

Frequently Asked Questions by Sponsoring Departments

Student Employee Technology Corps (SETC)

A Pilot Initiative from the Towson University Office of Technology Services
Client Services Team

Program Overview

1. What's in it for you?

Departments with students who complete the SETC program will have access to fast, "just in time" help for common technology needs. As "first responders", students will be trained to resolve problems on their own, and they'll have a direct hotline to OTS if they need assistance.

2. What does it mean to be a "first responder?"

A "first responder" is the first line of defense when it comes to issues on Towson's campus, including hardware, software, websites, computers, phones, and all the other things people at TU rely on to get their work done.

3. Are there responsibilities that local department staff will have with SETC?

Departments will nominate students; that's the primary responsibility. As a pilot, we will send you a survey to see how things are going and to offer suggestions. The supervisor should keep an eye on the student's work and make sure they are applying their skills wisely. There are no additional timesheets or any other administrative responsibilities required.

4. Will student employees in all departments participate in this program?

The program is voluntary; departments may opt in if they believe it will benefit them. We hope to have a broad representation across all the offices on campus so that everyone will have fast technology service, but we cannot mandate participation.

5. Will this take away from the student's primary job functions?

No, it will only expand their job function. The program familiarizes them with common solutions to technical problems and provides them with information so that they can better help *your* department.

6. Can I nominate a student at any time or do they have to start at the beginning of a semester?

Students can be nominated and at any time. However, scheduling their 6-10 hours of hands-on mentoring with OTS staff will be done periodically as the demand for the program dictates.

7. If we allow our students to participate, how will we know what they are doing?

Just because their work involves technology doesn't make it any different than supervising other tasks. If you have questions about what they are doing, ask your SETC-trained student. If you have concerns about their work, please talk to the full-time OTS staff member assigned to your student.

8. Will the student need any specific type of technology experience?

No, we will train students in everything they need to know to be “first responders”.

9. How long will the online training in Blackboard take?

The student will complete twelve 30-45 minute Blackboard modules, followed by a short quiz. After they complete the final module, they will be scheduled for hands-on training.

10. How much hands-on training will the student receive?

The hands-on training should take 6-10 hours, depending on how well they learn the online material, and their overall technical experience.

11. How often is the in-service training?

We expect that 2-3 hours of recurrent training will be needed once a semester to incorporate any new changes and ensure students are retaining the knowledge they learned. Training can also take the form of online videos, service bulletins, and webinars. We don't want to pull them away from their primary job too often.

12. What types of technology problems will my student learn how to fix?

Students will be able to help with everyday tasks like resetting forgotten/expired passwords, mapping network drives, and getting access to printers. For a complete list of the topics covered, see our list of the [Blackboard-based Online Training Modules](#).

13. Aren't these functions OTS's job? Why should my student employees be doing this?

While some of these tasks are traditionally OTS's, students are more than capable of helping out with this type of work. With the amount of technology on our campus and the limited number of OTS staff, departments will be served faster by having immediate access to someone who can solve more routine issues quickly.

14. The department works with lots of confidential and protected data. Should student employees be working on high-risk systems?

Part of their online training addresses ethics and confidentiality. They are also required to sign the OTS Privileged Access and Ethical Data Handling Agreement. If you don't feel comfortable having a student do certain types of work, you can always call OTS's Faculty/Staff Help Center, just like you always did.

15. Why would this be beneficial for students if they aren't COS/IT/CIS majors?

Every job uses some form of technology, and employers appreciate employees who are competent and able to work with it. Not only will students be able to add their SETC student experience to their resume, but they will be better able to troubleshoot technology in their next job as well. In addition, working as an SETC student gives them some core competencies in leadership, communication, critical thinking, problem solving skills, and professional work ethics regarding confidentiality.

Completing the Training

1. What are the benefits of completing the SETC training?

A student who has completed the SETC training benefits the department by sharing their knowledge and providing a quick response when problems come up. They can be ambassadors and liaisons for technology and, when they run into something that they can't fix, provide a vital communications link between OTS and the department they work for.

2. Is there a time limit to complete the Blackboard modules?

No, this is a self-paced program, but it is probably best to complete it within a few weeks so that all the information is retained. After that, we'll schedule the hands-on portion of the training.

3. OTS offers a lot of services. How will the students learn about everything OTS offers?

We review a lot of the services that OTS provides in the online course. The more students work with the resources, the more they will remember what is offered. Even if a student knows where or how to find out more information among OTS's resources, this will help tremendously.

4. What resources are provided to the student?

The Blackboard course consists of 12 modules and each module introduces all the resources the student will need. Part of our training teaches students where to find the relevant information about technology and how to find answers to common problems that may come up within their department.

5. How will the office staff know what the students are learning so we know when to contact them to fix something?

You will receive a copy of the training syllabus and topics covered in each module. When students complete the online and hands-on training, they will get a certificate and you will be notified. You'll also be notified if a student is not completing the training in a reasonable time.

6. Can I request OTS provide specific training for my student employee?

Possibly. We will need to evaluate requests of this type on a case-by-case basis. If your department has unique technology needs, talk to the OTS staff member who is assigned to work with your student.

7. We understand students will get special alerts from OTS. Can faculty or staff get those too?

Yes, this is an open service to anyone in the TU community. Go to the Web page below, view them online, or sign up for email alerts: <http://wp.towson.edu/otsalerts/>

8. Why is it important for students to learn about classroom technology?

A student who understands the technology in classrooms along with the services, tools, and resources available, will be able to assist a faculty member with finding solutions to problems that can limit or prevent class instruction. This information can also help in conference rooms where similar technology is being used to conduct meetings or presentations.

9. What support tools will be available to students who are SETC certified? Will they have access to just self-help resources or other more specific OTS tools too?

Initially, students will have access to the available self-help resources and tools and they can share what they learn with you. As the program goes forward and we learn more about how they can best provide support, we may develop additional tools specifically for their use.

10. Will students get a single certification or multiple topic specific certifications?

Students will receive one certificate upon completion of the program.

11. Will students have access to obtaining any kind of certifications? (Windows, Mac, etc.)

This program does not provide any certifications beyond completion of the program. If students are interested in acquiring additional training or certifications, they can attend most OTS Training workshops. Additionally, the university has a site license to Lynda.com. The link below provides information about our site license with Lynda.com, and how it works:

<http://www.towson.edu/technology/training/resources/lynda.html>

What to Expect from your SETC First Responder

1. How will I know that my student successfully completed the training and is now a certified SETC student employee?

When students complete the online and hands-on training, they will get a certificate and you will be notified. You'll also be notified if a student is not completing the training in a reasonable period of time.

2. What kind of special access will an SETC responder have?

Your SETC student will have direct access to an OTS staff member assigned to assist him or her with any technology related questions or problems that they may have.

3. When we have a problem in our office, should we call OTS first or reach out to our students?

If your student is there, you should ask them first. If they aren't there, you can wait or call OTS—whatever works best for you. If they are unable to solve the problem, call the Faculty/Staff Help Center at 410-704-5151.

4. What if the SETC student needs special access or administrative privileges to do the work?

The student will be trained to know when to involve a full-time OTS staff member. Still, there will be times when they will require administrative privileges, e.g. installing a local printer, software, etc. In these cases, a faculty or staff member in the department can use the Temporary Computer Administrator Rights (TCAR) tool to provide temporary administrator rights to the SETC student. For more information visit: <http://www.towson.edu/TCAR>.

5. Will students submit TechHelp tickets?

Yes. They need to keep track of their work, and entering it into TechHelp is the best solution. Samples will be provided to them during their training on how to do this. Other than that, it's up to your department to decide if and when you want your SETC student to submit a TechHelp request to receive support from an OTS full-time staff member.

6. Will students also work for labs and classrooms?

The students will have a basic understanding of the technology in classrooms and labs. If you need your student to assist with labs and classrooms, talk to the assigned OTS staff member. We will need to determine what your needs are and possibly include department and college IT providers or lab managers in the conversation.

7. Will students be expected to help with classroom issues for their own classes?

Yes. If they are able, we expect our first responders to use their SETC skills to politely aid their professors in using the technology in their classrooms if any issues arise.

8. If they help out in a classroom technology problem, won't this detract from their number one priority: being a student and getting educated?

If an instructor is having a tech problem, everyone's learning is usually affected: audio won't play, the computer is frozen or locked, the screen won't come down, the projector won't turn on. If SETC students can do a quick "save" and get things up and running fast, everyone can get back to learning as quickly as possible.

9. What happens when the student can't fix something and it's a VIP or inconsolable professor?

The students have been instructed to contact their assigned OTS Staff member or the Faculty/Staff Help Center and request assistance as soon as possible.

10. What if my student breaks something while trying to fix a technology problem in the office?

Accidental damage is extremely rare, but can happen when anyone tries to do something beyond their skill level, including full-time faculty or staff. Students will be trained to know when to draw the line between first-response assistance and contacting full time OTS staff.

11. What happens when a student makes a major mistake?

Hopefully students will follow their training and contact their assigned OTS staff member when difficult or complicated problems arise. OTS will make every effort to get someone there as quickly as possible if a major mistake occurs.

12. Is the training also available for faculty and staff who are involved in supporting technology?

While you certainly can be added to the Blackboard course site and go through the online training materials just as your students would, this program is designed to train student first-responders. You would not receive a certificate, but you can certainly still learn!

SETC Program Administration

1. Is there a charge for departments with SETC students?

No, there is no charge to participate in this program.

2. Is this a paid position or just for work experience? Does that depend on the office?

We are counting on the host office to invest in their students through a combination of work hours and personal time for the online theory work—as well as work time for the hands-on training component. OTS will not be paying student employees to participate.

3. How will student work hours be tracked?

OTS will keep track of hours completed in the online training and the one-on-one training. We will train the student to create TechHelp requests to document their work as an SETC student. You will be CC'd on those requests. If you'd like to request a report to summarize their SETC work, contact the Faculty/Staff Help Center.

4. How do we complete timesheets in reflection of the program?

Students will continue to fill out timesheets as they always have. There is no special tracking of SETC work.

5. Will there be a designated full-time staff in each host office that will serve as a point of contact and be responsible for signing up their students?

This is up to your department, but having a point of contact for your SETC students will cut down on confusion; and OTS will know who to contact regarding questions and concerns about the program or the student.

6. Student turnover is high. Will this program be sustainable?

This will be the very first class for this program, so we will learn as we go. If you feel student turnover is high in your department, try to select a student who you believe is comfortable working with your group and not likely to leave or graduate soon.

7. Can a department share their SETC student with other departments?

Sharing the knowledge of your SETC student can allow quicker resolutions to technological problems. Sparingly, we could even reach out to you to ask if your student employee could help in a nearby classroom or lab when we cannot get there. It's always good to do what we can to help support each other while working to make TU and its students successful, but it is ultimately up to you as the supervisor.

8. If a student goes to another department will they still be able to continue with the program?

Yes. The student should let their new supervisor know that they are a certified SETC first responder. The assigned OTS staff member can assist with explaining the program and how it will benefit the new department.

9. How will OTS be overseeing and ensuring that the student employee is doing it right?

In addition to refresher training each semester, the OTS staff member assigned to the student will have frequent conversations with the student regarding the types of problems they have encountered, and the steps they took to fix the problems. This helps the staff member determine if additional training needs to be provided based on problems the student frequently encounters.

10. Should this be part of my student employee's performance evaluation?

These are your students, so you probably already evaluate their performance. Feel free to add this to it, or consider adopting the TU Career Center's standardized (but customizable) student performance review form and process. OTS does not plan on formal evaluation after the student is certified—only during initial and recurring training. We will notify you with the results.

11. Will students be able to switch between assigned OTS staff members?

If you or the student feel the need to switch staff members please talk with the staff member's supervisor and explain your concerns.

12. Who is going to manage the workers across campus?

We will have a core group of OTS staff members who will be working directly with the SETC program. This includes staff that work directly with the students along with staff that administer and monitor the program.

13. Can departments back out?

Yes. If you no longer wish to participate in the program, tell the student of your decision and notify the assigned OTS staff member. Please explain to the staff member the reason for your decision. We want to know why the program did not work for you so we can improve it for the future.

14. If we find that a student is not providing the support that we expected they would, how will that be handled?

If you find that the student is not performing in the manner that you expected, please speak with the OTS staff member assigned to your student. The two of you should be able to determine if the student needs refresher training or is truly uninterested in continuing the program. If you decide you no longer want the student to continue as a first responder, we will remove the student from the program.