



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER™

School of Medicine
Operating Policy and Procedure

SOM OP: 40.05, **Student Mistreatment**

PURPOSE: The purpose of this School of Medicine (SOM) Policy and Procedure is to describe policies and procedures governing the reporting of mistreatment of a student and procedures to be followed in resolving such reports.

REVIEW: This SOM Policy and Procedure shall be reviewed within each even-numbered fiscal year by the Student Affairs Committee. Revisions will be forwarded to the Office of the Dean for publication.

POLICY/PROCEDURE:

1. **General.** It is the policy of The Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center School of Medicine to affirm the right of its students to a prompt and fair resolution of a complaint or grievance involving allegations of inappropriate behavior by faculty, residents, and/ or staff toward students. The Office of Student Affairs will administer the school's policies regarding student grievances and will ensure that due process is afforded to all concerned.
2. **Definition.** Mistreatment, either intentional or unintentional, occurs when behavior shows disrespect for the dignity of others and unreasonably interferes with the learning process. Categories of mistreatment include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Being Publicly Embarrassed
 - b. Being Publicly Humiliated
 - c. Being Threatened with Physical Harm
 - d. Being Physically Harmed
 - e. Being required to perform personal services
 - f. Receiving unwanted sexual advances
 - g. Being asked/forced to exchange sexual favors
 - h. Being exposed to offensive sexist remarks
 - i. Missing training opportunities based on gender
 - j. Receiving lower evaluations or grades because of gender rather than performance
 - k. Being denied opportunities for training or rewards based on race or ethnicity
 - l. Being exposed to offensive racist or ethnic remarks
 - m. Receiving lower evaluations or grades because of race or ethnicity rather than performance

- n. Being denied opportunities for training or rewards based on sexual orientation
- o. Being exposed to offensive remarks about sexual orientation
- p. Receiving low evaluations based on sexual orientation
- q. Being denied opportunities for training or rewards based on a disability
- r. Being subjected to offensive remarks/names related to a disability
- s. Receiving lower evaluations or grades because of a disability rather than performance
- t. Experiencing bias based on other personal characteristics or beliefs

3. Sources of Mistreatment

a. Sources

Pre-clerkship faculty
Clerkship faculty (classroom)
Clerkship faculty (clinical setting)
Resident/Intern
Nurse
Administrator
Other institution employee
Student

4. Procedures.

a. Responsibilities:

- 1) This policy will be administered by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs (or delegate).

b. Reporting Incidents of Mistreatment

- 1) It is the policy of the School of Medicine to ensure that students have access to a learning environment that is supportive and free from mistreatment and to a process that provides a fair and timely method for resolving reports of mistreatment.
- 2) The school has established two formal methods for reporting mistreatment, both of which include the opportunity for anonymous reporting
 - 1 Online reporting using the TTUHSC Student Grievance Reporting System (<https://www.ttuhschool.edu/student-affairs/grievances.aspx>). Students may submit an incident report in any of six categories
 - a Complaints regarding the general or academic misconduct of another student
 - b Complaints regarding discrimination (including complaints related to Title IX)

- c Complaints regarding student records
 - d Complaints regarding employment at TTUHSC
 - e Complaints regarding grades or grading
 - f Complaints regarding other types of mistreatment
 - 2 On end-of-course/clerkship surveys (both by identifying specific types of mistreatment and by including reports in written comments).
 - 3 Students may also report incidents to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs or other school administrators, who will treat such reports with discretion
- c. Investigating reports of mistreatment
- 1) The Associate Dean of Student Affairs (or delegate) will facilitate investigations of reports of potential mistreatment received through any of the methods described above, utilizing an Incident Response Team. The Associate Dean directly receives all reports submitted through the TTUHSC Student Grievance Reporting System. The Associate Dean for Student Affairs, along with the Associate Dean for Clinical Education, Senior Associate Dean for Student Affairs, and the Director of Student Affairs will regularly review course evaluations to identify incidents of potential mistreatment that require investigation.
 - 2) The Incident Response Team will include the Associate Dean for Student Affairs (or delegate), the Senior Associate Dean for Student Affairs, the Assistant Deans responsible for Student Affairs on each campus, and the Chairs of the Student Affairs Committee and Student Promotion and Professional Conduct Committee.
 - 3) The Incident Response Team will evaluate each report and categorize it as to type of mistreatment, setting and source.
 - 4) Reports that involve sexual or gender-based harassment or other forms of sexual misconduct will be referred to the institutional Title IX office for investigation.
 - 5) The Incident Response Team records each investigation in a secure database, including details about the complaint, individual(s) assigned to respond to the report, specific actions to be pursued, and outcomes.
 - 6) All outcomes are reviewed by the Incident Response Team to determine whether interventions have been successful or if additional actions are required.
 - 7) Potential intermediate and final actions overseen by the Incident Response Team include, but are not limited to:
 - 1 Issuance of a no-contact directive between the involved parties
 - 2 Removal of faculty/resident from medical student education for a defined period of time or until completion of a prescribed remediation plan
 - 3 Referral to Faculty Affairs/Graduate Medical Education Office/Human Resources to determine if intervention is appropriate

5. Protecting the Confidentiality of Students and Preventing Retaliation against students reporting mistreatment

1) Student confidentiality will be protected as follows:

- 1 Providing the option to submit anonymous reports through the TTUHSC Student Grievance Reporting System
- 2 Consulting with reporting students to determine the most appropriate timing for direct intervention to resolve the dispute

2) Addressing reasons for not reporting Mistreatment

- 1 Students report several reasons for not reporting mistreatment, including resolving the issue themselves, thinking that nothing would be done, and the incident not being important enough to report. About 30% of the national cohort consistently report fear of retaliation as the reason for not reporting an incident. The School of Medicine is committed to address this barrier to reporting as follows:
 - a Treating all reports, irrespective of reporting mechanism, with discretion to avoid unnecessary or premature identification of the reporting student. For example, if an incident occurs within a clerkship, the investigation will include a review of student assessments submitted by the alleged perpetrator to ensure that there is no evidence of retaliation.

6. Reporting of Mistreatment Report Outcomes

- a. A summary outcomes document will be disseminated to students on a regular basis, describing the number of incidents of potential mistreatment that have been investigated, and for those reports with actionable outcomes, the types of interventions employed.