Communication

Introduction

An important component of professional behavior and a major component of successful achievement of goals is clear and appropriate communication. The following policies or statements are intended to clearly define appropriate communication and interactions in the Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences.

Communication from Faculty/Staff to Student

Each faculty member, especially student advisors, accepts responsibility for maintaining lines of communication with students/advisees. In general, e-mail serves as the most efficient means of communicating information to students. Therefore, it is important that you check your UTMB e-mail daily. Additionally, faculty may contact students in person, telephone, facsimile, or other accepted forms of communication, such as the Info Depot available outside the Office of Student Affairs. When communication requiring some action on the student’s part is made by e-mail, telephone message, facsimile, etc., it is expected that students will respond or, at least acknowledge, receipt of the message within 72 hours (3 working days) of the original communication.

In most cases, if an acknowledgement or response is not received within the 72 hour period (3 working days), another attempt will be made to contact the student. If the student does not respond or acknowledge receipt of the second communication, the faculty member is no longer responsible for any consequences that might result.

The UTMB e-mail address is considered the official and primary internet address for communication. Students should not expect faculty to use alternative or secondary e-mail addresses.

This statement of communication implies that the student has a responsibility to ensure that the Department and their advisor are always aware of changes in the student’s contact information (e.g. phone numbers, address, etc.).

Communication from Student to Faculty/Staff

Students are encouraged to contact faculty and advisors when information or assistance is needed. Students may contact faculty in person, via e-mail, telephone message, or facsimile. Use of e-
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mails to the faculty is strongly encouraged, since the e-mail is frequently monitored by the individual faculty. If you need information or need to request a meeting with one of the faculty, this is frequently the simplest route. When requesting a meeting, it is helpful if you will indicate more than 1 time when you would be able to meet, if possible the nature of the meeting, and if you need information/consultation regarding an upcoming deadline. It is expected that, under normal circumstances, students should receive a response or acknowledgement of their communication within 72 hours (3 working days) of the attempt to contact faculty.

If a reply or acknowledgement is not received within 72 hours (3 working days), it is advisable to check with the secretarial staff or one of the other faculty to determine if the individual you are e-mailing is available. Situations may occur when the individual you seek is not available; in such instances, contacting the departmental chair or another faculty would be highly advisable. If this is not the case, please send a second email in case the first did not transmit, copying (“cc”) your message to your advisor and/or the departmental chair.

Students are encouraged to make appointments with faculty rather than simply assuming that if they are in their offices, they are free to meet with you. This helps to ensure that the faculty member can or will make themselves available at a time convenient for both parties.

Shared Communications

It is important that students understand and recognize that one of the responsibilities of faculty is to enlist the aid or assistance of other faculty, advisors in Student Affairs, and/or the Department Chair when certain types of problems arise. This action does not imply that any problems or difficulties will not or cannot be kept confidential. It is important that any problem or concern beyond the expertise of the faculty member contacted be referred to an appropriate resource person.

Advisors must be kept aware of advisee problems or concerns if they impact the ability of the student to perform well in their
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coursework. It is one of the responsibilities of student advisors to make certain that students having difficulties receive or be referred to adequate and appropriate help and support.

There are times where situations in a student’s life affect their academic performance and in some instances may require that course faculty or the departmental chair be apprised of the situation in order to obtain needed assistance for the student. It is imperative that each student understand that all communications of a personal nature are kept confidential but that the policies of the University, School, Department, and our accrediting agency demand that all available resources be brought to bear in assisting students.