

RPTS Graduate Student Handbook
Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences
Texas A&M University
(September 2004 Version)

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Welcome

The Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences seeks to provide the highest quality learning experiences to prepare world leaders, managers and teachers to meet present and future demands of society in recreation, parks and tourism. The vision of the faculty is to provide the preeminent learning, research and outreach program in the world.

Future Outlook

The department has had approximately 50 graduate students in the program for several years. With the sharp increase in the number of department faculty and visiting scientists, as well as a growing number of grants and contracts, there will be opportunities to increase the number of graduate students and expand the program. During the 2004-05 academic year, a new strategic plan will be put in place to outline new and exciting ways to enhance graduate opportunities through enhanced learning and research activity. This will be an exciting time to be a graduate student in this department

Department Head Roles and Responsibilities

In the Texas A&M system, the Department Head has overall responsibility for the Department's Graduate Program. Within the guidelines established by the university, the faculty in the each department develops an appropriate graduate program for the degrees that are offered in that unit and define the admission requirements. The Department Head appoints a Graduate Program Committee and a Committee Chair to provide oversight for management, planning and policy and make recommendations to the Department Head and faculty for needed changes and other matters related to the program. The Committee is also responsible for reviewing all applications for graduate admission and making recommendations to accept or deny admission of applicants on a case by case basis. The Graduate Program Committee Chair and the members of the Committee are identified in a published list that is made available from the Department Head's office. The Department Head interacts with the RPTS faculty regarding the progress of students and issues with students they are advising, works with faculty, students and staff to address scheduling and required administrative requirements, and has final signature authority.

Expectations of Graduate Students

Deciding to enroll in a graduate program is an important personal decision. Typically, students decide to enroll in a graduate program to enhance their skills and knowledge beyond what they might have been able to accomplish in an undergraduate or Master's program of study. Students see the knowledge and skills they will gain as critical to pursuing a career related to some aspect of recreation, park and tourism.

Students learn from faculty as well as from other students. Friendships and professional contacts that evolve long after leaving RPTS are often made at this time. The experience includes meeting people with a variety of interests and backgrounds from many parts of the world.

In our department system, all students are linked with an advisor at the outset of their program of study. Our philosophy is that the student's overall success and fit into a department will be

better achieved if interaction begins on the first day they are on campus and continues throughout a student's studies by the faculty member being the chief academic contact point for the student throughout the program.

The student's involvement in the program should be challenging and filled with ideas, some of which will be "outside the box". If you fail to proactively engage yourself in the learning process, you will miss out on many of those ideas and opportunities for learning. To achieve the highest quality learning experience, students are expected to *actively* participate in seminars, discussion groups, community activities and generally engage themselves in the department in ways that contribute to the development of a community of scholars. The quality of your graduate experience will be directly related to the extent that you involve yourself in the department, university and community.

RPTS is a wonderful department with terrific people. We are pleased you are a student in this department and look forward to working with you as you pursue your degree.

Joseph O'Leary
RPTS Department Head

Degrees Offered

Master of Science Degree (non-thesis option)

The Master of Science degree (non-thesis option) is intended for current professionals or those seeking a degree leading to professional service in recreation, parks, or tourism. It requires a minimum of 36 semester hours beyond the bachelor's degree. Students earning this degree may elect a professional internship as part of the 36 hours, but this is not required. Students may write a review paper consisting of library research, for example, on a topic approved by the student's advisory committee. The advisory committee also conducts a final comprehensive examination. For most students, the M.S. (non-thesis) degree can be completed in 1.5 to 2 years.

Master of Science Degree (thesis option)

The Master of Science degree (thesis option) is designed for students interested in continuing on to advanced study in a doctoral program, as well as those entering professional service. It requires a minimum of 35 semester hours of study beyond a bachelor's degree, including at least eight hours devoted to original research documented in a master's thesis. A final examination on the thesis is conducted by the student's advisory committee. Normally, it takes two years to complete this degree, although the time varies depending on individual circumstances.

Master of Recreation Resources Development

The Master of Recreation Resources Development (MRRD) is a professional degree for those who are already working in or anticipate a career in professional service. The degree provides maximum exposure to a specific body of knowledge with primary emphasis on statistic and research techniques. The program requires a minimum of 36 semester hours, comprised of 3 hours of statistics, 3 semester hours in preparation of a professional paper, 4 semester hours for full-time internship of at least six months with an approved employer, and 26 hours of other course work.

Master of Natural Resources Development

The Master of Natural Resources Development (MNRD) is identical in intent and general requirements to those for the Master of Recreation Resources Development. A professional paper and internship are still required. However, more emphasis is placed on undertaking an interdisciplinary mix of course work from other natural resources programs at Texas A&M University.

Doctor of Philosophy Degree

The Doctor of Philosophy degree prepares students for a career as a university faculty member, research scientist in a government agency, or the private sector. It requires 70 semester hours of graduate study beyond the master's degree, including 24 hours devoted to original dissertation research. A final examination on the dissertation is conducted by the student's advisory committee. The Ph.D. degree normally takes three to four years to complete, depending on individual circumstances.

For more information about each of these degrees see the RPTS website for degree requirements (<http://www.rpts.tamu.edu/drequire.htm#ms>) and current graduate courses (<http://www.rpts.tamu.edu/gradcour.htm>).

Degree Program Information

Graduate Advisory Committees

Masters' and doctoral candidates are expected to form a graduate advisory committee as soon as possible after they join the program. Consequently, it is to their benefit to finalize the composition of their Graduate Advisory Committee as early as possible. The minimum composite for a master's committee is three members of the graduate faculty, two inside and one outside the department. A doctoral advisory committee must consist of at least four members of the graduate faculty, at least one of which is from outside the department. A special appointed member may serve as an extra committee member, but cannot chair or co-chair.

Each student will already have an Advisory Committee chair when they begin their program of study, but, with the mutual consent of that chair and a prospective new chair, a student may choose to work with another faculty member once they are on campus. Conversely, an advisor or committee member may dismiss him/herself from a student's committee with written notice to the student. It is not the Department's responsibility to appoint another advisor in any instance.

The selection of outside committee members should be a reasoned and careful decision in consultation with the student's Advisory Committee Chair. Outside committee members from different disciplines and departments bring different perspectives, philosophies, expectations, traditions, and demands. For the student, this offers both advantages and disadvantages.

For further information, see:

RPTS Graduate Study Webpage – Graduate Advisory Committee
<http://www.rpts.tamu.edu/adcom.htm>

Degree Plans

Each master's student is required to have a degree plan filed prior to the third long semester of enrollment and doctoral candidates are required to have a degree plan filed prior to the fourth long semester. The graduate degree plan is the student's official program of graduate study. It is the agreement between student, his/her Advisory Committee, and the Office of Graduate Studies to satisfactorily complete the requirements in order to graduate. Degree plans are prepared in consultation with the student's Advisory Committee Chair.

The degree plan form must be filled out and printed off the Internet. Always do a draft copy first and let Marguerite peruse it prior to filling out the final copy for signatures. The student must sign the degree plan, followed by approval and signatures of the chair, all other members of the advisory committee and lastly the RPTS department head. Before submission to the Office of Graduate Studies for final approval, required copies need to be made, plus extra copies for the student's departmental file, committee chair, and a personal copy.

For more information, see: Office of Graduate Studies – Degree Plans
<http://ogs.tamu.edu/OGS/currentDegreePlans.htm>

Office of Graduate Studies – Steps to Fulfill Master’s Degree Requirements
<http://ogs.tamu.edu/OGS/currentStepsMasters.htm>

Office of Graduate Studies – Steps to Fulfill Doctoral Degree Requirements
<http://ogs.tamu.edu/OGS/currentStepsDoctoral.htm>

Other Forms and Documents

There are other official forms and announcements that need to be filled out, signed and sent forward within certain timeframes. Vivian Gonzales and Marguerite Van Dyke are knowledgeable, have the information needed on file or know where to get the information. Students should ask for help rather than relying on information gotten from other students in casual conversation.

It is essential that all copies of degree plans, proposals, petitions, memos, etc. be placed in the student’s departmental file. Each student is responsible to maintain a personal file plus providing copies for their advisory committee chair.

Dissertation, Thesis and Professional Paper Preparation

Preparation of a thesis, dissertation or professional paper should follow guidelines in the university’s Thesis Manual. Professional papers follow most of the same framework, depending on the specific paper. The manual can be found on the Office of Graduate Studies website at: <http://ogs.tamu.edu/OGS/currentGraduateHandbook.htm>.

Theses, dissertations and professional papers completed by previous RPTS student are available for borrowing in Francis 109. The honor system is used – record when copies are checked out and checked back in. Electronic manuscripts with recent graduation dates, i.e., May 2004 can be downloaded at <http://etd.tamu.edu>

Miscellaneous Academic Program Information

International Student Services

International Student Services provides information specifically geared to international students.

<http://international.tamu.edu/iss/>

Transportation Services has all the information you need for getting to and getting around campus.

<http://transport.tamu.edu/>

Institutional Review Board reviews research to ensure compliance with all university policies as well as ethical standards.

http://researchcompliance.tamu.edu/irb_approval.php

Graduate Student Resources & Services

The Office of Graduate Studies offers a webpage that has numerous useful links, from computer services to student organizations.

<http://ogs.tamu.edu/OGS/currentStudentResources.htm>

Library - Subject Specialist Librarian

The subject specialist librarian is available to assist graduate students with their research as well as help utilize all the tools within the library.

Tony Bremholm - tbremhol@tamu.edu

Library – Subject Guide

Use this guide to locate subject-specific indexes and databases, books, theses/dissertations, web resources, and print and electronic journals in the RPTS field.

http://library.tamu.edu/vgn/portal/tamulib/ssl/renderer/0,2775,1724_43008,00.html

The Student - Roles and Responsibilities

The following are expectations for graduate students in the RPTS department, along with a description of student's roles and responsibilities with regard to their education.

- Students are expected to have the intellect, creativity, initiative, resourcefulness, independence, and discipline to produce a high quality thesis or professional paper.
- Working on a graduate degree is a full-time commitment. It has been our experience that students who undertake a second full-time position in addition to their graduate studies (e.g., paid employment outside the university) are less likely to finish their degree or will have a less favorable educational experience.
- Students are expected to continually strive to acquire a thorough understanding of the scientific body of knowledge in their area(s) of interest. Such knowledge cannot be acquired by *only* doing the assigned readings in classes. A self-imposed reading schedule that includes several additional *journal articles per week* is strongly encouraged. Because of the interdisciplinary nature of our field, the selection of pertinent articles should not be limited to the major recreation (e.g., *Journal of Leisure Research, Leisure Sciences*) and tourism (e.g., *Annals of Tourism, Journal of Travel Research*) journals. Articles contained in journals related to social psychology, sociology, communication, anthropology, education, history, philosophy, political science, natural resources, forestry, range science, and wildlife might also be incorporated into the student's reading schedule.
- Students are expected to continually strive to improve their working knowledge of at least one major statistical software package (e.g., SPSS, SAS). Similar to any foreign language, this knowledge base cannot be obtained by *only* doing the assignments in the methodology and statistics courses. Members of the faculty have data sets available for students to use to increase their analytical skills. Whenever possible, students are strongly encouraged to collect their own data sets to increase their understanding and working knowledge of research and data analysis.
- A student is responsible for assuring communication with their committee and the Office of Graduate Studies, and assuring that all meeting arrangements, forms, procedures, and correspondence are handled in a timely and satisfactory manner.

- Master of Science (thesis option) and doctoral students are expected to develop a written research proposal that is approved by the student's committee prior to actually beginning their research.
- Students are expected to give committee members 10 working days to review proposals before a proposal defense is held. A student's self-imposed "deadline" may be an indicator of discipline, resourcefulness, and independence, but unless agreed to by the advisor, may fail to reflect the required level of initiative.
- Students are expected to keep their advisor informed of their progress, decisions, changes, and problems.

The Advisor - Roles and Responsibilities

A specific faculty member must accept a student prior to the student being accepted for graduate study in the Department. It is the advisor's responsibility to:

- Approve a student's program of study.
- Counsel with the student on career options.
- Provide intellectual support.
- Work with the student to develop an approved research proposal and quality drafts of the final dissertation, thesis or professional paper for committee review.
- Supervise preparation of the dissertation, thesis or professional paper.
- Encourage students to publish scientific articles.
- Recommend possible research and scientific article topics and work with students to develop publications.
- Help identify funding to fund their advisee's research.
- Pursue external funding to help support research assistantships for their students.

For more information, see: Office of Graduate Studies – Expectations of Graduate Study
<http://ogs.tamu.edu/OGS/currentExpectations.htm>

Computer Resources

Computer Labs

The RPTS department maintains three computer labs. There are in addition to the open access labs that are located around the Texas A&M campus. The three RPTS labs are:

- The Graduate Computer Lab (Francis Hall 313) contains at least 9 Windows-based computers. Graduate students have access to this lab at any time.
- The Undergraduate Lab (Francis Hall 115) is normally available to graduate students unless classes are scheduled there. This lab has 43 Windows-based personal computers, and is used in several department classes.
- The 402 Lab (Francis Hall 208) is primarily for use by Dr. Scott Shafer's RPTS 402 class. 6 Windows-based computers, a large-format scanner, color and B&W printers are available on a first-come first-served basis. This lab can be used by graduate students if approval is given by Dr. Shafer.

The Francis Hall Wired Network

Our department operates the RPTS network, an internal Local Area Network (LAN), which connects to the A&M network and the Internet. Each student is provided with a password-protected user account, which provides access to the RPTS server. You should not give ANYONE access to your account. Giving someone else your user ID and password is against University rules and Texas state law, and can result in the cancellation of your account.

Each user account has a **P:** drive on the network. This is a place for you to store personal files. Users can put their personal files in this directory for long-term storage. However, since availability of space on the server is important, please restrict stored files to work or academic related materials. Inappropriate files such as music, games, or movies may be deleted from all drives without notice.

By becoming involved in someone's research or an RPTS project, you may be given access to different workgroups. The **G:** drive contains shared folders for any workgroup to which you might belong.

The **W:** drive is the location of our departmental web pages. Access to these files is restricted to individuals who maintain those pages. Access can be granted to individuals working on web-based projects and courses.

Wireless Networking

The wireless networking in Francis Hall is part of the "tamulink" network. It is maintained and supported by Computing and Information Services (CIS). If you would like to use the wireless network, please go to the following website: <http://tamulink.tamu.edu/>. Further information about hooking up to the wireless network is also contained in Appendix A of this document.

Tape Backups

All data on the RPTS network is backed up on a regular basis. This provides a certain degree of safety for individuals that accidentally delete important files. If you store files on the hard drive of a computer they are using, they are not automatically backed up.

The server runs tape backups every weeknight at 7 PM. In order for a file to be saved on a tape, it needs to be on the server when the backups take place. Files cannot be restored from backups if they are not on our backup tapes. The schedule for tape backups is as follows:

<i>Monday</i>	<i>Web Folder</i>
<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>GroupWise Email</i>
<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>User Folders (Students)</i>
<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Workgroup Folders (G-Drive)</i>
<i>Friday</i>	<i>User Folders (Faculty and Staff)</i>

Teleconferencing

There are two stand-alone teleconferencing systems in Francis Hall located in rooms 109 and 252. This equipment will allow a user to connect to another teleconferencing system anywhere in the world, or to a computer with a webcam connected. A computer in the Graduate Computer Lab also has a webcam installed, so technically four teleconferencing systems are available. Access to the equipment is granted by reserving the conference room. Contact David Hess ahead of time if you need assistance with the equipment.

Software

All computers maintained by RPTS will have a standard software installation. The university and department are only licensed to install certain software. A full list of the standard programs can be found at the RPTS Computer Help Website (<http://help.rpts.tamu.edu>).

Please contact David Hess (dhess@tamu.edu) if you need other specific software on lab computers. Unlicensed software on departmental computers is illegal. Any software found on computers that is not licensed by the department will be removed immediately. This includes “shareware” and “freeware”. Anyone who installs illegal software on RPTS computers will have their RPTS accounts removed.

Dealing with Financial and Travel Issues in RPTS

The following are rules and procedures for undertaking purchases, making copies and traveling on departmental accounts. Please sure to read this information carefully and to check with the business office if you are unsure of the procedures.

Purchasing Rules and Procedures

Purchase Orders – You must request a purchase order from the RPTS business office before purchasing anything on a departmental account. This procedure has been implemented in order to ensure that purchase orders properly document agreements made with vendors, including estimates. In addition, following this procedure will help ensure that funds are available when obligations come due and will help keep bookkeeping system reports up to date with obligated and available balances.

1. *Procedure:*
All purchases must be preceded by business office staff completion of a purchase order on FAMIS bookkeeping system. You may submit a request for a purchase order in several ways; email, phone, or in person. Email is preferred.
2. *Required Information:* The business office needs the following information before a purchase order can be issued:
 1. *Vendor*
 2. *Estimated amount*
 3. *Brief description of goods to be purchased*

Personal Reimbursements

The following documents and proof of payment are required for all personal purchase voucher reimbursements, other than travel voucher reimbursements which are discussed below.

If payment is made via cash, personal check, credit card or debit card you will need:

1. An itemized invoice or receipt from the vendor indicating payment was received and method of payment; and
2. A signed Form AG-296 (<http://agservices.tamu.edu/forms/AG-296.pdf>).

If payment is made via Internet with credit card or debit card, you will need:

1. An itemized invoice or receipt from the vendor indicating payment was received and method of payment or printed confirmation of payment received from a web page or confirmation e-mail sent to the purchaser; and
2. A signed Form AG-296 (<http://agservices.tamu.edu/forms/AG-296.pdf>).

Foreign Currency

When purchasing anything in a Foreign Currency, the purchaser is responsible for verifying the information on the invoice. The amount needs to be in U.S. Dollars, or it needs to indicate what the currency is that is listed on the invoice. Business office staff will handle converting the foreign current to U.S. dollars based on the invoice date. The invoice needs to be in English, or have something in writing attached with a translation.

The best way to make purchases involving foreign funds would be for you to purchase the item with a credit card; then be reimbursed based on your credit card statement. Credit card statements usually provide accurate currency conversion rates.

Copying

You **must** go through TAMU-Graphics Services for all copy jobs. They will direct you off campus if they cannot complete your job according to your request. You **must** get a purchase order before going to graphics services.

Travel Regulations

I. Travel Request

- a. A travel request **must** be submitted **before** every trip.
 - i. Without an approved travel request, you may not be reimbursed for your travel.
 - ii. You should submit your travel request and a travel request checklist on the appropriate form at least one week prior to travel date.
- b. Website for Travel Forms:
 - i. <http://forms.rpts.tamu.edu/>

II. Travel Log

- i. A typed travel log (<http://forms.rpts.tamu.edu/>) **MUST** be submitted with all receipts in order to process a travel voucher.
- ii. Please type the full name of an organization completely at least once; do not just use the acronym. Be sure to include the title of any paper or presentation, if any, you made at a conference.

III. Taxi, Metro, or Shuttle Transportation

- a. Whether you have a receipt or not, the business office needs the following information to reimburse these expenses:
 - i. Date
 - ii. Dollar Amount
 - iii. Departure/Destination Location
- b. If you do not have receipts, write the above information on a separate piece of paper and turn in with your travel. If this information is not provided, the business office will not be able to reimburse you for these costs or it may delay reimbursement.

IV. Airfare

- a. The airline ticket or passenger receipt **must** contain:
 - i. Fare Basis Codes
 - ii. Form of Payment
 - iii. Cost Breakdown of Airfare Listing

1. Base Airfare
 2. Taxes/Segment Fees
 3. Passenger Facility Charges
- b. Airfare from a Travel Agency:
- i. The department will approve payment of airfare only when a travel request has been submitted.
 - ii. If a travel request has not been submitted, we will reject any tickets, until proper paper work is available.
- c. Purchase with Personal Credit Card:
- i. You **may not** use a personal credit card to purchase airline tickets unless your card has over \$500,000 accidental insurance coverage.
- d. Online Purchases or Phone Purchases
- i. State Funds
 1. If you are using state funds, you can not use online broker (i.e.—Travelocity, Orbitz) or you
 - a. Must provide a valid exception for not using contract airfare
 - ii. Local Funds
 1. If you are using local funds, you will be reimbursed if the ticket is purchased from a broker or directly from airline
 - a. The ticket receipt must contain the proper information (see above) and
 - b. You will need a valid exception for not using contract airfare
 - iii. Non-Refundable Tickets
 1. The total cost of a ticket cannot be more than state approved contract airfares, or you will only be reimbursed up to the state approved contract airfare limit.
 2. The cost charged by the airline exchange the ticket is \$100.00. This amount may be reimbursed by the university, but the ticket cost plus the exchange fee cannot exceed the state contract airfare.
- e. Online Tickets:
- i. If purchasing online tickets, you must make sure you have the proper information on all “receipts” you turn in. The following may be helpful in obtaining that information:
 1. When checking baggage or obtaining a boarding pass at the airport, request a “Passenger Receipt”, this should contain all proper information required for reimbursement.
 2. When online, select “Fare Rules” and print that information along with you ticket confirmation.
 - ii. If the above information is not on this receipt, there will be a delay in reimbursement; usually it is harder to get the proper information from the airlines after the trip has taken place.

V. Vehicle Reimbursement

- a. Reimbursement for Mileage on Your Personal Vehicle:
 - i. You must provide odometer readings and physical addresses from your point of departure to your point of arrival. If you are traveling to several different sites you should keep a mileage log.
 - ii. Please fill out the mileage log online before turning in your travel. (Available at: <http://agservices.tamu.edu/forms/milelog.doc>)
 - iii. The reimbursement rate is set by the state at \$0.35/mile.
 - iv. You may only use your home address if travel is not during regular working hours.
- b. Gas: Only reimbursable when you use a rental car.
 - i. Receipts must be provided.
- c. Parking
 - i. With or without receipts you may be reimbursed but you must provide the following information:
 1. Date
 2. Location
 3. Dollar Amount
 - ii. If you do not have an original receipt, please provide a statement as to why one is not available.

VI. Meals and Lodging

(DO NOT WRITE ON HOTEL RECEIPTS)

- a. Meals and Lodging Rates: Please be aware of allowable rates when traveling to avoid paying too much and not getting that back. Most hotels will work with you on price if you let them know you are a state employee.
 - i. The following website will help determine the allowable reimbursement levels for state employees:
<http://agfiscal.tamu.edu/travel/Meals.htm>
- b. Meals - You may lower the cost of meals to increase lodging. This means that if your hotel room is \$100, but the allowable rate is only \$80, you can use the meal rate to make up the difference in the cost. So if meals per day are \$30, you could use \$20 of that to make up the difference in your hotel room.
- c. Lodging
 - i. ***Do not ever reserve or pay for a hotel from an online source*** (e.g., Priceline)
 - ii. Contract hotels
 1. Please be aware of the contract hotels in a particular city. (Available at: <http://www.tbpc.state.tx.us/hotel/>)
 2. If you do not stay at a contract hotel, please provide a valid exception or this will delay your reimbursement.
 - iii. Sharing a room with a State Employee
 1. Each employee can only be reimbursed for half of the room cost.
 2. Please ask the hotel to split the bill **when making the reservation**. This will be easier for you and it will not delay your reimbursement.
 3. Hotel Receipt:

- a. Two Bills
 - i. Each traveler must have their own bill with their name on it, just as if they were in separate rooms.
 - ii. Each bill must show the full price of the room and show that you paid for half.
 - iii. Each bill must show a zero balance
- b. One Bill
 - i. This bill must have both travelers' names on it.
 - ii. It must show a zero balance.
 - iii. Must show 2 forms of payment, i.e., that each person paid ½ the bill.
- iv. Sharing with a Non-State Employee
 - 1. You will only be reimbursed at the single-room rate.

VII. Foreign Travel

- a. All travel requests for business related travel must be approved by the Agriculture Program Fiscal Office prior to travel. This includes all travel that is at no charge to the Agriculture Program.
- b. State funds cannot be used to reimburse foreign travel expenses.
- c. Travel requests must be approved by the Department Head prior to submission to the Agriculture Program Fiscal Office.
- d. Travel requests should include:
 - i. travel advisory (<http://travel.state.gov/travel/warnings.html>)
 - ii. daily itinerary
 - iii. justification as to how the trip will benefit the Agriculture Program

Miscellaneous Administrative and Financial Issues

Leave

If you are on an assistantship, you must consult with your supervisor and fill out the proper paperwork if you are taking either professional or personal leave. Please send an email or personally notify Tina, Shayne, Teresa, Justine, Marguerite, or Vivian if you have any questions. You do not have to fill out a travel request when going on personal travel.

HRConnect

Everyone should be familiar with HRConnect, either to update your insurance coverage each year and/or to view payroll information. If you have not logged in to HRConnect, please make sure you do so (Shayne can help if you are unsure of what to do) and see what the site offers, such as email notification of important personnel issues. If you are not signed up for email notification, you are highly encouraged to utilize this feature. If you need any help, please see Shayne.

Direct Deposit

You can set up direct deposit for payroll, travel, or purchase reimbursements. Please see Shayne, Tina, or Teresa for the forms to get enrolled. They are separate forms for Experiment Station, Extension Service and University accounts; so unfortunately, even if you have direct deposit set up for your paycheck, you still need fill out the appropriate forms to request reimbursements.

Personal Use of A&M Equipment and Facilities

Use of A&M facilities, telephones, mailing services, secretarial services, supplies, hardware, software and all other University resources for personal business is strictly forbidden by University policy and state law. In addition, department supplies such as paper, envelopes, computers, books, are not for personal use. They are only available to support teaching assistantship responsibilities.

Copy Codes

Students are not assigned personal copy codes and can not use the department's copy machines to make personal copies. Instead you should use the graphics services center or off-campus vendors for all personal copies. Remember if you are a TA and are making copies for the instructor to handout in a class, you will need to get a purchase order and go to graphics services.

Being Paid for Your Work on Special Projects

Do not begin work for anyone on any project for which you will be paid without clearing the source of funding and all required paperwork through the RPTS Business Office **before** work has begun. We must before you begin work that you are approved to be paid. Please be sure to check with Tina; this will ensure that you will be paid properly and promptly.

Keys

to the building and student offices may be acquired with Department chair approval. They are to be returned upon termination of the student's program or when no longer needed.

Mailboxes

Mailboxes are provided for graduate students. Mail is distributed daily, and these boxes are useful for communication between students; between faculty and students as well as to receive postal mail addressed to you in care of the department.

Appendix A: Wireless Networking on the Texas A&M Campus

Information you need to setup and use tamulink is available at: <http://tamulink.tamu.edu/>

What you will need:

1) A wireless networking card (802.11b/g compliant)

To start off, you'll need to get a wireless networking card that is compatible with the wireless network on the Texas A&M campus. Tamulink uses the 802.11b/g "Wi-Fi" standard, so any card you purchase will need to be able to use that. Specific information relating to compatibility is available at the tamulink website.

2) A VPN ("Virtual Private Network") account

A VPN account is required to connect to the wireless network on the A&M campus. You may obtain your VPN account by using the CLAIM system. This is done in the same way you would sign up for your MODEMS account in CLAIM. Specific instructions are available at the tamulink website.

The VPN account verifies that you are a student, staff, or faculty member at Texas A&M University. VPN accounts should not be shared and passwords are confidential information.

3) The VPN client program on your computer

Once you have your VPN account, you will be able to login to the wireless network using the VPN client. This is a program that is installed on your computer which tells the tamulink network that you are authorized to have network access. The program may be downloaded from the tamulink website, or you can have the Networking Help Desk (1110 Teague Hall) install it for you.

If you already have your wireless network card, you can have it installed and configured at the Networking Help Desk in 1110 Teague Hall.