement. The forms are available in the forms cabinet in the office and are also available on disk.

E. Summer Teaching Assignments Policy

This policy was drafted by the Department Summer Teaching Assignments Policy Committee, approved unanimously at the Fall 1989 department faculty meeting, and amended unanimously at the Fall 1994 department faculty meeting.

1. Our department has faculty on 12-month contracts; they are required to teach Summer Semester.
2. As retirement pay scale is determined by the salary of the best 3 years (best 2 years for faculty hired before 7/1/84), those faculty declaring retirement in writing may teach up to three five-hour courses, if available, each of the last 2 or 3 summers leading up to retirement.
3. Summer teaching assignments in our department are also determined in part by specialty; i.e. geologists cannot teach astronomy, physicists cannot teach engineering, etc.
4. There are those in the department with special income obligations that can be met by teaching summers. Needs must be considered.
5. Prior summer teaching must also be considered, both in proximity to the present summer, and also in the number of courses taught during the interval. Since there is no campus-wide policy concerning summer teaching assignments, we suggest a point scale for determining eligibility employing the following criteria:

a. Those on 12 month contract	Highest Priority
b. Within 2 or 3 years of declared retirement	2 nd highest
c. Appropriate specialization, taking into account the probability of the class making	30 points
d. Special Income Needs	0-30 points
e. Having taught prior summer	2 courses minus 40 points 1 course minus 20 points
Having taught 3 years prior	2 courses minus 20 points 1 course minus 5 points
Seniority	add 2 points for each year at VSU

