

The Academic Department Administrative Assistant Guidelines for Chairs and Faculty



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PREFACE
**Better understanding of the roles and responsibilities
of the Academic Department Administrative Assistant**

Across PSU divisions and departments, the Academic Administrative Assistant position has many variations due to the contexts of department needs, differences in USNH system rank or level, position specifics at hire, changes to the position over time, and changes in technologies and data systems over time.

There is, however, a common core of responsibilities shared across Academic Departments. This guide provides a foundation for understanding the position, for guiding expectations, and for working professionally, respectfully, and efficiently with the Administrative Assistant.

Table of Contents

- I. Common Core of Responsibilities
- II. Values and Priorities from Perspectives of the A.A.
- III. Additional Responsibilities: Variations Across Campus
- IV. Boundaries for Expectations and Other Responsibilities
- V. Boundary Crossing: Inappropriate “Other Duties” and Requests
- VI. Tips for Chairs and Faculty
- VII. Tips for New Chairs
- VIII. Training and Professional Development Opportunities

I. Common Core of Responsibilities

There are many common responsibilities and expectations for our Academic Department Administrative Assistants. A key concern is to be attentive to the volume of work, making work requests in a timely manner, and being aware of the department office business hours that may differ from academic class hours.

Common responsibilities that have been established are:

1. Department office management
 - Ordering supplies and equipment for department as requested by the department Chair
 - Hiring, training, and supervision of student workers in the department office
 - Completion of I-9 and W-4 forms with student workers
 - Collection of time sheets from student workers and part-time employees
 - Banner data entry for student worker and part-time employee paychecks
 - Coordinating maintenance of Xerox machine
 - Entering Physical Plant and IT work orders
2. Budget/financial management
 - P-card, purchase orders, reimbursements, honorariums, audits, accountability, direct pay processing, Banner data entry and reporting, preparing monthly reports, processing start-up and professional development awards in coordination with the Office of the Academic Deans and/or the Provost's Office.
3. Customer service
 - Responding to phone, email, and walk-in inquiries
 - Being the face of the department
4. Collecting and uploading syllabi for all courses each semester
5. Assistance with departmental course scheduling processes (Data entry will be undertaken by the Registrar)
 - Filing of Teaching Lecturer availability forms
6. Assisting with scheduling of conferences, meetings, and special events
 - Catering
 - Room reservations
 - Parking passes for guests to campus
 - Easels, markers, etc.
7. Taking minutes at department meetings
8. Assisting Chair with correspondence
 - Printing letters & envelopes for mailings
9. Supporting appropriate chair and faculty requests
10. Filing maintenance and reporting assistance for Chair and Program Coordinators for program assessment, academic program review, and accreditation
11. Keeping updated on technology use related to department and institutional needs. E.g. Changes to Banner, changes in software and operating systems, working with Skype, Share Drives, Moodle, Mahara, and Web Maintenance Management needs.
 - Web maintenance management can be approached in different ways including the supervision of trained student workers
 - NEW: Assistance to Chair and Program Coordinators with upcoming Data Management System for departmental program data for program assessment and accreditation

II. Values and priorities from the perspective of the Administrative Assistants

- Meeting student needs
- Meeting Chair and department faculty needs

- Fulfilling budget responsibilities and compliance responsibilities
- Office management
- Customer service
- Processing of payroll for student workers and hourly workers
- General troubleshooting

III. Additional responsibility variations based on department needs

- Assistance with Accreditation and Program Review Assessments
 - Maintaining department shared drive, Mahara, and/or Moodle
- Setting up online placement testing of standardized tests
 - Communicating scores to responsible faculty and/or advisors, and keeping scoring records
- Maintaining OSHA records and inventory (working with Designated Department Safety Manager)
- Graduate Programs
 - Answering phone and email inquiries directed to department office
 - Assisting Program Coordinators
 - May be providing office support for GA's who have instructional responsibilities in a similar manner to office support provided for Teaching Lecturers
 - Helping graduate students in same manner as undergraduate students
 - Processing supplies and equipment transactions for Graduate Program
 - working with CoGS Business Staff
- Processing grants transactions
 - Working with department specific software, e.g. SONA software for scheduling meetings with research subjects
- Meeting with students and families – providing department tours for walk-in visitors when Chair is not available
- Assistance with Chair's calendar
- Assistance with special programs such as Mindflight, Model UN, College Bound Summit, National History Day, etc.
- Assistance for University Councils such as the Honors Council
- Assistance with Clinical placements

IV. Boundaries for Expectations and “Other Responsibilities”

There are times when requests overstep the boundaries of “other responsibilities” and transgress appropriate expectations. In most cases, a thoughtful discussion between Chair and Administrative Assistant will clarify comfort levels and appropriateness, and can identify alternative means of solving needs.

V. Inappropriate “other duties” and requests:

- Writing content for Website
- Creating webpages for faculty
- Inappropriate Course Scheduling: being asked to determine course offerings, assigning of instructor, and changing credit loads
- Working directly with toxic chemicals and materials
- Purchasing or picking up food for class events in response to faculty requests
- Planning the agenda for department meetings
- Chairing a department faculty meeting if the Chair can not be present
- Analyzing test scores

- Baking for department events or for classes
- Proctoring exams and make-up exams
- Advising students when faculty not available
- Entering grades for faculty members
- Confidential and/or Non-public documents should not be sent or received via FAX.
- Expectations of office and individual technology repair and technology trouble shooting. EX: diagnosing and actual repairing of equipment.
- Making sure the Xerox machine always has paper.
- Expectations of coffee machine maintenance, cleaning of refrigerator, sinks, dishes, and microwave.....

VI. TIPS for facilitating and sustaining a positive, mutually supportive, respectful, and professional work environment

- Be respectful and courteous
- Be aware of volume of work and priorities when making additional requests
- Be aware of time management, office hours, and multiple responsibilities when making a request.
- Communicate priorities and requests with reasonable advance time considerations
 - e.g. Social Sciences department policy requires a 3day window for requests from faculty
- Lead and delegate vs. micromanage
- Deal with faculty and student issues promptly
- Understand that there are USNH and PSU policies and procedures that must be followed
- Provide advance notice and timely communications to inform and communicate upcoming changes that will impact workflow and office management.
 - e.g. plans for an interim Chair or Program Coordinator, course cancellation notifications, course additions, UBER calendar deadlines, and Union-related procedures.
- If the Administrative Assistant works for more than one department:
 - Maintain cross-department communications between the chairs to assist with good work flow and reasonable workload
 - ONE evaluation only for a shared position
- Ask first regarding purchasing and travel policies and expenses
- Recommend weekly one-hour meeting between Chair and Administrative Assistant
- Work together and plan ahead for:
 - taking earned time and vacation time off
 - attending key meetings and/or committee meetings
 - attending workshops, professional development training, and courses
 - attending OS monthly meetings
 - attending Administrative Assistant working lunch meetings with Alice O'Connor (not counted as lunch)
 - Share your calendar with your Administrative Assistant (personal information can be blocked)
- Review workplace harassment policy and procedures
- Maintain good communication with your Administrative Assistant so that the chair and department needs, as well as the needs of your Assistant, are clear
- During annual performance review, consider changes and/or adjustments that may need to be made to position description

VII. Tips for NEW Chairs

Congratulations on your Department Chair appointment. You will now be working far more closely with your department's Administrative Assistant. Achieving the right mixture of delegation, trust, and rapport are vital to developing an effective, positive, and professional partnership. Here are some steps you can take to get this partnership off to the best start.

- Schedule time to meet with your administrative assistant. During your first week, set aside at least an hour to meet. This is the opportunity to review roles and responsibilities, clarify mutual expectations and needs, and establish preference for communications and meetings.
- Review the calendar and set an agreed upon meeting time for at least 30 minutes a week for the first eight weeks. It takes time to build rapport and get a clear channel of communications worked out.
- Confirm your respective preferred forms of communication: email, text, cell, written note, etc.
- Provide the names of people you want to be interrupted for, such as elderly parents, partner, University President, daycare provider, child's school, and which of those people have privileges to know your whereabouts and cell phone number.
- Discuss needs and expectations for preparation of budget reports, processing of purchases and contracts, and PSU need-to-know policies. Your Administrative Assistant is the expert in these areas.
- Establish the best method the Administrative Assistant should use to notify you that he or she will be out of the office or is running behind schedule and vice versa.
- Review the resume and position description for your Administrative Assistant
 - Discuss and review together. Become familiar with his or her professional experience and expertise.
 - Develop and discuss a list of tasks you can delegate. Start with just a few in the beginning and add on as you become more settled in the working relationship.
- Consider sharing calendar management and scheduling of meetings. This can be one of the biggest time savers for both of you. Be sure to confirm calendar changes via email or text and let the Administrative Assistant know whether he or she needs to notify the other party, update the calendar, or if you have already handled it.
- Don't wait to discuss something that is not working. Timely communication is essential. A transition period is always needed for new responsibilities and developing new working relationships.

VIII. TRAINING and Professional Development that can be provided by PSU

- Shared Drive, Moodle, and Mahara training and assistance
- Web maintenance training, review, and support
- New technology training, review, and support
- Banner finance training
- Banner student training (IT and Registrar)
- Complaints and Conflict Management
- Student training for Web maintenance
- Review of workplace harassment policy
- Strategic planning for selection, hiring, and allocation of work to student workers
- Other based on request