



UT Health Science Center: COM108 Student Mistreatment - COM Medical Education	
Version 2	Publication Date: 04/25/2025

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Related Policy: SA105 – Preventing Student Mistreatment AA110 – Grading Policy COM107 – Grading Policy for MD Curriculum COM112 -- Work (Duty) Hours		

POLICY

It is the policy of the University of Tennessee Health Science Center (UTHSC) College of Medicine (COM) to promote an environment in which all medical professionals can work and learn in an atmosphere of dignity, respect and freedom from discrimination. The COM will follow the below procedures in implementing the relevant UTHSC policy ([SA105 -- Preventing Student Mistreatment](#)).

RATIONALE AND PROCEDURE

1. Process for dissemination of UTHSC policy
 - a) The COM provides ongoing education to students, residents, fellows, faculty and other staff, focusing on reinforcing standards of professional and collegial behavior, and informing the community of procedures for managing real or perceived mistreatment. Specific groups are targeted as follows:
 - i. Medical students: The CenterScope student handbook includes a section on mistreatment. This topic is on the agenda for all student orientations, and is referenced in the policies for each preclinical course and clinical rotation.
 - ii. Faculty, residents, fellows, nurses, and other staff: The mistreatment policy is shared along with other policies and resources central to the educational mission through the Medical Educator Resource Link (MERL).
2. Process for addressing mistreatment
 - a) The first course of action in an instance of perceived mistreatment is for the involved parties to attempt to resolve the issue themselves, with the goal of addressing potential sources of misunderstanding.
 - b) If the student is unsure whether the incident rises to the level of mistreatment, the student should contact the COM Ombuds (currently Dr. Melody Cunningham). The Ombuds is a confidential, non-mandatory reporter who can provide feedback, resource options, policy clarification and perspectives for effective communication strategies.
 - c) If attempts at personal resolution are not successful, the student should engage the teaching or clinical team hierarchy. The purpose of this involvement is to provide a further opportunity for communication, and to identify the nature of

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the alleged mistreatment.

- i. Pre-clinical years (M1/M2)
 1. An incidence of mistreatment should be reported to the course director.
 2. If the issue involves the Course Director, the student should contact the Senior Assistant Dean of Preclinical/Basic Science Curriculum or the Associate Dean of Student Affairs, whomever the student feels more comfortable approaching or considers more appropriate.
- ii. Clinical years (M3/M4)
 1. If the concern involves an intern or junior resident on the team, the student should discuss the situation with the supervising resident.
 2. If the issue involves ancillary personnel or the supervising resident, the student should discuss the problem with the team attending physician.
 3. If the issue involves the attending physician, or if the student is uncomfortable discussing the situation with any member of the team, or if he/she is simply unsure about whom to approach, the student should contact the Clerkship Director.
 4. If the issue involves the Clerkship Director, the student should contact the department Chair, the Senior Assistant Dean of Clinical Curriculum or the Associate Dean of Student Affairs, whomever the student feels more comfortable approaching or considers more appropriate.
3. Mistreatment Reporting Form (all years)
 - a) All incidents of mistreatment should be reported using the COM Mistreatment Reporting Form, which can be found on OLSEN or here ([Mistreatment Reporting Form](#)).
 - b) Students may choose to provide their name and contact information on the report, or they may wish to remain anonymous.
4. Procedures to address specific categories of alleged mistreatment
 - a) A diagram showing the general flow of how mistreatment complaints are handled is shown on the next page.
 - b) Complaints relating to grades are handled as outlined in the Academic Catalog (e.g. the Bulletin) and UTHSC [Grading Policy, AA110](#). Grade appeals are made according to the procedure outlined in the [Grading Policy for MD Curriculum, COM107](#).
 - c) Issues of racial or gender discrimination or harassment are directed to the UTHSC Office of Access and Compliance. An alternative to the University hearing process may be afforded according to the “contested cases” section of the State of Tennessee Uniform Administrative Procedures Act.
 - d) For complaints concerning Work (Duty) Hours violation for any clinical rotation, the student should contact the Clerkship or Course Director for the rotation who will investigate the allegation without identifying the source of the complaint. If the work hours expectations exceed the policy, the team will be educated concerning the policy rules and follow up oversight will assure resolution of the problem. (See [COM112-- Work](#)

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[\(Duty\) Hours](#)

- e) If warranted, college officials may request further investigation by the Student Conduct Officer, who will interview all parties and make a recommendation to the college as to possible resolution.
- 5. Protection from retaliation
 - a) Individuals alleging mistreatment are protected from retaliation.
 - b) Those accused of mistreatment are reminded that retaliation is itself regarded as a form of mistreatment, and will be addressed according to the procedures described above.

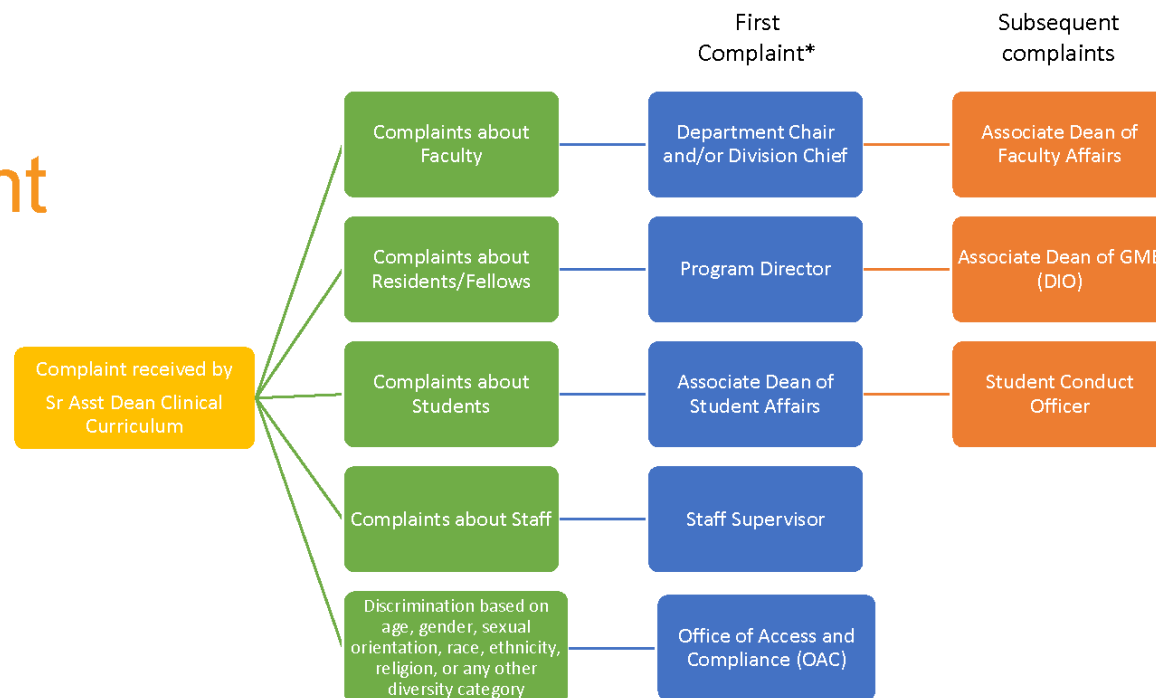
APPROVAL HISTORY

Effective: 5/20/2019

Revised: 4/21/25

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Handling of Mistreatment Complaints



*For mistreatment complaints that occur at regional campuses, the local Dean(s) will be notified first to then discuss the appropriate supervisor.

**For all complaints involving students, both the Associate Dean of Medical Education and Associate Dean of Student Affairs are copied on initial communication to the immediate supervisor, as well as the final resolution.

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*Note that the Associate Dean of GME/DIO will be notified (copied) after resolution of the first complaint. For subsequent complaints the DIO will be included on the initial correspondence to the Program Director.