CSUN New Faculty Survival Guide
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I Just Accepted My CSUN Offer as a Tenure-Track Faculty Member… Now What?

You submitted an application, you gave an amazing interview, you received your “offer letter” from Faculty Affairs and now you are ready to start a new exciting career at CSUN. CONGRATULATION! Securing a tenure-track position in Southern California is a wonderful milestone!

**Human Resources**

Sign and return your contract as soon as possible! Once in the system, you must ask to set-up the following:
- CSUN email account
- Login for Solar (Administration Website)
- Moodle (Learning Management System for Classroom)

**Office of Human Resources**

18111 Nordhoff Street  
Mail Code 8229  
Northridge, CA 91330-8229  
University Hall 165  
Phone: (818) 677-2101  
Fax: (818) 677-7863
Seek information about:

- Payroll schedule
- Employment opportunities
- All-important holiday schedule
- Retirement
- Health insurance
- Investments

Get your Photo ID Card
Faculty can obtain their university ID card from University Cash Services.

Get your Parking Pass
You must have a valid parking decal displayed in your car on the first day of the semester in order to park in the CSUN faculty lots. The decal may be purchased by:

- Mail (Mail-In Instructions)
- Cash Services Office in the Student Services Building.
- Payroll deduction (this must be done in person.)

For further information go to the web site at http://www-admn.csun.edu/dps/parking/.

Get your User ID and Password
Your CSUN User ID and Password will be issued when you sign–in with Human Resources.

If you have not already done so, bring your completed New Employee Sign–In Form to the Human Resources office located in Room 165 of the University Hall building.

The sign–in hours at Human Resources are Monday through Friday, 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

- Visit the CSUN Login page, and enter your User ID and Initial Password.
- Follow the subsequent instructions to activate your User ID and Password.

Figure out Temporary Health Insurance Needs
Since your CSUN health benefits do not start until roughly a couple months after the semester begins, determine/arrange alternative health insurance coverage for you (and your family).

New Faculty Orientation & Programs
CSUN highly values newly hired faculty and is seriously invested in ensuring your success as a faculty member. Each year CSUN hosts a formal New Faculty Orientation event the week before class starts, near the first day of the official faculty contract (fall semester). As of Fall 2012, the Faculty Development is dedicated to expand ongoing support for first year tenure track faculty. This program includes a faculty director who organizes sessions/workshops and informal coffee hours just for the first year faculty to gather. New faculty, who take advantage of this program find that it aids their transition to the overall campus. Check out the various resources at our website: http://www.csun.edu/facdev/
Preparing for Classes

Setting Up Your Office
- Get a key to your office.
- Ask about keys to other available to faculty in your department (copy room, etc.).
- Make sure your office is vacated. Some faculty did not have their office ready until after classes were in session.
- Note that a printer may not be standard office equipment.
- Make sure your campus extension is correct.
- Make sure you have a phone set up with voicemail.
- Make sure computer situation and all software is set up.
- Call IT technician to help you with any new downloads.
- Get your copy code and what the procedures are (e.g., does the department cover cost of exams?).
- Remember to find out if there is a copy limit.

Getting Access to Moodle
- Make sure you have access to Moodle.
- Make sure your department chair or administrative assistant has connected you to your assigned courses with your name as the instructor and not “staff”.

Posting to Moodle
- Post your syllabus to Moodle.
- Find the “eyeball” icon to help you control what is visible to the class.
- Find the “forum” function to help you send an email to your entire class. There is a 30-minute delay incase you want to edit your message.

CSUN Solar is where you:
- Access your class rosters.
- Give out permission numbers for those who want to add the class.
  - You have to ask the solar system to first “generate” permission numbers; once you get the numbers you can distribute them to students to add your classes.
- Post student’s final grades.
Specific Course Preparation
Prepare for your class as early as possible, but be flexible.
- Complete your syllabus.
- Get sample syllabi from your department secretary.
  - Note that it is required to list the student learning objectives (SLOs) that match the course catalogue. Contact your department for details.
- Date your syllabus if you make any changes throughout semester.
  - Remember that your syllabus is a contract and can protect you against student complaints.

Contact your department about:
- What classes you’ll be teaching.
- What the schedule is for the semester.
- How to order your books.
  - Check with the bookstore about whether all required materials are fully stocked.
- Place your textbook on reserve at the library
  - Know there is a college designated Librarian to help you.
- How many students are in your class.

Preparing your Syllabus
To better inform students about the requirements, content and methodology of the university’s undergraduate curricula, all faculty teaching undergraduate courses will distribute a written syllabus to each student in the course and/or post it on-line no later than the second week of classes.

The syllabus should contain the following information:
- Course objective(s).
- A brief list or summary of topics or projects covered.

Course requirements including:
- Methods of evaluation.
- Tentative due dates for major assignments and/or exams.
- Grading criteria including whether or not the plus/minus system will be used.

Contact information:
- Instructor’s name
- Office hours
- Office location
- Campus phone number
**Classroom Equipment**

- Find out if you need a code to get in your class.
- Get a key for the “black box” that should be in every classroom and have a computer projector.
  - However, there are classrooms that have empty boxes, so check every classroom you’re in for technology.
- Find out if you need a podium key (particularly for large lecture rooms).
  - Can contain projectors, VCRs, or other equipment.

**Media Library** (ext. 2211) will deliver films, videos, and other media.

- Equipment can be picked up from the office on the second floor of the east wing of the Oviatt Library.
- Media Equipment Services (ext. 6363) is on the ground level of the Oviatt Library.

Campus-wide Computer Labs may be reserved for classes. Reservations may be online. Many departments and colleges have their own computer labs, which may be used for classes.

**Classroom Guest Speakers**

- Specialized Librarians, who cover your subject matter, will give library tours or talks to students about research (ext. 2277).
- Speakers are also available from Counseling Services (ext. 2366).
- The Writing Center offers talks as well (ext. 2033).
- Distinguished Visitors Program (ext. 2138).
For a **General Education course**, the syllabus should describe how it meets the currently approved goals of the General Education section in which it resides.

For an **upper-division General Education course**, the syllabus should include a statement that informs students that the course is an upper-division General Education course and that it requires completion of writing assignments totaling a minimum of 2,500 words.

**Grading Policy**

**Basis of grading:** Students may take a class for a regular letter grade or the option of Credit/No-Credit. All General Education courses must be taken for a letter grade. The University uses a combination of the following grading options: A-F letter grading: A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D- and F. Grades A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D- indicate passing grades; F indicates failure. Faculty defines the grading criteria for all courses. Any changes in grading policies should be provided in writing to students before such changes are implemented.

**Incomplete:** It is up to the instructor to decide whether to allow an incomplete. The student should be passing at the time of the decision. All grades must be complete in the year following the end of the semester of the assigned Incomplete.

**Cheating:** There is a very clear and extensive section on the University’s policy on cheating and plagiarism in the University Catalog.

**Cheating and Plagiarism**

California State University believes strongly in academic honesty and integrity. Plagiarism and academic cheating are, therefore, prohibited.

Academic dishonesty cases that occur in the classroom shall be handled by faculty members.

**Procedure for Reporting Academic Dishonesty**

- Complete a form that identifies the student who was found responsible
- The general nature of the offense
- The action taken
- A recommendation as to whether or not additional action should be considered by the campus judicial affairs office.

The penalty for academic dishonesty can vary from:

- Receiving a lower or failing grade for a particular assignment
- Failing grade in the course
- Suspension or expulsion from the University.
Students’ Special Needs
For information on accommodating students with disabilities in the learning environment faculty can contact the Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) office. As a resource to assist faculty, the DRES department has produced a "Faculty Guide to Accommodating Students with Disabilities." Faculty are invited to contact DRES with any questions or concerns regarding these instructional guidelines.

Sample Statement to Include in Syllabus: "If you have a disability and need accommodations, please register with the Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) office or the National Center on Deafness (NCOD). The DRES office is located in Bayramian Hall, room 110 and can be reached at (818) 677-2684. NCOD is located on Bertrand Street in Jeanne Chisholm Hall and can be reached at (818) 677-2611. If you would like to discuss your need for accommodations with me, please contact me to set up an appointment."

Student Enrollment and Advisement
Late registration/schedule adjustment is the time between the first instructional weekday of an academic term and the last day to late register and/or change academic schedule (i.e., add, drop, swap classes, or change grading basis) online through myNorthridge. Permission numbers are required to add all classes as soon as the wait listing period has ended.

Enrollment Eligibility:
Academic standing determines a student's eligibility to enroll in the University through the regular enrollment process. Academic standing is defined by the student's Grade Point Average (GPA).
- Students in **good academic standing** are eligible to enroll in the University when they maintain the minimum GPA in both CSUN coursework and cumulative total GPA for their class level.
- Students on **probation** are also eligible to enroll in the University through the regular enrollment process.
- Students who are **disqualified** or under disciplinary suspension are not considered in good standing and therefore are not routinely eligible to enroll. They may enroll in CSUN courses only through Open University in the Tseng College.

For more information, see the Academic Load Regulations and Academic Probation and Disqualification topics on this page, the current University Catalog topics on Academic Standing and Categories of Disqualification, and Graduate Studies Policies.
Check-list for the First Few Weeks

☐ Be patient. Give yourself plenty of time to prepare.
   ○ You may find that uploading something that should take only a minute takes 20 minutes, because you had to learn something new.

☐ Have a backup plan for technology issues.
   ○ Know that there is a phone in each classroom you can use to get help with technology.

☐ Have a parking plan (e.g., if Lot X is full, I will part in Lot Y).

☐ Arrive 15 minutes early to class to get your bearings.

☐ Note that during the first 2 days of class, you may have “crashers”.
   ○ These students want to join your already-full class and want a permission number to join your class. Ask your department about their policy of permission numbers.

☐ Be very friendly with your department secretary because he/she can answer many questions about enrollment and what forms are necessary for various procedures.

☐ Do not be afraid to ask for clarification.

☐ Know that students can add and drop your class until the 3rd week of classes.
   ○ With the chair’s approval, some students may be added/dropped in the 5th week.

☐ Check your class size.
Questions to Ask Your Department Chair

Your Department Chair’s role is to assist you during this transitional period. However, keep in mind they are a faculty member as well who likely has teaching & research obligations as well. To aid your Department Chair in effectively developing a strong mentor-mentee relationship, consider the following questions below and plan to ask questions in blocks of time (vs. popping in to ask each individual question).

Also keep in mind that the department administrative assistant(s) are likely able to answer some of these questions too. Developing a positive relationship with all staff members in your department is critically important since they serve in a critical gateway position to many of tasks you will need accomplished.

You will want to have a discussion with your department chair regarding the specific expectations department faculty can expect from department staff in general. For instance some departments with many staff members can request staff members to make photocopies for their courses; however, in different departments some faculty requests of office staff are less realistic (due to resources, time, or number of staff members). Just have a conversation about the specific office culture you are now joining.
Grading Policy
- Is there a department grading policy?
- What is the acceptable range of a class GPA or pass/fail range?

Add/Drop Class Policy
- Policy/procedure for adding students?
- Can you describe how the waitlist system works in solar?
- What is the policy for dropping students from class at various times during the semester?

Classroom Preparation
- Is there a department policy on syllabi?
- Are there sample syllabi that are indicative of what is normally expected of students in this type of course?
- What is the department procedure/etiquette for getting tests typed and duplicated?
- What is the department procedure/etiquette for making copies?
- What is my responsibility for arranging for coverage for my classes in case of an unpredicted absence?

Help Preparing for Class
- What clerical help is available, if any from office staff?
- Are teaching assistants available? If so, what is the procedure for requesting a TA?

Help with Students
- What do I do if a student is a behavior problem in class?
- What do I do if a student is injured in class
**Class Schedule**
- What am I scheduled to teach in the spring semester?
- How is the class schedule established?
- How do I apply to teach in Winter Session and/or Summer Session?
- How does the department decide which faculty are allowed/expected to teach Winter/Summer courses?

**Office Hours**
- What is the policy regarding office hours?
- If I have a Monday/Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday teaching schedule, am I expected to be on campus one or more of the other weekdays? What if I teach three days per week?

**Faculty Resources**
- What computer facilities are available to me from the department, college, and university?
- Is there petty cash reimbursement?
- Can I request new or additional instructional equipment?
- What is the department policy for asking for research equipment or funds?
- Is there money for professional travel to conferences? How do I apply for it?
- What intradepartmental, college, or university grants are available to me?
- Can you suggest other faculty in the department who could mentor me?
**Teaching Expectations**

- In what areas am I expected to advise students?
- Who can be assigned to mentor me about advising?
- What are the department’s expectations of me this year and in the subsequent years regarding:
  - Teaching
  - Advisement
  - Department/College meetings
  - Committee work
  - Curricular Improvement
  - Research or creative activity
  - Extra-curricular/student activities

**Professional Development**

- What are the department’s policies for retention, tenure, and promotion? Are there separate College level personnel expectations?
- What is the department deadline for my Professional Information File (PIF) next year.

**Class Visits and Evaluations**

- Know that your department chair is expected to complete a class visit by the end of the year.
- A personnel committee may also evaluate you in your department.
- Make sure you know what the rating criteria are and work with your department to schedule dates.
- Know that student evaluations happen near the end of the semester. Ask your department when you can expect them.
- In 2013, new faculty received a Personal Information File (PIF) organizational binder during NFO: Part 2 to help navigate the steps in being reviewed for retention.
Moving to Los Angeles/Southern California?

How to acquire official documents?

- Social Security Card:
  - 9168 De Soto Ave, Chatsworth, CA 91311 Ph: 1-800-772-1213
- California Service of Immigration and Naturalization Services
  - 300 North Los Angeles St. Los Angeles, CA 90012
- California Driver’s License:
  - California Department of Motor Vehicles Ph: 1-800-777-0133
- Visa Information:
  - [http://www.csun.edu/international/faculty/](http://www.csun.edu/international/faculty/)

Where to live?

- Faculty Housing has a long waiting list. If you are serious about faculty housing, you may need to rent a place with a 1-, 3-, or 9-month lease in case space becomes available.
- Deposits to hold range from $500-$3000.
  - Note that you may lose your hold (but have your deposit refunded) if landlords want to rent the place to someone else who is willing to move in earlier. Have a backup plan.
Research where you want to live and plan in advance:
  o Make a trip beforehand if you can.
  o Use Westside rentals, which is a website where landlords post available housing: http://www.westsiderentals.com/.
  o Do not sign a lease until you have seen the place and have a backup plan.
  o Check all appliances. Refrigerators, washer dryer, dishwashers, etc are not standard in the apartment.
  o Check to see what utilities you must pay. Water, gas, trash, electricity, etc., is not standard in the apartment.
  o Parking: Two-bedroom apartments do not necessarily come with 2 parking spots. Some neighborhoods need parking passes to park on the street.
  o Note that it is not standard to have storage beyond the space available in the apartment.
  o Try to find housing away from major freeways (e.g., 405) because traffic backs up. However, housing off the 101 and 118 freeways are generally good.
  o Once you find a place to live—unpack!
  o Keep in mind that the “expected” arrival date of moving trucks is unreliable.
  o Make sure your furniture arrives before school starts

What to do before coming to CSUN

If you are moving:
  □ Check with your College Dean on what can be paid up front and how much support you can get.
  □ Have your books and office-related boxes sent directly to your new office (instead of your new home)

If you have children, check out school districts and academic calendars.
  o You may have to move earlier to register with schools. Note that you may not be able to register your child until you have a lease. Unfortunately some schools in the valley have waiting lists or lotteries in deciding who is accepted; proof of where you live is required in this process.
  o While schools outline specific “required” vaccines your children will need (e.g., tuberculosis) before starting school (with evidence from your doctor), California does permit exemptions to immunizations requirements (http://www.shotsforschool.org/immunizationlaws/).
  o Helpful websites:
    o www.greatschools.net
    o http://notebook.lausd.net/portal/page?_pageid=33,47493&_dad=ptl&_schema=PTL_EP
Around Northridge

Transportation/Traffic

- Check with the Department of Motor vehicles regarding when you need to register your car and avoid fees: [http://www.dmv.ca.gov/vr/vr.htm](http://www.dmv.ca.gov/vr/vr.htm)
- Research your traffic routes to and from your office
- Ask other faculty about where they park. Note that faculty are not allowed to park in parking structures.
- Avoid the 405 freeway if possible, especially early morning or mid-day.
  - However, if you’re living south of Northridge, traffic typically is not bad because people tend to live in the valley (Northridge) and drive to the city (Los Angeles), so the worse traffic going south in the morning and north in the evening.
- Public transportation is not as efficient as you will assume with a large metropolitan city.
  - Taking a bus from LA may take up to 2 hours (using 2 buses and a train). If you don’t have a car, you may want to living within walking/biking distance.
- Know that time for travel according to Google maps should be disregarded.
  - You will **always** have traffic. It may take 30 minutes to go 4 miles on surface streets or 30 minutes to go 20 miles on the freeway.
Driving Directions

From CA 118 Westbound
Exit CA 118 at Reseda Blvd and turn right. Travel 200 yards on Rinaldi to Reseda Blvd. Turn right on Reseda and travel 2.5 miles south to Prairie Street. Turn left and travel one-and-a-half blocks to information booth on the left.

From CA 118 Eastbound
Exit CA 118 at Reseda Blvd. Turn right on Reseda and travel 2.5 miles south to Prairie Street. Turn left and travel one-and-a-half blocks to information booth on the left.

From Interstate 405 Southbound
Exit Interstate 405 at Nordhoff St. and turn right. Travel 3.2 miles to Zelzah Ave. Turn right on Zelzah. Proceed through the light to parking lot G4 on the left. Information Booth is located in the lot.

From Interstate 405 Northbound
Exit Interstate 405 at Nordhoff St. and turn left. Travel 3.2 miles to Zelzah Ave. Turn right on Zelzah. Proceed through the light to parking lot G4 on the left. Information Booth is located in the lot.

From US 101 Westbound
Exit US 101 at Reseda Blvd and turn right. Travel 4.5 miles, past Nordhoff Street to Prairie Street. Turn right and travel one-and-a-half blocks to information booth on the left.

From US 101 Eastbound
Exit US 101 at Reseda Blvd and turn left. Travel 4.5 miles, past Nordhoff Street to Prairie Street. Turn right and travel one-and-a-half blocks to information booth on the left.
Where to eat?

On-Campus
On-campus food stations are available, along with a Subway, Jamba Juice, etc. The University Club—A non-membership restaurant for lunch, which has rooms that can be booked for meetings and dinners.

Off-Campus

Acapulco 9400 Reseda Bl.
Alessio Restaurant 9725 Reseda Bl.
Brent’s Deli 19565 Parthenia Bl.
Chili’s Grill and Bar 9200 Reseda Bl.
Claim Jumper Restaurant 9429 Tampa Ave.
El Torito Mexican Restaurant and Cantina 8855 Tampa Ave.
Emle’s Restaurant 9250 Reseda Bl.
Falafel Palace 9255 Reseda Bl.
Hot Wok Café 9135 Reseda Bl.
King’s Burgers 9345 Reseda Bl.
Lum-Ka-Naad Thai Restaurant 8910 Reseda Bl.
Mandarian Deli Restaurant 9305 Reseda Bl.
Maria’s Italian Kitchen 9161 Reseda Bl.
Monster Thai 9545 Reseda Bl.
Pieology Pizzeria 9118 Reseda Bl.
Romano’s Macaroni Grill 19400 Plummer St.
Yard House 9301 Tampa Ave.
How to travel?
- Metrolink—Take the train to campus.
- Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority—There’s always the bus.

Where to bank?
Matadors Federal Credit Union: A full service credit union
Located at 9401 Reseda Blvd., Northridge, CA 91324.

What to read?
- Daily News: A San Fernando Valley based paper.
- LA Times: The primary Los Angeles newspaper.
- LA Weekly: A free alternative paper.
- CSUN Today: The current electronic version of all CSUN news. However there is a tab especially for faculty & staff: http://csuntoday.csun.edu/category/faculty-and-staff-news/
- Daily Sundial: A newspaper published by students at CSUN.

What to listen to?
KCSN 88.5 FM—The campus-based radio station at CSUN.
KFWB 980 and KNX 1070—Two all-news radio stations.
Grants

The Office of Research and Sponsored Projects can assist you in identifying funding opportunities based on your areas of interest and expertise. You may contact our staff grant writer, Dr. Shelley Bartenstein, at shelley.bartenstein@csun.edu to set up a meeting time. She will work with you to find funding sources, as well as potential collaborators.

In addition, you can access two services through our website, InfoEd SPIN and GENIUS/SMARTS, that provide access to funding opportunities.

1. The SPIN database can provide an immediate result from search parameters you enter.
2. GENIUS/SMARTS service allows you to set up a profile and receive automatic emails from the InfoEd database.

Also provided are links to federal, state, and local government agencies offering grant and contract announcements, as well as links to specific types of funding opportunities such as federal equipment programs and young investigator/junior faculty programs.

Check with your college dean about college research funds.
Frequently Asked Questions

1. **When does my insurance coverage start?**
   a. Insurance does **not** start on your official start date in August. Check to see if you need to purchase COBRA or other insurance for that first month.

2. **When will I receive my first paycheck?**
   a. Know that your first paycheck is not issued until October 1st.

3. **What is the local temperature?**
   a. The temperature in the valley is different from Los Angeles. There can be as much as a 15-degree difference, with the valley being more extreme (hotter or colder).
   b. Don’t throw away your winter jackets.
   c. Wear layers
   d. Rain – it doesn’t rain often, but when it does, people forget how to drive. Driving in the rain in LA is like driving snow anywhere else.
   e. Wind – the Santa Ana winds are quite strong during XX.

4. **What should I focus on my first semester?**
   a. For your first month, **focus on classes**. Be protective of your time and commitments to committees. You are not expected to do everything your first year. It’s OK to say no.
   b. However, if your Department Chair, Dean, Provost, or President invites you to something, you should probably go.
   c. If you must get a time-sensitive study off the ground, then be aware of the human subjects meeting dates that happen about once a month. It may take over 2 months to get approval.
   d. There are a lot of workshops available. Only go to workshops that are interesting to you. We recommend workshops on Moodle, using the Oviatt Library, and RTP (Retention, Tenure, and Promotion).

5. **What about earthquakes?**
   a. Be aware that Southern California is prone to earthquakes. Don’t panic. Be familiar with emergency procedures. There is a designated person in your department who knows emergency procedures.

6. **Is interlibrary loan available?**
   a. Go to Oviatt orientation. Money for interlibrary loan is available.

7. **Am I required to complete paperwork for travel?**
   a. Know that any travel on official university business (conferences, etc.) require you to complete forms at least 2 weeks prior to travel (regardless of whether the university is paying for it).
   b. After travel, you turn in receipts for reimbursements (if applicable).
c. Your department may be able to give you a university credit card to use during travel, but there are very specific rules about what the university will cover.
d. Note that reimbursements can take over 2 months.

8. **Who are some key people I should get to know?**
   a. Get to know key people who will help you throughout your time at CSUN. Some suggestions:
      a. Marty Soupcoff & or Hillary Kaplowitz – faculty technology
      b. Rueyling Tsay – library reserves and streaming videos in classrooms
      c. Your subject specialist librarian –
         [http://library.csun.edu/About/SubjectSpecialists](http://library.csun.edu/About/SubjectSpecialists)
      d. Staff at writing centers who help with student writing. There is a university-wide writing center, but there may be one for your department or college.

9. **Where can I learn about my rights as a faculty member?**
   a. Know your rights as faculty member. Read Section 600.
   b. We also have a union and they are happy to meet with you and will hold various events just for new faculty: [http://www.calfac.org/csun-northridge](http://www.calfac.org/csun-northridge)

10. **When should I work on my Professional Information File (PIF)?**
    a. Your first semester you should set up a binder or drawer that organizes material for your Professional Information File (PIF). You’ll need a section for service, research, and teaching. Again, the Director of New Faculty Orientation & Programs will arrange a special workshop with Faculty Affairs providing an overview of how to get organized for your first review cycle and putting together your first PIF. The Office of Faculty Development has a PIF organizer to guide first year faculty in the process of putting this together.