



COLLEGE OF SCIENCE

DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY & BIOCHEMISTRY

# New Graduate Student Handbook



College of Science

|   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
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| Assistant Dean                              | Dr. Gail Arnold     |

UTEP Graduate School

|                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|
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|                                 |                             |
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| Laboratory Coordinator          | Dr. Brenda Torres           |
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| Stockroom Manager               | Guillermo A. Campos         |



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## El Paso, Texas – “The Sun City”

Located at the foot of the Franklin Mountains, El Paso is on the U.S./Mexico border, in the farthest western part of Texas. The population is 680,000+ and is the 22<sup>nd</sup> largest city in the United States. Just across the border in Mexico is Ciudad Juárez with a population of 1.4 million.

Located in the Chihuahuan Desert, El Paso enjoys, on average, 302 days of sunshine per year with hot summers, low humidity, and cool to mild dry winters.

Places of interest include Scenic Drive, Franklin Mountains State Park, the El Paso Museum of Art, the El Paso Zoo, and a number of historic and cultural sites and neighborhoods.

### Fast Facts

|               |                                      |
|---------------|--------------------------------------|
| County:       | El Paso                              |
| Elevation:    | 3,740 ft (1,140 m)                   |
| Incorporated: | 1873                                 |
| Time Zone:    | Mountain Time Zone                   |
| Airport:      | El Paso International Airport        |
| Awards:       | All-American City Award (2010, 2018) |







COLLEGE OF SCIENCE  
DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY & BIOCHEMISTRY



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## General New Student Information

### Email Setup

- UTEP students are provided with a @miners.utep.edu email account
  - OneDrive, Calendars, and Contacts are also part of your account
- To configure your account, visit <https://newaccount.utep.edu>
- To access your @miners email account, log in at <my.utep.edu> and click on Student Email
- Call the HELP Desk at 915-747-HELP (4357) if you need assistance

### Miner Gold Card

- The Miner Gold Card is the official ID for faculty, staff and students at UTEP. It validates your institutional status at many on-campus and off-campus locations. The Miner Gold Card provides access to campus services, printing allocations, and more. Visit the [Miner Gold Card website](#) for more information.
- If you require electronic access to doors or buildings, you will use your Miner Gold Card for keyless entry once your Space Access Request has been processed through Facilities Services
- You will need valid, current photo identification in order to obtain your Miner Gold Card. The Miner Gold Card office is located in the Mike Loya Academic Services Bldg, Room 116
  - [How to get your Miner Gold Card](#)

### Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP)

Students in the University of Texas system who are taking credit hours are eligible to enroll in a Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP).

#### Graduate Student Employee (GSE)

- All new graduate students in our graduate program are eligible for the GSE plan, which comes at no cost to you
  - If you are appointed as a TA/RA, you will not have to pay the SHIP premium cost
- Information and how to enroll can be found on the [SHIP webpage](#)
- Domestic students are not required to enroll in a health insurance plan

#### International students

- International students are required to maintain medical, evacuation, and repatriation insurance coverage while enrolled at a UT System institution
- International students are automatically enrolled in the Graduate SHIP with cost of coverage included in the tuition and fee bill
  - **IMPORTANT:** While your initial appointment is being finalized by HR, you will be charged the Graduate SHIP premium of \$1,428 which is added to your tuition cost. Once your appointment is finalized, you qualify for the GSE plan and the premium charge will be reversed
  - You MUST Opt-In to the GSE plan here: <https://airtable.com/appvf6boiX0QosWkR/shratlY14AizmCqyM>.

## Placement Exams

Placement exams are administered the week before classes start.

- Placement Exams are administered in the following subjects: Organic Chemistry, Inorganic Chemistry, Biochemistry, Physical Chemistry, and Analytical Chemistry
- Placement Exams are used as an assessment tool only
  - Passing scores are 85% of the national average
- If you do not pass one more subjects, the graduate advisor may recommend that you take a developmental (undergraduate) course in that/those subject(s)

## Orientation

First Semester Graduate Experience (Graduate School)

- Should receive email notification from Graduate School when it is available through [Blackboard](#).
- Must be completed by all new graduate students

Community of Care (Compliance Requirement)

- Consists of several modules on topics including academic integrity and campus safety
- Must be completed by all new graduate students
- Available through [Miner Support](#)

Department of Chemistry & Biochemistry New Graduate Student Orientation

- Departmental orientation will be conducted the Thursday before classes start for the semester
- Will receive an email with the meeting location, time, and date of orientation along with any other important information you will need to know

## Training

Successful completion of Teaching Assistant Training and Safety Training is mandatory.

Both training sessions will be conducted during the Department New Student Orientation.

- Teaching Assistant (TA) Training
  - Conducted by Dr. Brenda Torres, Laboratory Coordinator
- [Laboratory Safety Training](#)
  - Conducted by UTEP's [Environmental Health and Safety Department \(EH&S\)](#)

## Advising/Registration

The Thursday before the semester begins, during Department orientation, you will be advised for courses based on course availability, your degree plan, and placement exam results. You will meet with a Graduate Advisor and finalize your courses.



## Access (key and electronic)

There are two types of access you may be granted depending on the type of lock(s) on your designated lab/office space: key access and electronic swipe access.

Steps to obtain access:

1. Your research advisor will submit an access request through the [Facilities Management Service Desk](#).
2. Once the request is approved, you can either pick up your key at the Access Control Shop (you will be notified of location and time) or you will be able to swipe your Miner Gold Card to enter the designated space.

**NOTE:** If you are issued a key, you are responsible for that key. If you obtain electronic access to a lab/office space, you will be responsible for making sure you do not lose your Miner Gold Card.

If you lose your Miner Gold Card and you have electronic access:

- You must notify your Research Advisor immediately
- You must notify the Department Chair immediately
- You must notify the Miner Gold Card Office immediately so they can deactivate the card
  - Call: 915-747-7334
  - Email: [minergold@utep.edu](mailto:minergold@utep.edu)
  - Location: Mike Loya Academic Services Building, Room 116
- You will have to pay a \$20 fee to get a replacement card
  - The charge can be added to your account where you may pay online at Pete's Payment Options with a credit or debit card, or you can pay with cash or check at the Cashier's located in the lobby of the Mike Loya Academic Services Building
- The access will be restored with your replacement card

If you lose your key:

- You must notify your Research Advisor immediately
- You must notify the Department Chair immediately
- You must notify Campus Police immediately
- A police report will be filed
- You may be held financially responsible for any re-keying costs as the Access Control Team will have to replace any locks associated with that key
- You will have to go through the steps to obtain access again to be issued a replacement key



## Health and Wellness

In addition to your Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP, information on pg 5), there are a number of resources available to students on and off the UTEP campus.

### UTEP Student Health and Wellness Center

- The Student Health and Wellness Center provides services such as general medical care, women's and men's wellness exams, nutrition services, and STD screenings. The center can also provide routine immunizations.
- Contact information:
  - Location: Union Building East, Ste 100
  - Phone: 915-747-5624
  - Email: [studenthealth@utep.edu](mailto:studenthealth@utep.edu)
  - Hours: Monday – Friday, 7:30 am – 12:30 pm, 1 pm – 4 pm
  - Website: <https://www.utep.edu/chs/shc/>

### UTEP Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

- CAPS offers high quality mental health services to students. This includes career counseling, psycho-educational workshops, individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, and professional training experiences.
- Contact Information:
  - Location: 202 Union West
  - Phone: 915-747-5302
  - Email: [caps@utep.edu](mailto:caps@utep.edu)
  - Website: <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/counsel/>

### Medical Emergencies

- **If you are having a medical emergency, call 9-1-1 IMMEDIATELY.**
  - You will need to provide as much information as possible and exactly where you are located
- If you require emergency medical treatment, you will be transported to the nearest hospital via ambulance

### Urgent Care Clinics

- Urgent Care Clinics, or Centers, offer immediate medical services for non-emergency, but urgent, minor illnesses and injuries
  - Easy access to medical care when your primary care physician is not available
- Urgent Care Clinics are generally on a walk-in basis, however you are able to make an appointment at some locations
- Many located throughout El Paso
  - Closest Urgent Care Clinic to UTEP is Southwest Urgent Care at 2030 N Mesa St, El Paso, TX 79902 (approximately 5 min. walk from campus)



## Off-Campus Medical Care

- If you have health insurance through UTEP (SHIP GSE), you can search for a provider here:  
<https://www.bcbstx.com/find-care/find-a-doctor-or-hospital>

## Student Recreation Center

- The Department of Recreational Sports provides access to programs and services to UTEP students via the Recreation Center. There is an open recreation space, pool, sand court, and more.
- You will need your Miner Gold Card to enter the facility
- Contact Information:
  - Location: 3450 Sun Bowl Drive
  - Phone: 915-747-5103
  - Email: [recsports@utep.edu](mailto:recsports@utep.edu)
  - Hours: [Varies per semester](#)
  - Website: <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/rsd/>



## Housing and Transportation

### Living On-Campus

- There are three (3) apartment-style residence halls available on campus through the UTEP Department of Housing and Residence Life
- The residence halls include community spaces for studying and recreation as well as private mailboxes.
- There are several floor plans available with two- and four- bedroom units
- Living on-campus has advantages; you would not spend as much time and money on gas and a commute
- The three residence halls are: Miner Village, Miner Heights, and Miner Canyon
- Floor plans and rates are available here: <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/housing/future-residents/residence-floor-plans.html>
- Contact Information:
  - Location: Boquillas Hall, 3490 Sun Bowl Drive
  - Phone: 915-747-5352
  - Email: [housing@utep.edu](mailto:housing@utep.edu)
  - Website: <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/housing/>

### Living Off-Campus

- There are many housing options available off-campus. Some are within walking or biking distance
- Typically, getting personal references for your housing options is recommended. There are many things to consider when looking for off-campus housing including, but not limited to, safety, distance to campus, and access to necessities

### Campus Parking

- If you have your own vehicle and will be using it to commute to campus, you will need to purchase a parking permit to park on UTEP property from the UTEP Department of Parking and Transportation.
  - If you park in a UTEP designated parking lot/area without a permit, you will be ticketed and fined
- Permit prices vary. Current student permit prices are here: <https://www.utep.edu/parking-and-transportation/parking/student-permits.html>.
- Visitor Parking:
  - There are several parking options for UTEP visitors. The visitor lot closest to the Chemistry & Computer Science Building is at the Mike Loya Academic Services Building. All visitor parking lots are pay lots. Most accept credit cards.
  - Locations: <https://www.utep.edu/parking-and-transportation/parking/visitors-parking.html>
- Contact Information:
  - Location: 3737 N Mesa Ave, Ste A
  - Phone: 915-747-5724
  - Email: [parking@utep.edu](mailto:parking@utep.edu)
  - Website: <https://www.utep.edu/parking-and-transportation/>



## Miner Metro

- Miner Metro is a free shuttle service provided by UTEP to faculty, staff, students, and visitors.
- Shuttles run the perimeter of campus as well as to- and from- remote and perimeter parking lots.
- Service is available Monday through Friday when classes are in session during the fall, spring, and summer semesters.
  - Shuttles do not operate during intersessions, University holidays, minimesters, or Wintermester.
- Information about Miner Metro including routes and times are located here: <https://www.utep.edu/parking-and-transportation/transportation/miner-metro.html>

## Public Transportation

- Public transportation is available to most areas in the El Paso area via the Sun Metro bus system.
  - The Sun Metro bus system website contains a trip planner, fees, and a quick route finder: <http://www.sunmetro.net/>
  - Brio is a Rapid Transit System (RTS) that operates in the UTEP area via the Mesa Corridor route: <http://sunmetrobrío.net/>



## Safety

El Paso is one of the safest big cities in America, however precautions should be taken to ensure personal safety.

### Safety Tips

- Be aware of your surroundings. Pay attention to suspicious-looking persons or activities.
- Walk with other people, especially at night and especially when in an unfamiliar area.
- Lock the doors of your room/apartment/house. Do not allow strangers in your home. Ask for identification from service workers before allowing them inside.
- Keep personal items such as purses, wallets, jewelry out of sight and locked away if possible. Do not leave personal items unattended.
- Keep track of your banking accounts. Do not allow anyone access to your debit/credit cards. Do not keep large sums of cash on your person.
- Report and crime or suspicious activity to campus police if it occurred on campus or to the El Paso Police Department if it occurred outside of the UTEP campus.
- Go through the Crime Prevention tips on the UTEP Police Department website
  - <https://www.utep.edu/police/safety-awareness/index1.html>.
- Beware of scam emails.
  - There are several ways to detect and protect yourself against scam/phishing emails to your UTEP email account. If you see any suspicious email, please forward to [security@utep.edu](mailto:security@utep.edu).
  - <https://www.utep.edu/information-resources/iso/security-awareness/how-do-i-protect-myself/protection-from-phishing.html>

### UTEP Police Department

- The UTEP Police Department provides a safe environment and enforces local and state laws on the UTEP campus. The UTEP Police Department responds to accidents and medical emergencies on campus as well.
- Safety Escort Service
  - Contact University Police for on-campus safety escort to your vehicle or bus stop: 915-747-5611
- Lost and Found
  - Lost and found items are submitted to University Police and are stored for a minimum of 90 days
    - [lostandfound@utep.edu](mailto:lostandfound@utep.edu) or call 915-747-6640/915-747-6338.
    - Website: <https://www.utep.edu/police/police-services/lost-and-found.html>
- Contact Information:
  - Location: 3118 Sun Bowl Drive (next to Facility Services)
  - Phone: 915-747-5611 (Dial 911 if emergency)
  - Email: [police@utep.edu](mailto:police@utep.edu)
  - Website: <https://www.utep.edu/police/>



## Miner Alert

- The Miner Alert system is UTEP's emergency alert notification system. It is used to immediately contact you during urgent or emergency situations. It will include useful information and updates via text messages to your email account and cell phone.
- To register your device: <https://www.utep.edu/police/police-services/miner-alert.html>

## Concealed Carry Policy

- Individuals with a Texas concealed handgun license are allowed to carry concealed handguns on public university campuses throughout the state.
- Laboratories are considered Exclusion Zones, which means concealed handguns are not allowed in those areas. Exclusion Zones: <https://www.utep.edu/campuscarry/exclusion-zones/index.html>
- Website: <https://www.utep.edu/campuscarry/>

## Emergencies

- If you find yourself having a medical emergency or in a dangerous situation that requires immediate attention/help, dial 9-1-1 IMMEDIATELY from wherever you are.
- Dialing 9-1-1 will connect you to a dispatcher who will ask you about your current situation and location. Try to be as accurate as possible so emergency services can get to you as fast as possible.

## On-Campus Resources

### On-Campus Dining

- There are several dining options on-campus available in various locations.
  - UTEP Student Union Building (Union East, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor)
    - Pick 'N Shovel (all-you-can-eat buffet, rotating menu)
    - Panera Bread
    - Hissho Sushi
    - Mein Bowl
    - Pizza Hut Express
    - Pick N Go
    - Jamba Juice (Union East, 1<sup>st</sup> floor)
  - Chemistry & Computer Science Building
    - Starbucks (1<sup>st</sup> floor)
  - El Paso Natural Gas Center (across from Library)
    - Chick-fil-A
    - El Sazon Minero
    - Café a la Cart
    - Sandella's
  - University Bookstore Building (2201 Sun Bowl Dr, behind Hudspeth Hall)
    - Einstein Bros. Bagels
  - Library
    - Texas Western Café
- To find what is currently open and locations, visit <https://utepdining.sodexomyway.com/>

### Help Desk

- Contact the Help Desk for any technology support. The Help Desk can help you with your account information (email, blackboard), issues with printing, software, and internet/wifi.
- Contact Information:
  - Location: UTEP Library Room 300
  - Phone: 915-747-4357 (747-HELP)
  - Email: [helpdesk@utep.edu](mailto:helpdesk@utep.edu)
  - Website: <https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/>

### Library

- A wide range of services are available including the ability to check books out, access to study areas and conference rooms, interlibrary loans, and computer labs.
- Contact Information:
  - Location: 1900 Wiggins Way (inside campus)
  - Phone: 915-747-5643
  - Email: [ask@utep.libanswers.com](mailto:ask@utep.libanswers.com)
  - Website: <https://www.utep.edu/library/>

## Printing

- You have several on-campus options for printing solutions. Each student has a printing account, in which a monetary allotment is added at the beginning of each semester.
- Printing Information: [https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/servicecatalog/pri\\_studentprinting.html](https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/servicecatalog/pri_studentprinting.html)
- Computer Printing Lab Locations:  
[https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/servicecatalog/comp\\_computerprintinglabs.html](https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/servicecatalog/comp_computerprintinglabs.html)

## Mail Services

- The UTEP Mail Center is a full service mail center that offers shipping and additional services for all students, faculty, and staff.
- Private Mailbox Rental
  - You can rent a Post Office Box (P.O. Box) located in the Union Building East. Rates are \$75 per year (August to August). This allows you to keep your home address private while receiving mail and you are able to receive mail without leaving campus. They can accept packages on your behalf from USPS, FedEx, UPS, and DHL.
- Outgoing mail
  - You can send letters and packages through mail services. Rates are the same as USPS.
- Contact Information:
  - Location: Union Building East, 1<sup>st</sup> floor
  - Phone: 915-747-5677
  - Email: [mailservices@utep.edu](mailto:mailservices@utep.edu)
  - Website: <https://www.utep.edu/vpba/printing-copy-mail/mail-services/>

## UTEP Bookstore

- At the Bookstore, you can buy your class textbooks, classroom supplies, UTEP gear, and more. The bookstore is open year-round.
- Contact Information:
  - Location: 2201 Sun Bowl Dr.
  - Phone: 915-747-5594
  - Email: [utep@bkstr.com](mailto:utep@bkstr.com)
  - Website: <https://www.bkstr.com/texaselpasostore/home>

## Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS)

- The UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) provides/coordinates support for students with disabilities.
- Contact Information:
  - Location: Union Building East, Room 106
  - Phone: 915-747-5148
  - Email: [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu)
  - Website: <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/cass/>

## Meal Plans

- Meal plans are available for on-campus dining. You can use your meal plan to enjoy a variety of foods at the Pick 'n Shovel with an all-you-can-eat buffet and rotating menu.
- Once you purchase a meal plan, you will be able to “swipe” your card at the entrance of Pick 'n Shovel and enter to eat.
- Meal plans prices are per semester. You can purchase a meal plan through the Miner Gold Card Office.
- Contact Information:
  - Location: Miner Gold Card Office (Mike Loya Academic Service Bldg, Room 116)
  - Phone: 915-747-7334
  - Email: [minergold@utep.edu](mailto:minergold@utep.edu)
  - Website: <https://www.utep.edu/vpba/miner-gold-card/meal-plans/meal-plans.html>

## Title IX

- The University of Texas at El Paso is committed to maintaining a learning and working environment that is free from discrimination based on sex in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any federally funded educational programs or activities.
- Title IX protects students, employees, applicants for admission and employment, and other persons from all forms of sex discrimination including sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, and acts of sexual violence. Sexual violence may include rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, sexual coercion, stalking, and relationship violence. Title IX prohibits institutions from excluding, separating, denying benefits, or otherwise treating individuals differently on the basis of sex. Sex based discrimination is prohibited at UTEP both by law and by University and UT System policies.
- For additional information or questions, please contact the Title IX Coordinator, who can be reached by phone at 915-747-8358, by email at [titleix@utep.edu](mailto:titleix@utep.edu), or by mail at 500 W. University Ave, El Paso, TX 79968, Kelly Hall, Room 223. In addition to or in lieu of contacting the Title IX Coordinator, inquiries relating to Title IX may also be sent to the Assistant Secretary of the Office for Civil Rights.



## Local Resources

### Grocery Stores

- There are many grocery stores in El Paso. There are many stores with more general grocery/merchandise and some are more specialized.
- Here is a small list of grocery stores:
  - Albertson's – 310 N Mesa St
  - Sprout's Farmers Market – 655 Sunland Park Dr #B
  - Vista Quality Market – 3920 Doniphan Dr
  - Walmart Neighborhood Market – 1110 Sunland Park Dr
- You can also ask your colleagues/friends for recommendations on where to shop for particular goods.

### Superstores

- There are markets referred to as Superstores that have a broad inventory of goods and wide range of products including groceries, home goods, clothing, electronics, office supplies, etc.
- Here are two examples:
  - Walmart Supercenter – 7555 N Mesa St (and approximately 7 other locations across El Paso)
  - Target – 801 Sunland Park Dr (and approximately 3 other locations across El Paso)

### Malls and Outlets

- [Bassett Place](#) – 6101 Gateway Blvd West
- [Cielo Vista Mall](#) – 8401 Gateway Blvd West
- [Fountains at Farah](#) – 8889 Gateway Blvd West
- Las Palmas Marketplace – 1327 George Dieter Dr
- [Outlet Shoppes at El Paso](#) – 7051 S. Desert Blvd
- [Sunland Park Mall](#) – 750 Sunland Park Dr
- [TI:ME at Montecillo](#) – 4935 N Mesa St
- [West Towne Marketplace](#) – 1539 N Desert Blvd

### Restaurants/Off-Campus Dining

- There are many restaurants in El Paso offering a variety of food that can appeal to everyone.
- Restaurants with Mexican food are a specialty in El Paso because of its proximity to the border and the prevalent Hispanic culture.
- To view restaurants in El Paso along with reviews, you can visit [Yelp](#).
- There are also a number of fast food and other eateries within walking distance to UTEP.
  - Map on page 20.



## Things to Do

- There is a multitude of things to do, attractions, and events in El Paso. You can visit the [Visit El Paso](#) webpage for a complete list of attractions and events.
- Museums:
  - [El Paso Museum of Art](#) – 1 Arts Festival Plaza
  - [El Paso Museum of Archaeology Wilderness Park](#) – 4301 Woodrow Bean Transmountain Rd
  - [El Paso Museum of History](#) – 510 N. Santa Fe St
  - [Centennial Museum](#) – on UTEP campus
  - [The Lhaxhang Cultural Exhibit](#) – on UTEP Campus
- Entertainment:
  - [Adventure Zone](#) – 251 E. Redd Rd
  - [El Paso Chihuahuas Baseball](#) – 1 Ballpark Plaza
  - [El Paso Locomotive FC](#) – 1 Ballpark Plaza
  - [El Paso Zoo](#) – 4001 East Paisano Dr
  - [Top Golf](#) – 365 Vin Rambla Dr
- Historical and Cultural Sites:
  - [El Paso Historic Mission Trail](#) – 9065 Alameda Ave
  - [San Jacinto Plaza](#) – Downtown El Paso
  - [Magoffin Home State Historic Site](#) – 120 Magoffin Ave

## Get to Know the Area

There are many resources located within walking distance to UTEP.

[Google Maps](#)



\*\*Restaurants subject to change. This is as of June 2026.



## Contacts

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