

## 13.02.99.H1.02

## General Student Complaints



Approved: April 9, 2012

Revised: October 29, 2021

Revised: March 1, 2023

Next Scheduled Review: March 2028

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### Procedure Summary

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Texas A&M University-Texarkana is committed to providing a learning environment for its students, in which complaints are responded to in a prompt and fair manner. Toward this end, A&M- Texarkana has developed procedures that address specific kinds of complaints that are in keeping with state and federal law and Texas A&M System Policies and Regulations. Moreover, the Human Resources website and the Code of Conduct provide for a number of complaint procedures that are unique to A&M-Texarkana.

This procedure specifically addresses any general student complaints that do not fall into the categories covered by other specific processes and that are not articulated elsewhere in Texas A&M University System Policies and Regulations, A&M-Texarkana Rules and Procedures and the A&M-Texarkana catalog. Any type of complaint with a documented process will follow that process.

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### Procedures and Responsibilities

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Separate Policies and procedures exist for the following types of complaints and are not covered by this procedure:

- Complaints regarding academic or disciplinary matters
- Complaints regarding discrimination
- Complaints regarding sexual harassment
- Complaints regarding grades or grading
- Complaints regarding Distance Education
- Student Grievance for Financial Aid Loss due to Unsatisfactory Academic Progress (SAP Appeal)

A student's right to a prompt and equitable resolution of the complaint shall not be impaired by the student's pursuit of other remedies, such as filing a complaint with the responsible federal department or agency.

A&M-Texarkana has established procedures for handling general complaints. These procedures contain:

- **Informal Process.** A process that provides for informal resolution of complaints/grievances through consultation with the faculty, staff person or administrator

directly responsible for the initial action or decision at the college/office level before pursuing a more formal process.

- **Formal Process.** A formal process that designates a point of contact for filing a written complaint, provides for review of the complaint, and issues a written response to the complainant within a specified timeframe.
- **Appeal Process.** A process that includes an opportunity for an individual to appeal a decision in writing within a specified timeframe with designation of the individual(s) who make(s) the final decision. Generally, general complaint appeals conclude with the Dean of the college or the Director of an office or department. Appeals of complaints at the University level will conclude with the Vice President responsible for the college or office/department involved, or the President if the office/department in question directly reports to the chief executive officer.

Except for the timelines provided in Section 3 of this procedure, a chief executive officer (CEO) is authorized to modify this process when required by the organizational structure or geographical dispersion of employees or departments. Modified procedures must conform in principle with the procedures outlined in this document.

## **1. INFORMAL PROCESS**

Most problems can be resolved through informal discussions between the complainant and the employee or department. An individual also may informally discuss a complaint with the departmental director, or the Vice President who oversees the division in which the department reports. The department director and/or vice president will work with all parties to the complaint to seek a satisfactory resolution.

Informal discussions are to be recorded using the form [here](#) by the person receiving the complaint. This serves to document the conversation to create a historical record so that trends may be observed if they develop.

Although individuals are encouraged to resolve a complaint informally first, he or she may file a formal written complaint without first seeking informal resolution.

## **2. FORMAL PROCESS**

2.1 A student wishing to submit a grievance or general complaint shall initially file the complaint in writing to the Assistant Vice President of Student Life (administrator). If the grievance is against the AVP of Student Life, then the student should notify the Director of Compliance.

2.1.1 The written notice should state the specific grievance, student's name, address, email and telephone number, specific date(s), names of other persons allegedly involved as either witnesses or participants, and any specific remedies sought. An online formal complaint form can be found [here](#). Written notices received in

any other format shall be entered into the online complaint tracking system by the administrator.

- 2.1.2 The written grievance must be signed (electronic is acceptable) and dated by the student and submitted within 30 business days of the alleged incident. A determination as to whether complaints submitted after this deadline will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the administrator.
- 2.1.3 After the grievance is received, the investigative period may last up to 30 business days; extenuating circumstances may cause the University to deviate from the defined time frames. Extensions should be limited to 15 additional business days unless extreme circumstances warrant further extension, which should be approved by the CEO. Any extension should be communicated to the student.
  - The administrator may conduct the investigation or may appoint a university or system investigator, if necessary. The administrator will take reasonable measures to avoid any and all conflicts of interest in selecting the investigator.
  - The investigator will gather all facts pertaining to the grievance and submit those in writing to the administrator.
  - The administrator shall be responsible for determining final resolution.
- 2.1.4 The administrator shall send a written resolution within 5 business days of receiving the written report from the investigator to the student with the outcome(s), reason(s), for the decision, any remedies afforded, if any, and notice of the appeals process. The administrator shall also forward a copy of the resolution to the respondent, if a specific individual, as well as the supervisor of the employee or department the grievance was filed against. The written resolution shall also be filed with the electronic record of the formal grievance.

### **3. APPEAL**

- 3.1 An individual may appeal the decision of the administrator within five (5) business days after receipt of the written decision. Appeals must be in writing and submitted to the Vice President of Student Affairs. The VPSA will review the original complaint and the written appeal, and may conduct additional investigation, if necessary. The VPSA will provide a written decision to the complainant within fifteen (15) business days of the officer's receipt of the appeal. The decision of the VPSA is final.

### **4. NOTIFICATION AND PUBLICATION**

- 4.1 A&M-Texarkana shall post established general complaint procedures on the Rule and Procedures website and other pages as determined by the

President. These procedures shall be reviewed at least every 5 years.

## 5. DOCUMENTATION

Each Vice President is responsible for ensuring the utilization this process for collecting and recording written complaints at A&M-Texarkana that occur within their units, departments and colleges via the electronic database.

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### **Related Statutes, Policies, or Requirements**

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[System Regulation 13.02, \*Student Rights and Obligations\*](#)

[University Procedure 08.01.01.H1 \*Civil Rights Compliance\*](#).

[University Procedure 13.99.99.H0.01 \*Student Grade Appeals\*](#)

[Texas A&M University - Texarkana Student Code of Conduct](#)

[Texas A&M University – Texarkana Distance Education Student Grievance Process](#)

[Texas A&M University – Satisfactory Academic Progress Financial Aid Appeal Process](#)

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### **Appendix**

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[Informal Complaint Report](#)

[Formal Student Complaint Form](#)

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### **Contact Offices**

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Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs  
903.223.3004

Vice President for Student Affairs  
903-223-3061