

**UT Health Science Center:
SA110 Student Complaint Procedures**

Version 3

Publication Date: 09/15/2025

No./Title: SA110 – STUDENT COMPLAINT PROCEDURES		Resp. Office: STUDENT AFFAIRS Approval Body: CASA	Effective Date: 04/16/2013
Category: Students		Last Review: 05/05/2020 Last Revision: 08/29/2025	Next Review: 05/05/2028
Contact: Office of Student Success		☎ 901.448.4939	✉ csnyde16@uthsc.edu
Related Policies & Information:	• Annual updates related to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act are provided on the UTHSC web site at https://uthsc.edu/registrar/student-rights.php • Information related to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, including guidance for maintaining the security of protected health information can be accessed from https://www.uthsc.edu/institutional-compliance/ • The UTHSC Honor System and Student Conduct Code are available at http://catalog.uthsc.edu/		

POLICY

As a part of the University of Tennessee’s compliance with US Department of Education Program Integrity Rules process, the University of Tennessee Health Science Center provides students several mechanisms whereby students can resolve complaints.

PROCEDURES

Complaints Regarding Academic Issues

Each of the colleges at UTHSC has developed an appeal process for addressing student concerns regarding grades and grading procedures, assignments, progression, etc. These processes can be found in the UTHSC Academic Catalog. Normally, such processes allow for the resolution of the majority of complaints relating to academic matters. However, if satisfactory resolutions cannot be found for disputes of grades or grading procedures, an appeal should be made to the dean. If the complaint involves a recommendation for dismissal, students can submit a formal written appeal to the Vice Chancellor for Academic, Faculty and Student Affairs and/or to the Chancellor. Written complaints stating the issue, the processes that were used to address the issue, the desired outcome and the reason(s) that the student feels unfairly treated by the college’s proposed resolution should be sent to the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic, Faculty and Student Affairs.

Discrimination Complaint Procedure

Any UTHSC student (e.g. current student or applicant to an academic program offered by UTHSC) who believes that he or she has been discriminated against on the basis of race, color, sex (including sexual orientation, gender identity), sexual harassment, sexual assault, and sexual violence, pregnancy, marital status, parental status, religion, national origin, age, disability or veteran status is encouraged to use the procedures outlined below for the resolution of his or

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her complaint. University policy prohibits retaliation against any person who in good faith opposes a practice which he or she believes to be discriminatory or who participates in an investigation of a complaint. Complaints of discrimination should be directed to the UTHSC Office of Compliance (OC):

920 Madison Avenue, Suite 825
Memphis, Tennessee 38163
901-448-2112 [voice]
901-448-7382 [TTY]

Student complaints must be put in writing and filed within 180 calendar days of the alleged discriminatory action. Complaints related to workplace discrimination must be filed within 300 calendar days of the alleged discriminatory action. In certain circumstances, at the discretion of the Office of Compliance (OC), complaints filed outside of this time limit or that are not put in writing may be investigated.

- A. Employees and students are encouraged to attempt to resolve a complaint through the administrative structure of the employment unit or academic department. OC will provide assistance to the complainant, employment unit, and/or academic department in order to resolve the complaint.
- B. Complaints received directly by OC will be reported by the Director (or the Director's designee) to the appropriate administrator(s) who will attempt to resolve the matter working in conjunction with OC. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible.
- C. If the complaint is not resolved through the methods described above, OC may use the following:
 - 1. Complaints should be submitted in writing to OC. The complaint must include (a) the name of the complainant; (b) an explanation of the action or conduct complained of and (c) the person or department responsible for the complained of action. The complaint should include the resolution sought by the complainant. The complaint may identify witnesses and other evidence the complainant wants OC to consider in its investigation. The party against whom the complaint has been lodged (respondent) and the appropriate administrator with supervisory responsibility will be notified of the complaint.

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2. OC will conduct an investigation, the nature and scope of which will be determined by OC on a case-by-case basis. The investigation may include any or all of the following, as well as such other action as OC deems appropriate: interviewing the complainant; interviewing the respondent; interviewing witnesses; submitting questions to or taking statements from parties or witnesses; reviewing documents; and/or setting up an investigative committee.
3. OC will make findings and recommendations. Those findings and recommendations, together with a statement outlining the basis for them, will be transmitted by OC to the appropriate administrator within forty-five (45) calendar days of receipt of a complaint. A copy will also be sent to the complainant and respondent.
4. The appropriate administrator(s) will review OC's findings and recommendations, make a determination, and notify the complainant and respondent of the determination in writing within fifteen (15) calendar days of the receipt of OC's findings and recommendations.
5. When the complainant is a student, OC will make a good faith effort to conclude the investigation and resolution of a complaint (i.e., steps 3(b) through 3(d)) within sixty (60) calendar days of the date the receipt of the complaint by OC. If the investigation and resolution of a complaint cannot be completed within that time period, then OC will contact the complainant and respondent and provide an estimated time frame in which the investigation and resolution of a complaint will be completed.
6. Appeals
 - a) Employees: A complainant or respondent who is an employee who is not satisfied with the determination described in Section 3(d) may appeal in accordance with applicable University policies and procedures, including Human Resources Policy 0525, Human Resources Policy 0640, and the UTHSC Faculty Handbook.

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- b) Students: Within seven (7) calendar days after receipt of the determination described in Section 3(d), a complainant or respondent who is a student and who is not satisfied with the determination may appeal in writing to the next higher administrative level. The University will inform the complainant and respondent in writing of the person to whom an appeal may be made. Any administrator who receives an appeal shall make a decision on the appeal within ten (10) calendar days of the administrator's receipt of the appeal. Decisions on appeals shall be provided in writing to the complainant and respondent.

The time limits above are subject to modification on a case-by-case basis due to operational requirements, travel away from campus, in-depth investigations, or other issues that complicate the process or require additional time to reach a thorough and fair resolution of the matter.

The University will take steps to prevent the recurrence of any prohibited discrimination and to correct any discriminatory effects on the complainant and others, if appropriate.

An individual who is subjected to retaliation (e.g., threats, intimidation, reprisals, or adverse employment or educational actions) because he or she (a) made a report of discrimination in good faith, (b) assisted someone with a report of discrimination, or (c) participated in any manner in an investigation or resolution of a report of discrimination, may make a complaint of retaliation under these procedures.

Sexual Harassment Complaints

In addition to, or in lieu of, initiating criminal prosecution, students who feel they have been the victim of sexual harassment, including sexual assault, have the right to file a Title IX sex discrimination complaint with the University. Conduct may violate the University's Standards of Conduct or constitute unlawful sexual harassment under Title IX even if the police conclude they do not have sufficient evidence of a criminal violation. Students may be suspended or permanently dismissed as a penalty for sexual discrimination.

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Complaints of sexual harassment should be directed to the UTHSC Office of Compliance (OC), 920 Madison Avenue, Suite 825, Memphis, Tennessee 38163 (telephone: 901-448-2112 [voice], 901-448-7382 [TTY]). Such complaints may be submitted to the Office of Compliance without confronting the offender. These complaints must be put in writing filed within 300 calendar days of the alleged discriminatory action. In certain circumstances, at the discretion of OC, complaints filed outside of this time limit or that are not put in writing may be investigated.

- A. Whenever possible, the goal will be to resolve the matter informally. The complainant will be notified of the resolution.
- B. An investigation will be conducted, the nature and scope of which will be determined on a case-by-case basis. This investigation may include any or all of the following, as well as other action as is deemed appropriate:
 - 1. Interviewing the complainant, the respondent, and witnesses;
 - 2. Submitting questions to, or taking statements from, parties or witnesses;
 - 3. Reviewing documents and appointing an investigative committee.
- C. If an investigative committee is formed, it will consist of at least three persons other than the Director or designee. The Director or designee will be the non-voting chair of the committee.
- D. Upon the conclusion of the investigation, the OC, in the instance of complaints against faculty, residents or students, will present findings and recommendations to the appropriate Dean for a decision concerning disciplinary action. The employee's Department Chair or other appropriate person(s) may be consulted and may be a part of the decision-making process if desired by the Dean. The complainant will be informed of the decision by the Dean or designee.

Filing a Sexual Harassment Complaint Against a Student

A complaint of sexual harassment against another student will be treated as a complaint of sex

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discrimination in violation of Title IX and should be filed with the Office of Compliance, 920 Madison Avenue, Suite 825, Memphis, Tennessee 38163 (telephone: 901-448-2112 [voice], 901-448-7382 [TTY]). An employee in the Office of Compliance will meet with the complainant, explain the University's grievance procedures, listen to the complainant's allegations, provide the complainant with an opportunity to ask questions, and refer the complainant to the University's Victim's Advocate in University Health Services, who can assist the complainant with obtaining medical and/or psychological care, reporting the incident to the police, and exploring interim and remedial measures.

Following the initial meeting with the complainant, the Office of Compliance will investigate the complaint to determine if the University Standards of Conduct or the University's policy against sex discrimination has been violated. Investigations usually will include interviews of the complainant, the student against whom the complaint was filed, and other witnesses, as well as an analysis of documents and other relevant information. University investigations of sexual harassment complaints will be prompt, thorough, impartial, and independent of any criminal investigation or case that may be ongoing. The Office of Compliance uses a "preponderance of the evidence" standard in reaching its conclusions. If the Office of Compliance determines that a Standard of Conduct or University policy has been violated, then the case will be processed in accordance with the University's student disciplinary regulations and procedures, which can be found below.

In a case involving a complaint against another student of sex discrimination, the alleged victim shall have the right to:

- A. notice concerning the process by which the university will handle the complaint and an opportunity to ask questions about the process;
- B. a prompt, thorough, and impartial investigation of the complaint;
- C. the same opportunity as the accused student to present his/her explanation of the facts during the university's investigation;
- D. have the investigation of the complaint concluded within sixty (60) days of the university's receipt of a complaint, unless circumstances make it impracticable for the

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university to complete its investigation within that timeframe;

- E. notice of the outcome of the university's investigation;
- F. have a disciplinary hearing conducted within thirty (30) days of a university disciplinary charge, unless circumstances make it impracticable for the university to conduct a hearing within that timeframe;
- G. notice of the date, time, and location of the disciplinary hearing, the right to have the disciplinary hearing closed to the public, and the right to request rescheduling of the hearing for good cause;
- H. the same access as the accused student to any information or documents that will be used by the university during the disciplinary hearing, unless prohibited by law;
- I. challenge the selection of any member of a hearing panel or a hearing examiner for good cause, which will be determined at the discretion of the Chancellor or his/her designee;
- J. be accompanied by an advisor of his/her choosing during the University's investigation or a disciplinary hearing, but the advisor shall not be permitted to speak for the victim during a disciplinary hearing;
- K. the same opportunity as the accused student to be present during the hearing, present witnesses and other evidence, challenge the admissibility of evidence, and cross-examine adverse witnesses during the disciplinary hearing;
- L. testify or remain silent in a hearing at his/her option; however, choosing to remain silent may result in the University dismissing the charges against the accused student or the hearing panel or examiner finding that there is insufficient evidence to find the accused student guilty of the charges against him/her;
- M. not to be questioned directly by the accused student during the disciplinary hearing;

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- N. submit a written impact statement to the hearing panel or examiner for consideration during the sanctioning phase of the disciplinary hearing, if the student is found guilty of the charges against him/her;
- O. notice of the decision of the hearing panel or examiner within three (3) business days of the hearing, and
- P. appeal the decision of the hearing panel or examiner to the Chancellor

Filing a Sexual Harassment Complaint against a University Employee

A complaint of sexual harassment against a University employee (faculty, staff or student employee) or a third party unaffiliated with the University should be filed with the University's Title IX Coordinator, Dr. Michael Alston, Office of Compliance, 920 Madison Avenue, Suite 825, Memphis, TN , Phone: 901-448-2133, Fax: 901-448-1120, malston1@uthsc.edu, and will be handled in accordance with the University's discrimination complaint procedures.

Initiating a Criminal Complaint Against a University Employee or Student

Victims of sexual assault or misconduct have the right to initiate criminal prosecution by contacting the [University of Tennessee Health Science Center Police Department](#), 740 Court, 901- 448-4444, or the [Memphis Police Department](#), 545-2677. Victims may file a criminal complaint before, during, or after the University's investigation of sexual assault or misconduct.

Complaints Related to Financial Aid

Students who have been denied access to financial aid can appeal this decision by submitting, in writing to the Director of Financial Aid, a Professional Judgement Appeal; the basis for the appeal should be specified and the student is encouraged to provide any additional information (e.g.

emancipated status of the student; changes in parental custody of financial situations, etc.) that might have been unavailable/overlooked by the office. The Director will review the

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appeal and make a determination based on the additional information and guided by federal/state laws regarding loan eligibility.

Students are also denied financial aid when they no longer meet the requirements for satisfactory academic progress (SAP). If he/she does not meet the minimum requirements for satisfactory academic progress as defined by his/her academic program such that they are subject to dismissal or probation, the student may lose his/her eligibility for financial aid as well as for continuation in their academic program. The college provides an appeal process to review extenuating circumstances that may have contributed to the poor academic performance (appeal procedures are available on college web sites and in the UTHSC academic catalog) and to assess the possibility of successful remediation. The financial aid office also provides an appeal process (<https://www.uthsc.edu/financial-aid/satisfactory-academic-progress.php>) for restoring student eligibility for Title IV financial aid. To file a SAP appeal, students must submit a letter with supporting documentation to the Office of Financial Aid explaining why they failed to make academic progress, as well as an explanation of what has changed in their circumstances that will allow them to make satisfactory academic progress by the end of the next semester. In addition, the student must provide a copy of the approved Academic Plan from his/her college that describes the specific steps the student will take to achieve satisfactory academic progress status during the next term. The Financial Aid Office, working with a subcommittee appointed for this purpose, will consider the appeal; representatives from the college may be consulted as part of the appeal. The student is notified of the decision via the student's university assigned email address. Neither the committee nor the financial aid staff will give appeal results over the phone. Questions related to the policy, process, and outcomes of an aid appeal should be directed to the student's Financial Aid Counselor.

Students wishing to complain about financial aid service may do so by contacting the Director of Financial Aid. If the complaint is not resolved, students may share their complaint with the Associate Director of Enrollment Management.

FERPA Complaint Procedure

Complaints involving alleged violation(s) of the Family Education Rights Protection Act (FERPA) should be directed to the Office of the Registrar. The Registrar serves as the UTHSC



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FERPA Compliance Officer and investigates possible FERPA violations and misconduct on campus. If you believe your FERPA rights have been violated or there has been a failure to comply with FERPA at UTHSC, please contact the UTHSC Registrar’s Office:

910 Madison Avenue, Suite 520
Memphis, TN 38163
901-448-5568
registrar@uthsc.edu

A complaint must contain specific allegations of fact giving reasonable cause to believe that a violation of the Act has occurred. The Office investigates each timely complaint to determine whether the educational agency or institution has failed to comply with the provisions of the Act. A timely complaint is defined as an allegation of a violation of the Act that is submitted to the Office within 180 days of the date of the alleged violation or of the date that the complainant knew or reasonably should have known of the alleged violation. The office may extend the time limit for good cause shown.

An eligible student may file a written complaint with the Family Policy Compliance Office (FPCO) regarding an alleged violation under the Act. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of
Education 400 Maryland
Avenue, SW Washington, DC
20202-5901

HIPAA Complaint Procedure

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) established regulations for the use and disclosure of protected health information. Details related to HIPAA can be accessed at <https://www.uthsc.edu/institutional-compliance/>. Please contact the UTHSC Privacy Officer if you have questions or would like to make a complaint.

Complaints Regarding Student Mistreatment

UTHSC has a responsibility to foster in students, postgraduate trainees, faculty, preceptors and other staff the development of professional and collegial attitudes needed to provide caring and compassionate health care. To nurture these attitudes and promote an effective learning environment, an atmosphere of mutual respect and collegiality among teachers and students is essential. While such an environment is extremely important to the educational mission of UTHSC, negative interactions with students sometimes occur due to misunderstandings, lack of appreciation of, or sensitivity to, student perspectives/experience, miscommunication, and, in some instances clinical imperatives that preclude/complicate effective

explanation of expectations. These negative interactions may include: sexual harassment; discrimination based on race, gender, religion, ethnic background, sexual orientation, disabilities, or age; or purposeful humiliation, verbal abuse, threats, or other psychological punishment. In practice, mistreatment of students may involve incidents in which a faculty or staff member:

1. speaks insultingly or unjustifiably harshly;
2. belittles or humiliates;
3. threatens physical harm;
4. physically attacks (e.g., hits, slaps, kicks);
5. demands personal services (e.g., shopping, baby-sitting);
6. threatens to lower the student's grade for reasons other than course/clinical performance

Such actions are unprofessional, contrary to the spirit of learning, and violate the trust between teacher and learner.

Process for Addressing Incidents of Mistreatment

When interactions are such that a student feels mistreated, several options are available:

1. If he/she feels comfortable addressing the matter directly, the student should attempt to explain his/her concerns to the offending individual.
2. If he/she is reluctant to approach the accuser directly, the student should report

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his/her concerns to a faculty member or to a college official.

3. If warranted, further investigation will be conducted by the Chief Student Affairs Officer (or designee), who will interview all parties and make a recommendation to the as to possible resolution.

Confidentiality and Protection from Retaliation

Every effort will be made to protect alleged victims of mistreatment from retaliation if they seek redress. Although it is impossible to guarantee freedom from retaliation, it is possible to take steps to try to prevent it and to set up a process for responding to it. To help prevent retaliation, those who are accused of mistreatment will be informed that retaliation is regarded as a form of mistreatment. Accusations that retaliation has occurred will be handled in the same manner as accusations concerning other forms of mistreatment.

Unresolved Complaints

Complaints regarding any University of Tennessee institution may also be reported to the UT Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Success.

The University of Tennessee

Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Success 821 Andy
Holt Tower
Knoxville, TN 37996 utvpacademicaffairs@tennessee.edu

Alternatively, complaints regarding distance education programs offered to students in other states may be reported through the applicable state's process, if a separate complaint process is listed at the following link:
<http://wcet.wiche.edu/advance/state-approval-complaint>.

University of Tennessee Health Science Center Complaint Policies for Certain Distance Education Students Enrolled Through the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (SARA)

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The policies below apply to students who are:

- Non-Tennessee residents in [State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement \(SARA\) states](#) and who are enrolled in a distance education program/course or
- Attending an out-of-state learning placement in a [SARA state](#) other than Tennessee.

The nature of complaints to be addressed through these policies include violations of SARA policies and dishonest or fraudulent activity. These policies do not apply to complaints concerning student grades or student conduct violations. For more information on complaint subject matter, see [SARA Policy Manual](#) Sections 4.2 and 4.3.

Additional Complaint Policies

- Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC)
 - Students (as described above) must complete the institution complaint process before appealing to THEC.
 - Students who are not satisfied with the institution's resolution of their complaint may appeal the institution's decision to THEC using the [Request for Complaint Review form](#). Additional information on the THEC complaint process is available at [THEC Complaint Review Process](#). Students may also contact THEC.RCD@tn.gov with questions.
 - The appeal to THEC must be filed within two (2) years of the incident about which the complaint is made.
 - Out-of-state students may also contact their home state higher education authority, although students may be referred to THEC. See [State Portal Entity Contacts | NC-SARA](#) for a listing of SARA states and contacts.
 - Students residing in non-SARA states, currently California only, should consult their respective state of residence for further instructions for filing a complaint.

Complaints Reported to Accreditors



Complaints may also be reported by on-campus and distance learning students to the state and any accrediting agency which offers accreditation to the University, including:

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges
1866 Southern Lane
Decatur, GA 30033
(404)-679-4500

Tennessee Higher Education Commission
404 James Robertson Parkway Suite 1900
Nashville, TN 37243
(615) 741-3605
Julie.woodruff@tn.gov
<https://www.tn.gov/thec/bureaus/student-aid-and-compliance/postsecondary-state-authorization/request-for-complaint-review.html>

Complaints Made to the State of Tennessee

Complaints made requesting review and appropriate action by a state agency regarding state laws and laws related to fraud and false advertising may be made to the Tennessee Department of Post-Secondary Education (DSPA)

Tennessee Higher Education Commission
Department of Post-Secondary Education
Parkway Towers Suite 1900
Nashville, TN 37243
(615) 741-5293
Julie.woodruff@tn.gov

Submission of Student Complaint Logs

All UTHSC academic and administrative units/departments who collect, and address student complaints must maintain ongoing logs of such complaints. Such logs must include the following elements:

1. unit/department
2. date of the complaint
3. issue(s)
4. the remedy sought
5. findings
6. the date and nature of the final resolution of the complaint
7. location(s) of complaint documents

Copies of the student complaint logs from each unit/department must be provided to the Office of Academic Faculty and Student Affairs each quarter. Student Complaint logs are due to the Director of Student Affairs and Community Engagement by the 15th of the next month, following the close of each quarter.

Quarter	Dates	Logs Due By
1	July 1 - September 30	October 15
2	October 1 - December 31	January 15
3	January 1- March 31	April 15
4	April 1 -June 30	July 15

APPROVAL HISTORY:

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Revised: July 1, 2014, Committee on Academic and
Student Affairs (CASA) Revised: April 15, 2015,

Committee on Academic and Student Affairs (CASA)

Revised: December 10, 2015, Committee on Academic
and Student Affairs (CASA) Approved: December 28,
2015, Chancellor

Revised: September 6, 2016, Committee on Academic
and Student Affairs (CASA) Approved: September 12,
2016, Chancellor

Revised: April 16, 2019, CASA

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Approved: September 3, 2019, Chancellor

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