

# STUDENT MISTREATMENT POLICY

**Policy framework:** The University of Texas at San Antonio strives to provide an educational environment that is safe, equitable and hospitable so that learners have the opportunity to succeed in their academic and professional programs. To that end, mistreatment of students will not be tolerated. Mistreatment, intentional or unintentional, occurs when behavior shows disrespect for the dignity of others and interferes with the learning process. Student mistreatment may take many forms, all of which impact student performance.

Examples of behavior that are unacceptable at The University of Texas at San Antonio include:

- Disparaging or demeaning comments about an individual or group;
- Loss of personal civility including shouting, displays of temper, public or private abuse, belittling, or humiliation;
- Use of grading or other forms of evaluation in a punitive or retaliatory manner;
- Sending student on inappropriate errands.

Students should be able to access university officials to understand processes and procedures for resolution of their non-academic grievances.

Sexual harassment and assault, as well discrimination or harassment based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, citizenship, genetic information, veteran status, gender identity, or sexual orientation are also forms of student mistreatment. The procedures for reporting complaints of sexual harassment and assault or discrimination follow policies separate from the Student Mistreatment Policy. The Institutional Handbook of Operating Policies, Section 4.2.1 (<https://uthealthsa.sharepoint.com/RAC/Documents/HOP/Chapter04/4.2.1.pdf>) defines UT Health's Nondiscrimination Policy and Complaint Procedures (<https://uthealthsa.sharepoint.com/RAC/Documents/HOP/Chapter04/4.2.1.pdf>). The Institutional Handbook of Operating Policies Section 4.2.2, Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy (<https://uthealthsa.sharepoint.com/RAC/Documents/HOP/Chapter04/4.2.2.pdf>), describes the process for filing complaints of sexual harassment and assault.

The Student Mistreatment Policy does not cover appeals of academic grades or appeals of decisions about academic progression, including academic dismissal. Students should follow the appropriate academic policies and procedures through their school if they have academic complaints.

Students who believe they have been mistreated under the framework of the Student Mistreatment Policy may report such perceptions to any of the following:

- Dean's Designee - School's Assistant/Associate Dean for Student Affairs
- The University of Texas at San Antonio Office of Student Life Student Ombudsperson
- Assistant Vice President for Educational and Student Success & Chief Student Affairs Officer

**Informal Grievance Resolution Process:** These school and institutional representatives are empowered to informally discuss a student's

perceptions related to mistreatment, providing guidance. If a student seeks advice from an institutional representative, the institutional representative should refer the student immediately to the student's Assistant/Associate Dean for Student Affairs for further instructions.

A grievance involving perceived mistreatment can be resolved in an informal or a formal manner. A student pursuing an informal, nonacademic grievance resolution must contact the Assistant/Associate Dean for Student Affairs in writing within twenty (20) business days of the alleged incident. The written informal complaint must include a short description of the alleged incident, the expressed desire to handle the issue informally and the date it occurred. The Assistant/Associate Dean for Student Affairs will assist the student in the informal resolution of the grievance, to be completed within twenty (20) days from receipt of the student's written grievance. If an informal resolution is not achieved, the aggrieved student has an additional five (5) business days to file a formal written grievance. If the grievance involves staff, faculty, student(s) from the broader University of Texas at San Antonio community, the Assistant/Associate Dean for Student Affairs will liaison with other appropriate authorities, as indicated.

**Formal Grievance Resolution Process:** A student may forego the informal resolution process and move directly to filing a formal academic grievance. To file a formal, nonacademic grievance, the student must first contact the Assistant/Associate Dean for Student Affairs for a review of applicable policies and procedures. If the allegation is one of sexual harassment/assault, the Assistant/Associate Dean for Student Affairs will engage The University of Texas at San Antonio's Chief Student Affairs Officer & Title IX Director to follow the procedures described in HOP 4.2.2. If the allegation is one of discrimination, the Assistant/Associate Dean for Student Affairs will follow the procedures described in HOP 4.2.1.

The student must file a formal written grievance with the Assistant/Associate Dean for Student Affairs within twenty (20) business days from the alleged incident. If the student had sought an informal resolution and now wishes to submit a formal grievance, the student must file the formal written grievance no later than five (5) business days after the period of the informal grievance process.

The formal grievance must include a detailed description of the incident, the underlying reason for filing the formal grievance, and a proposed resolution, if possible. If the grievance involves/accuses The University of Texas at San Antonio students, faculty, staff or employees who are not members of the grievant school, the Assistant/Associate Dean for Student Affairs of the student's School will facilitate engagement with appropriate advocacy/supervisory institutional authorities. Copies of the written grievance will be made available to named parties and the appropriate advocacy/supervisory institutional authorities. The Assistant/Associate Dean for Student Affairs (and appropriate institutional authorities noted above) may, at her/his discretion, hold discussions with or without the involved/accused individual(s) to hear and resolve the grievance, schedule a meeting between the student and the involved/accused individual(s), and/or involve other parties in facilitating a resolution of the grievance. The Assistant/Associate Dean for Student Affairs has twenty (20) business days from receipt of the formal written grievance to resolve the grievance and will provide the aggrieved student a written summary of resolution.

If the aggrieved student is dissatisfied with the resolution, he/she may file a formal written appeal with the school's dean within five (5) business days of the decision. The decision of the school dean is final. The school

dean has twenty (20) business days to provide a written decision to the student and to the School's Assistant/Associate Dean for Student Affairs.

The Dean's decision regarding the merits of the grievance and its resolution are final. If the student alleges that institutional policies were not followed, the student may appeal at the institutional level only if the student alleges he/she was not afforded due process.

Appeals on the basis of procedure violations only are submitted to the Vice President for Academic, Faculty and Student Affairs, or the Vice President's designee, within five (5) business days of receipt of the dean's decision pertaining to the non-academic grievance.