

SOUTH TEXAS COLLEGE

# STUDENT HANDBOOK

2024-25



South Texas College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award Baccalaureate and Associate degrees. South Texas College also may offer credentials such as certificates and diplomas at approved degree levels.

Questions about the accreditation of South Texas College may be directed in writing to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, GA 30033-4097, by calling (404) 679-4500, or by using information available on SACSCOC's website ([www.sacscoc.org](http://www.sacscoc.org)).

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# Chapter 1: Student Handbook

## **Notice of Non-Discrimination**

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The College does not discriminate or tolerate discrimination against any employee, applicant for employment, student, or applicant for admission on the basis of race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, parental status, disabilities, genetic information, veteran status, or any other protected category under applicable local, state, or federal law. Conduct that excludes participation, denies benefits or subjects others to discrimination on the basis of a protected class is prohibited. The College complies with all applicable policies and state and federal legislation in order to combat discrimination.

## **Rights of Individuals with Disabilities**

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South Texas College complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and does not discriminate on the basis of a disability in the areas of admission, accessibility, treatment, and employment. Individuals with disabilities, as defined under the law, who otherwise meet the institution's academic and employment requirements will be provided with services and resources accordingly. It is the policy of the College to provide reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities, including pregnancy and parenting related needs.

For students with disabilities, reasonable accommodations are made to allow the individual student to be successful at South Texas College. Accommodations are provided for those students who submit documentation of the disability from a qualified professional whose license or credentials are appropriate to diagnose the disability. South Texas College supports efforts to make the campus more accessible and encourages individuals with disabilities to participate in all activities.

For accommodations for Faculty and Staff, please contact the College's Office of Human Resources at 956-872-4448. For accommodations for Students, please contact the Office of Counseling and Student Accessibility Services at 956-872-2173.

## **Discriminatory Harassment**

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Harassment can take many forms and can affect both educational and employment opportunities. Harassment is unwelcome, physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct, and may include off-campus or online conduct. Some examples of harassment are: name-calling, sharing graphic images, written statements, and other unwelcome conduct that may be humiliating, physically threatening or harmful. When such conduct creates a hostile environment and limits or denies an individual's educational or employment access, benefits, or opportunities, it is a violation of this policy and is subject to disciplinary action or termination, unless it is determined to be constitutionally protected expression. The College reserves the right to address any offensive conduct with supportive measures, respectful conversation, education,

remedial actions, or other informal resolutions, whenever appropriate and especially if a substantial in-program disruption has occurred.

## **Sexual Misconduct**

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South Texas College is committed to eradicating all forms of sex-based discrimination and harassment. The College's policy concerning sexual misconduct is made and enforced in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations (such as Title IX) and may include off-campus or online conduct. Any person who violates the College's policy is subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the College or termination from employment.

## **Title IX Statement**

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Title IX of the Education Amendments 1972 (20 U.S.C. §1681 et seq.) and its implementing regulations, 34 C.F.R. Part 106 (Title IX) state the following: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

For more information on Title IX including the Title IX Grievance Procedures, please visit the Title IX website at <https://www.southtexascollege.edu/title-ix/>.

### **REPORT A COMPLAINT OF DISCRIMINATION, OR SEXUAL MISCONDUCT**

The following person has been designated as the Title IX Coordinator to handle inquiries regarding all forms of sexual misconduct as that term is defined in the College's policy:

Todd C. Nelson, J.D.  
Title IX Coordinator  
3201 W. Pecan Blvd., N150  
McAllen, TX 78501  
956-872-4664  
[TitleIX@southtexascollege.edu](mailto:TitleIX@southtexascollege.edu)

More information about gender-based sexual harassment, sexual assault and other sexual misconduct, can be found here:

<https://www.southtexascollege.edu/title-ix/>

File a report of discrimination here: <https://www.southtexascollege.edu/report/>

## **Victims' Rights Statement Pursuant to Texas House Bill HB 1735**

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All victims of sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, or stalking have the right to report an incident and to a prompt and equitable resolution of the reports. Victims of a crime

have the right to choose whether to report the crime to law enforcement, to be assisted by the College in reporting the crime, or to decline to report the crime to law enforcement. The College stresses the importance of going to a hospital, if necessary, for treatment and preservation of evidence as soon as practicable after an incident of sexual assault.

## Clery Act Reporting

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The Department of Public Safety prepares an Annual Security Report. The report compiles local Crime Statistics in compliance with the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Crime Statistics Act and the Violence Against Women Act. The College must notify all faculty, staff, and enrolled students every year when the reports and statistics are available. Copies of the report may also be obtained in person by appointment only at the South Texas College Department of Public Safety, located at 2509 W. Pecan Blvd., McAllen, TX 78501 or by calling 956-872-4444.

In addition copies of the Annual Security Report and Campus-Specific Crime Statistics can be found on the [Clery Act Website](#) and on the following link:

### [Annual Security Report](#)

Campus-Specific Crime Statistics:

- [Higher Education Center – La Joya](#)
- [Mid-Valley Campus](#)
- [Nursing Allied Health Campus](#)
- [Pecan Campus](#)
- [Regional Center for Public Safety Excellence](#)
- [Starr County Campus](#)
- [Technology Campus](#)

## Statement on Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco, Firearms and Other Substances

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In compliance with the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act Amendment of 1989 (Public Law 101-226) and Texas House Resolution 2253 and Senate Resolution 645 (passed in 1987), South Texas College forbids the unlawful manufacture, possession, sale, use or distribution of illegal drugs and alcoholic beverages at on-and off-campus college-sponsored events. Each of these statutes requires colleges and universities to clearly inform students that no illegal drugs (including unlawful possession of alcohol) will be allowed on campus (inside buildings and on campus property), and that students who are found guilty of such violation(s) will be penalized.

South Texas College also prohibits smoking, the use of tobacco products, and the use of e-cigarettes in all college buildings. The College, including all its facilities and grounds, is a smoke/tobacco free environment except in designated smoking/tobacco areas and parking lots. Violators of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action. Students seeking assistance or



educational materials about alcohol, drugs, tobacco or other substances should contact the office of Student Support Services.

Senate Bill 11, also known as Campus Carry, allows holders of a Texas License to Carry (LTC) or Concealed Handgun License (CHL) to bring concealed handguns to certain locations on the college campuses. License holders are referred to the following website for information on prohibited areas and gun free zones:

<https://www.southtexascollege.edu/about/notices/campus-carry.html>. Violators are subject to disciplinary action and criminal prosecution.

## **South Texas College Comprehensive Mission**

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### **Vision Statement**

South Texas College will be a global model in educational innovation serving as a catalyst to drive regional prosperity, economic development, and the social mobility of those we serve.

### **Mission Statement**

South Texas College is a public institution of higher education that provides educational opportunities through excellence in teaching and learning, workforce development, cultural enrichment, community service, and regional and global collaborations.

### **Core Values**

#### **Student Success:**

We are committed to the personal, academic and career goals of each student.

#### **Excellence:**

We are committed to excellence and innovation in teaching, learning and services.

#### **Opportunity:**

We are committed to providing access and support for students to achieve their academic and career goals.

#### **Caring:**

We are committed to creating a campus culture that embodies respect, empathy, and genuine care for all.

#### **Integrity:**

We are committed to being respectful, professional, honest, accountable and transparent.

## Important Phone Numbers

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Student Services Call Center (all campuses): 956-872-8311

Admissions & Records: 956-872-8323

[admissions@southtexascollege.edu](mailto:admissions@southtexascollege.edu)

[Office of Admissions & Records](#)

Advising: 956-872-8372

Bookstore: 956-872-2075

Campus Police & Security: 956-872-4444

Parking Office: 956-872-3333

Cashiers:

- Email: [stc\\_cashiers@southtexascollege.edu](mailto:stc_cashiers@southtexascollege.edu)
- [Cashiers Chat](#)
- Cashiers Call Center: 956-872-3455
- Pecan Campus: 956-872-3455
- Pecan Plaza: 956-872-3852
- Mid-Valley Campus: 956-447-1226
- Starr County Campus: 956-488-5863
- Technology Campus: 956-872-6158
- Nursing and Allied Health Campus: 956-872-3015

S.P.I.R.I.T. Office Pecan Campus: 956-872-4624 or 956-872-2565

Counseling and Student Accessibility Services: 956-872-2173

Centers for Learning Excellence (Tutoring): 956-872-8303

Student Rights and Responsibilities (Student Conduct and Ombuds Services): 956-872-2180

Digital Learning: 956-872-2598

Financial Aid:

- Pecan Campus: 956-872-8375
- Mid Valley Campus: 956-447-6672
- Starr County Campus: 956-488-5803

Veteran Affairs: 956-872-6723

Career and Employer Services: 956-872-6318

Library: 956-872-2645

Student Affairs: 956-872-3530 or 956-872-3535

Student Assessment Center (Testing): 956-872-3484

Student Information Center: 956-872-8311

- Nursing Allied Health 956-872-3100
- Technology Campus 956-872-6100

Virtual Student Services (Chat): <https://studentservices.southtexascollege.edu/chat.html>

## College Catalog

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The South Texas College Catalog is a guide to course descriptions, academic programs, admission, tuition, and administrative information.

The College Catalog is available online at <https://catalog.southtexascollege.edu>

## Academic Calendar

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<https://www.southtexascollege.edu/academics/calendar/>

### Fall Semester 2024 (August 26 - December 15)

August 14 (Wednesday)	New Faculty Start Date – New Faculty Benefits & Orientation (Human Resources)
August 15 (Thursday)	New Faculty Orientation
August 16 (Friday)	New Faculty Service Area Tour
August 19 (Monday)	Faculty Return – Academic Affairs Assembly / Division Meetings
August 20 (Tuesday)	Faculty Preparation Day / Departmental Meetings
August 21 (Wednesday)	Faculty Preparation Day / Departmental Meetings
August 22 (Thursday)	Faculty Preparation Day / Full-Time Faculty Teaching Dual Credit Courses PD Day / Departmental Meetings
August 23 (Friday)	Faculty Preparation Day / Departmental Meetings
August 24 (Saturday)	Adjunct & Dual Credit Faculty Professional and Organizational Development Day
August 26 (Monday)	Classes Begin
September 2 (Monday)	College Closed – Labor Day
September 11 (Wednesday)	Census Day - Twelfth Class Day
September 27 (Friday)	College Closed – Fall Convocation*
November 15 (Friday)	Last Day to Withdraw
November 28 – Dec. 1 (Thursday – Sunday)	College Closed - Thanksgiving Holiday
December 9 – 15 (Monday – Sunday)	Finals
December 14 (Saturday)	Commencement Ceremonies*

December 14 (Saturday)..... Certificate and Degree Award Date  
 December 15 (Sunday) ..... End of Term  
 December 16 (Monday)..... Last Day to Submit Grades  
 December 19 – January 5 (Thurs. – Sun.) ..... Winter Break (College Closed)

**Spring Semester 2025 (January 21 – May 15)**

January 6 (Monday)..... College Opens – Staff return  
 January 6 (Monday)..... New Faculty Start Date – New Faculty Benefits & Orientation  
 (Human Resources)  
 January 13 (Monday)..... Faculty Return – Division / Department Meetings  
 January 14 – 17 (Tuesday-Friday) ..... Faculty Preparation Day / Departmental Meetings  
 January 18 (Saturday)..... Adjunct & Dual Credit Faculty Professional and Organizational  
 Development Day  
 January 20 (Monday)..... Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – College Closed  
 January 21 (Tuesday)..... Classes Begin  
 January 28 – February 1 (Tuesday – Saturday)..... Distance Learning Symposium  
 February 5 (Wednesday) ..... Census Day - Twelfth Class Day  
 February 14 (Friday) ..... College Closed – College-Wide Professional Development  
 Day\*  
 March 17 – 23 (Monday - Sunday) ..... College Closed - Spring Break  
 April 17 – 20 (Thursday – Sunday) ..... College Closed - Semester Break  
 April 21 (Monday)..... Last Day to Withdraw  
 May 9 – 15 (Friday – Thursday) ..... Finals  
 May 15 (Thursday)..... End of Term  
 May 16 – 17 (Friday - Saturday)..... Commencement Ceremonies\*  
 May 17 (Saturday) ..... Certificate and Degree Award Date  
 May 19 (Monday) ..... Last Day to Submit Grades  
 May 26 (Monday) ..... College Closed – Memorial Day

**Summer Session 2025 (June 2 – August 8)**

June 2 (Monday)..... Classes Begin  
 June 17 (Tuesday) ..... Census Day - Twelfth Class Day  
 June 19 (Thursday) ..... College Closed - Juneteenth  
 July 4 (Friday)..... College Closed-Independence Day  
 July 7 – 8 (Monday & Tuesday)..... No classes (For Summer III only)  
 July 24 (Thursday)..... Last Day to Withdraw  
 August 7 (Thursday)..... End of Term/Finals (Classes Meeting M-R)  
 August 8 (Friday)..... End of Term /Finals (Classes Meeting M-F)  
 August 9 (Saturday) ..... Certificate and Degree Award Date  
 August 11 (Monday) ..... Last Day to Submit Grades

**SI – Minimester (June 2 – July 3)**

June 2 (Monday)..... Classes Begin  
 June 5 (Thursday)..... Census Day - Fourth Class Day  
 June 19 (Thursday) ..... College Closed - Juneteenth  
 June 26 (Thursday) ..... Last Day to Withdraw

July 3 (Thursday).....End of Term/Finals  
 July 4 (Friday).....College Closed-Independence Day  
 July 7 (Monday) .....Last Day to Submit Grades

**SII – Minimester (July 9 – August 8)**

July 9 (Wednesday).....Classes Begin  
 July 14 (Monday) .....Census Day - Fourth Class Day  
 August 1 (Friday).....Last Day to Withdraw  
 August 7 (Thursday).....End of Term/Finals (Classes Meeting M-R)  
 August 8 (Friday).....End of Term /Finals (Classes Meeting M-F)  
 August 11 (Monday) .....Last Day to Submit Grades

\*Subject to change depending on availability of venue.

**Minimester Sessions**

**Note:** Note: "K" Sessions include Competency-Based courses that require approval for registration.

**Fall 2024 Minimester Sessions**

Session	Classes Begin	Census Date	Last Day to Withdraw	Classes End	Grades Due Date
REG	August 26	September 11	November 15	December 15	December 16
N1	August 26	September 6	October 28	November 15	November 18
N5	August 26	August 29	September 25	October 4	October 7
M9	August 26	September 3	October 7	October 18	October 21
K1	August 26	August 30	October 2	October 11	October 14
M6	August 26	August 30	October 2	October 11	October 14
L2	August 26	August 29	September 19	September 26	September 27
M2	September 3	September 11	October 24	November 8	November 11
N9	September 3	September 6	September 26	October 4	October 7
M0	September 9	September 20	November 19	December 13	December 16
M5	September 16	September 19	October 17	October 25	October 28
N4	October 7	October 10	November 6	November 15	November 18
N6	October 7	October 15	November 26	December 13	December 16
M7	October 21	October 25	November 25	December 6	December 9
K2	October 21	October 25	November 25	December 6	December 9
M3	October 21	October 28	December 2	December 13	December 16
M8	November 11	November 14	December 6	December 13	December 16
N11	November 18	November 20	December 9	December 13	December 16

**Spring 2025 Minimester Sessions**

Session	Classes Begin	Census Date	Last Day to Withdraw	Classes End	Grades Due Date
REG	January 21	February 5	April 21	May 15	May 19
N5	January 21	January 24	February 20	February 28	March 3
N12	January 21	January 27	February 26	March 7	March 10

Session	Classes Begin	Census Date	Last Day to Withdraw	Classes End	Grades Due Date
K1	January 21	January 27	February 26	March 7	March 10
M8	January 21	January 28	March 3	March 14	March 24
M2	January 21	January 29	March 13	April 4	April 7
N1	January 21	January 30	March 26	April 11	April 14
M0	January 27	February 7	April 15	May 9	May 12
M5	January 27	January 30	February 27	March 7	March 10
N4	February 17	February 25	April 15	May 2	May 5
N6	March 3	March 6	April 8	April 16	April 21
N3	March 3	March 11	April 30	May 15	May 19
N13	March 24	March 28	April 30	May 9	May 12
K2	March 24	March 28	April 30	May 9	May 12
M3	March 24	March 31	May 5	May 15	May 19
M6	March 31	April 3	May 1	May 9	May 12
N11	April 14	April 16	May 5	May 9	May 12
N9	April 14	April 21	May 8	May 15	May 19
M4	April 21	April 23	May 9	May 15	May 19

## South Texas College Emergency Notification System

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Receive important alerts and emergency response information from the RAVE Emergency Notification System and RAVE Guardian Application by text, email, and voice message. Login with your JagNet username and password at [www.getrave.com](http://www.getrave.com). For more information on RAVE and RAVE Guardian and how it can help keep you safe while on campus please visit our website at: <https://www.southtexascollege.edu/stcdps/stcrave.html>.

## Multi-Hazard Emergency Operations Plan

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The Multi-Hazard Emergency Operations Plan details the coordinated prevention/mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery to a range of natural, criminal and man-made occurrences with the potential to disrupt normal operations of the College and threaten the safety of students, employees, and members of the greater community. This plan contains strategies that are grounded in the multi-hazard management approach to safety and security throughout South Texas College. <https://www.southtexascollege.edu/emergency/pdf/All-Hazards-Emergency-Plan.pdf>

## South Texas College Username and Pin

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If you do not receive the letter or need to reset your PIN please contact the South Texas College Help Desk at 956-872-2111, or via email at [isphelp@southtexascollege.edu](mailto:isphelp@southtexascollege.edu); the STC Call Center can also assist with providing, or resetting, your login access.

## JagNet

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JagNet is South Texas College's web portal that provides personalized access to web services. All registered students, faculty and staff have access to course information, group tools, campus life, work life, personal calendars, email, and more - anytime, anywhere.

Visit [jagnet.southtexascollege.edu](http://jagnet.southtexascollege.edu) and login using your South Texas College username and password.

## JagMail

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Your South Texas College JagMail account is provided by Microsoft Office 365. This email account is the official form of electronic communication for your experience at South Texas College. All campus communication, course-related information, tuition and billing information, and any additional administrative correspondence related to your enrollment and attendance at South Texas College will be sent to this campus e-mail account. For JagMail activation steps visit: <https://isp.southtexascollege.edu/service/jagnet-self-service/> It is the student's responsibility to check their JagMail account regularly and will be held responsible for viewing all communication sent by South Texas College.

## Wireless Internet

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Wireless connectivity is provided to all students, faculty and staff to promote mobile learning. The college provides limited support for personal wireless technology and users are expected to understand how to configure and operate their devices accordingly.

<https://isp.southtexascollege.edu/service/wireless-faq/>

## Student I.D. Cards

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All students are responsible for obtaining an identification card at the time of initial registration with the college. Students should carry it at all times as it must be presented when paying fees, requesting transcripts, and utilizing advising, library, or other services. Student identification cards are issued to students free of charge. The identification card replacement fee is \$15. Student identification cards are available at campus Enrollment Centers district-wide.

## Textbooks

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All students are expected to obtain the required textbooks for each class and have them by the first day of class. Students who fail to obtain textbooks may be removed from class by the instructor.

Book Allowances and Refund dates for the current award year can be found at [https://studentservices.southtexascollege.edu/finaid/book\\_allowances.html](https://studentservices.southtexascollege.edu/finaid/book_allowances.html)

## College Bookstore

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BibliU is the official college bookstore: [mystcstore.com](http://mystcstore.com).

To comply with HB 1096 (81st Legislature of Texas) South Texas College advises that a student of this institution is under no obligation to purchase a textbook from a College-affiliated bookstore. The same textbook may also be available from an independent retailer, including an online retailer.

## Financial Aid Standards of Academic Progress

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Federal regulations mandate that a student receiving Financial Assistance under Title IV programs must maintain Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) in his/her course of study *regardless of whether or not financial aid is awarded each semester.*

1. **Meet GPA Requirement**

Students must make sure their overall GPA is at or above a 2.0.

2. **Complete 67% of Attempted Credits**

Students must complete a minimum of 67 percent of all attempted credits. Failing grades, drops, incompletes, and withdrawals can result in failure to meet the 67% requirement.

3. **Graduate within the Maximum Time Frame**

Maximum time frame is the total number of hours financial aid will fund while in a particular degree.

Maximum Time Frame = required hours to graduate from degree X 150%.

(Please refer to your degree plan to determine the required number of hours to graduate.)

More information on the Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Policy can be found at

[https://studentservices.southtexascollege.edu/finaid/academic\\_progress.html](https://studentservices.southtexascollege.edu/finaid/academic_progress.html)

## Eligibility Issues

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Eligibility issues that could affect a student's Financial Aid award include but are not limited to:

- Undeclared Majors
- Developmental Coursework
- Over-awards
- Repeated Coursework
- Lifetime Eligibility Used
- Unusual Enrollment History
- Attendance
- Withdrawing
- Failure to Earn a Passing Grade
- Gainful Employment
- Satisfactory Academic Progress
- Professional Judgment
- Verification

More information on this can be found at

<https://studentservices.southtexascollege.edu/finaid/regulations.html>



## Net Price Calculator

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The Net Price Calculator is designed to provide an estimate of the net price to attend a college/university. It provides an estimate for students attending full-time. It does not represent a final determination or actual award of financial assistance, nor does it replace the FAFSA application. To use the Net Price Calculator please use this link:

<https://www.highered.texas.gov/institutional-resources-programs/net-price-calculator/>

## Report Fraud

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If you suspect that a student, employee, or other individual has misreported information or altered documentation to fraudulently obtain federal funds, report that individual to the Office of Inspector General at 214-661-9530. This includes false claims of independent student status, false claims of citizenship, use of false identities, forgery of signatures of certifications, and false statements of income. Fraud is the intent to deceive as opposed to a mistake.

## Campus Parking

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### Parking Permits Required

All students, faculty, and staff must purchase a parking permit for each vehicle or motorcycle that will be parked on South Texas College property. A parking permit is required for each vehicle and cannot be transferred from one vehicle to another. A parking permit does not guarantee a parking space, but does authorize parking in designated areas.

### Purchasing a Parking Permit

Parking permits must be purchased online at <https://jagparking.southtexascollege.edu/>. All outstanding parking fines must be paid in full prior to obtaining a permit. Parking permits will be mailed to the address selected or entered on the STC parking portal.

### Parking permit fees are as follows:

- Initial Permit: \$25.00
- Additional: \$25.00

### Replacement Parking Permits

A parking permit cannot be transferred between vehicles. However, a parking permit may be replaced at no cost for the following with proper documentation:

- Windshield Replacement
- Vehicle Total Loss

### Permit Refunds:

Refunds can be issued for unused parking permits returned within 21 days of purchase. Subject to approval.

## **Temporary Parking Permits**

Students, faculty, and staff with valid parking permits may obtain a temporary parking permit for short periods when a vehicle or motorcycle is not available, this includes waiting for a parking permit that has been mailed. You may request a temporary parking permit through the STC parking portal.

Visitors may also obtain a temporary parking permit through the STC parking portal.

## **Displaying a Parking Permit**

Parking permits are good for one-time use, please be sure to display permit vinyl correctly the first time.

Parking permits for vehicles shall be visible and permanently affixed to the inside lower right-hand corner (passenger side) of the front windshield with only the adhesive on the front face of the permit (do not use tape). Permits for motorcycles shall be permanently affixed in a clearly visible location with only the adhesive on the opposite side of the permit (do not use tape). Permits shall be displayed in an upright position and not altered in anyway.

## **Issuance of Citations**

Texas Education Code Section 51.201 declares that laws of Texas are in effect for Institutions of Higher Education and violations of state traffic laws may result in the issuance of citations to be adjudicated through the Municipal or Justice of the Peace courts in which the campus is located. Administrative citations can also be issued for traffic and parking violations. Individuals who own or operate a vehicle or motorcycle on South Texas College property will be held liable for any citations issued to that vehicle or motorcycle with or without a permit.

### **Administrative Parking Citation Fees**

- 1st Citation: \$30.00
- 2nd Citation: \$50.00
- 3rd Citation: \$80.00
- 4th Citation: \$100.00
- 5th Citation: \$120.00
- Vehicle Boot Removal Fee: \$100

### **Fire Lane Violations\***

- 1st Citation: \$50.00
- 2nd Citation: \$90.00

### **Handicap Parking Violations\***

- Citation: \$150.00

### **Skateboard and Other Appliance Violations\***

- 1st Citation: Warning
- 2nd Citation: \$30.00
- 3rd Citation: \$50.00
- 4th Citation: \$70.00
- 5th Citation: \$90.00

### **Moving Violation Fees\***

- Warning: \$0.00
- 1st Citation: \$30.00
- 2nd Citation: \$50.00
- 3rd Citation: \$90.00

Stated fees are for administrative parking citations issued by an STC security guard only.

\*If a citation for fire lane parking, handicap parking, or moving violations is issued by an STC Police Officer the fees will vary depending on the Municipal or Justice of the Peace courts in which the campus is located.

### **Wheel Locks**

Wheel locks will be placed upon receiving the 5th citation for the same administrative parking violation. All outstanding citations must be paid in full and a receipt of payment must be verified by the South Texas College Department of Public Safety before the wheel lock is removed. If the wheel lock is attempted or successfully removed from the vehicle without the approval of the Department of Public Safety, the individual will be held responsible for any damage done to South Texas College property. Wheel locks may be placed on vehicles for outstanding parking fines, security, or police matters. The South Texas College Department of Public Safety is not responsible for any damage to vehicles.

### **Appeals of Administrative Citations**

The South Texas College Department of Public Safety provides an Independent Traffic and Parking Citation Appeals Committee for administrative citations that includes faculty and staff who are not employees of the Department of Public Safety.

Submitting an appeal does not mean that it will be granted, but rather reviewed for consideration of de-escalation.

Appeals of administrative citations must be submitted through the STC parking portal within 14 calendar days from the date of the citation. No late appeals will be accepted.

Appeals of citations with no dollar value will not be accepted. (Example: Warning issued at \$0.00)

Appellants will be notified of appeal decisions via the email address provided on the STC Parking Portal.

- If the appeal is granted, then no further action is required.
- If the appeal is denied, the appellant will be informed of the decision and given an explanation for the denial.
- If a citation that has been appealed is paid or waived/reduced from taking the awareness examination, the appeal will be automatically denied.

All appeal decisions are final.

## **Ticket Dismissal**

The Parking department may dismiss citations that are issued in error. If a citation is dismissed, the appellant will be informed of the decision via email, and no further action is needed.

## **Awareness Assessment**

An individual that has received a citation(s) is eligible to take a one-time parking assessment to waive or reduce parking fines. This does not apply once a wheel lock fine has been issued, or for fire lane and disabled parking violations. A score of 70% or more will result in the adjustment of the fine(s). If the individual fails the examination, they are unable to retake the examination and it is noted on their parking account. The examination is offered as a one-time solution per school year and is conducted online.

## **STC Police Officer Citations**

If a citation is issued by an STC police officer you may not appeal the citation through the STC parking portal. All citations issued by STC police officers will be referred to the Municipal or Justice of the Peace courts in which the campus is located.

## **South Texas College Department of Public Safety (Campus Police & Security)**

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The mission of the South Texas College Department of Public Safety is to provide a safe educational environment for students, faculty, staff, and campus visitors.

If you are involved in an incident or accident on campus grounds that requires emergency assistance, call 911 or 956-872-4444 immediately. To report crimes or for any other assistance contact the South Texas College Department of Public Safety at 956-872-4444 or visit their web site at: <https://www.southtexascollege.edu/stcdps/>

## **Bicycles, Skateboards, In-Line Skates, Roller Skates, Motorized Scooters, Hoverboards, and Similar Apparatuses**

Bicycles, Skateboards, In-Line Skates, Roller Skates, Motorized Scooters, Hoverboards, and Similar Apparatuses, hereafter referred to as Wheeled Devices, may operate on college driveways, parking lots, and designated areas only.

Wheeled devices shall comply with all stop signs, yield signs, and other official traffic control devices and not exceed posted speed limits when traveling on campus.

Wheeled device users must exercise caution to prevent injury to oneself and others. Users of wheeled devices are personally liable for damages caused and associated with their use.

Individuals may be found to have violated the Student Code of Conduct by conducting one's self in a manner that endangers the health or safety of other persons on campus or at an authorized function sponsored by the College.

- A. Wheeled Devices may be used as a form of transportation only. The use of wheeled devices, the only exception being mobility assistance devices for the disabled, is prohibited within any building on South Texas College property or under the control of South Texas College including but not limited to the following surface features:
  - a. Sidewalk curbs
  - b. Garages
  - c. Staircases and steps
  - d. Handrails
  - e. Flower planters
  - f. Ramps
  - g. Benches, table, chairs or stools or any other architectural features
  - h. Never hitch a ride from a car, bus, truck or bicycle
- B. It is prohibited for wheeled device user to engage in trick riding on campus.
  - Trick riding is defined as any type of movement where the wheels of the wheeled device are deliberately removed from contact with the surface of the ground, sidewalk or street in a repetitive technique.
  - Individuals are encouraged to abide by safety regulations at all times. This includes the use of protective safety gear, including helmets, knee and elbow pads that meet current U.S. safety standards.
- C. Wheeled devices may park at bike racks and are subject to the same parking regulations as bicycles.
  - Scooters and bikes are not permitted in buildings or inside any exterior access door.
  - South Texas College is not responsible for loss, theft or damage to skateboards, skates, scooters (non-motorized), bikes, EPAMDs, and other wheeled devices.
  - To report loss, theft or damage please contact the South Texas College Department of Public Safety.
- D. Definitions

- **Scooter:** any non-motorized device consisting of two or more wheels affixed to a platform a platform or footboard upon which a rider stands and which has a handle or other mechanism for holding or guiding the device. It does not include mopeds, whether operated with or without motor power (see Motorcycle/Moped/Motor Scooters).
- **Skateboard:** any non-motorized device consisting of two or more wheels affixed to a platform or footboard upon which a rider stands and which does not have steering capability similar to that of a bicycle or brakes, which operate on or upon the wheels of the skateboard. It also includes every device generally recognized as a skateboard.

### **Bicycles, Low-Powered Electrical Bicycles, Scooters and EPAMDS:**

On all college streets and property, operators of wheeled devices shall comply with all stop signs, yield signs, and other official traffic control devices.

Wheeled devices must be operated in accordance with and conform to all local, state, and federal regulations. It is prohibited to operate a wheeled device on campus in a manner that jeopardizes pedestrian safety. Individuals may be subject to fine or penalty under local, state or federal law. Penalties can include warnings, fines, and in some cases arrest. The penalties depend on whether the charge is a first or repeat offense, and how severe the infraction is deemed.

### **Public Safety and Yielding the Right-of-Way**

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Wheeled devices do not have the right of way at any time. The campus grounds, sidewalks, streets, parking lots and other areas are not designed for or intended to be used by persons using wheeled devices.

Whenever a person is using a wheeled device that person **must** yield the right-of-way to any pedestrian, and/or other mobility assistance devices for the disabled.

### **Local, State or Federal Law**

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For further information about local, state or federal law please contact the South Texas College Department of Public Safety at:

Phone: 956-872-4444

Web: <https://www.southtexascollege.edu/stcdps/>

### **Smoke/Tobacco/E-Cigarette Free Environment**

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South Texas College, including all its facilities and grounds, is a smoke/tobacco/e-cigarette free environment except in designated areas and parking lots. Persons violating this policy shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

For more information about designated smoking areas please review the campus maps at <https://campuses.southtexascollege.edu>.

## **Voluntary Student Accident Insurance**

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South Texas College makes available to all enrolling students accident insurance coverage. Such coverage is voluntary and must be purchased by the student. Students have the option to pay the full annual premium or purchase the Voluntary Student Accident Insurance coverage per semester. Coverage terminates at the end of every semester. As with most insurance coverage, the policy result, individuals purchasing this insurance are responsible for any balance or unpaid claim due. The policy includes coverage while participating in school sponsored activities, including intramural and recreational sports.

Students have the following options regarding insurance purchase:

- a) Have their own insurance (BCBS, Aetna, Medicaid, Medicare, VA, etc.)
- b) Purchase the South Texas College policy (insurance must be purchased online at <https://www.southtexascollege.edu/current/insurance.html>)
- c) Accept full financial responsibility for expenses from an accident and/or sickness

For information visit <https://www.southtexascollege.edu/current/insurance.html> or contact the Cashier's office at 956-872-3455.

## **Withdrawal (Dropping) From Developmental Courses**

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Students not meeting Placement Standards to enroll in freshman-level coursework and not qualifying for an exemption are required to enroll in and attend developmental course(s) work until they meet the Placement Standards for those skills. Students placing in one or more Developmental courses must also enroll in and attend a College Success course (EDCS 0101, EDUC1300, PSYC1300, CSFH0101) during their first semester, until they successfully exit the course or become college ready in all three areas. Students who fail to comply with policies and procedures may be withdrawn from all of their classes except College Success and may not earn any college credit hours for the semester. Students who withdraw, are withdrawn from, or do not enroll in their required developmental classes are entitled to a one semester-long waiver which will allow them not to be withdrawn from all their academic classes, but they must enroll in the appropriate developmental class(es) the following semester or sooner. Being withdrawn from academic classes will affect Financial Aid status.

## **Withdrawal (Dropping) From Semester Credit Courses**

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Withdrawal from a course results in a grade of "W." A student who decides to withdraw from a specific course(s) are encouraged to speak to the instructor first before completing the online withdrawal process. Student may withdraw from a course(s) by accessing their registration schedule in JagNet on or before the published withdrawal deadline.

**Students who withdraw or are withdrawn from a course(s) may be required to repay all or a portion of their financial aid.**

For Title IV purposes students who officially withdraw, are withdrawn by instructor, do not officially withdraw **or** fail to earn at least one passing grade in the period, are considered withdrawn students, and therefore, may be required to repay some or all of the financial aid received. Failing grades for financial aid purposes are “F”, “I”, “NP” and no grades. More information on this can be found at:

<https://studentservices.southtexascollege.edu/finaid/withdrawals.html>

Students who fail to withdraw properly or who are failing a course and have not withdrawn as of the established deadline, will receive an “F” for the course. It is the student’s responsibility to initiate the withdrawal process. South Texas College is not responsible for any liabilities incurred as a result of the student’s failure to officially withdraw from the College.

## **Six “W” Limit**

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Students enrolling as first-time freshmen at a public institution of higher education in Texas in Fall 2007 or thereafter will be limited to a total of six dropped courses during their entire undergraduate career.

## **Course Repeat Fee**

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Students repeating a course will be required to pay an additional fee per credit hour.

- Third or More Attempts (Excludes Developmental Courses) \$125.00
- Enrollment in Developmental Studies Courses (>18 credit hours) \$125.00

## **S.P.I.R.I.T. OFFICE (Student Payment Inquiry Resolution and Information Team)**

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Office staff provide guidance to students experiencing financial issues, billing or enrollment concerns, and other related difficulties. The goal of the office is to reduce frustrations associated with student accounts that a student may experience while attending STC.

### **Contact the S.P.I.R.I.T. Office**

Pecan Campus

Student Services Building K, Room 1.912

Phone: 956-872-2565 or 956-872-4624

Website: <https://finance.southtexascollege.edu/businessoffice/cashiers/spirit.html>

## **Cashiers Department**

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The Cashiers Department currently has six cashier office locations to service students in student account related questions with South Texas College. Visit us online for more information on campus locations: [southtexascollege.edu/go/cashiers](https://southtexascollege.edu/go/cashiers)



- Email: [stc\\_cashiers@southtexascollege.edu](mailto:stc_cashiers@southtexascollege.edu)
- Call Center: 956-872-3455

## **Special Courses**

The College reserves the right to set appropriate fees and tuition for any special courses which may be offered after publication of this catalog.

While this handbook was prepared on the basis of the best information available at the time, South Texas College reserves the right to change any information, including tuition and fees, course offerings and admissions requirements without notice or obligation in keeping with policies approved by the Board of Trustees of South Texas College.

## **Financial Management**

At STC we care about our students' financial success that is why we want to help address the national increase in student loan debt and loan default rates. In support of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) – Chapter 12.6, the college participates by informing students about the consequences and obligations associated with debt and repayment of loans by providing free financial management information and guidance to help student borrowers to better understand how to manage their finances.

The College offers free Student Financial Literacy workshops throughout the year. The Financial Management workshops empower students to achieve their financial goals in life by educating them on free financial management tools and resources available to better equip them in taking ownership of their finances.

## **Consequences of Debt**

South Texas College students should be aware that any student loans obtained is an expensive means of borrowing money.

STC student loans must be repaid within the terms established on the loan agreement.

Students may be responsible for additional late fees, fines or penalties if the payment is defaulted.

Additionally, the account may be sent to a contracted collection agency and the student will be responsible for additional collection fees when in default.

If in default, future student loans at STC may be denied.

## **Students Responsibility for Information**

Students must become familiar with and abide by the College's policies, procedures, requirements, and deadlines regarding the student financial account as described in all official College publication items. Publication items include, but are not limited to: Course Catalog,

Student Handbook, Course Schedule, Flyers, Posters, Postcards, Student Guide, Due Date Pocket Calendar, Website, Emails, and the JagNet portal.

The College reserves the right to make changes to policies, regulations, procedures, requirements, deadlines, and tuition rates and fee schedules at any time and as necessary; once these changes have been made they shall be posted online at which point they shall take effect. Students are encouraged to check online at [SouthTexasCollege.edu](http://SouthTexasCollege.edu) for the updated versions of all South Texas College Board of Trustees approved policies, procedures, regulations, requirements, deadlines, and tuition rates and fee schedules.

Students are also responsible for ensuring that the College has their up-to-date personal contact information including their current mailing address and phone number. Students may update their contact information online using their JagNet account.

The College uses e-mail as the primary means for communication, and it is the student's responsibility not only to activate the student's college email but also to review the account regularly. Students may redirect their official College emails to another address. However, students shall be deemed to have received and shall be obligated by any information sent via the College's official email account whether or not the student has actually read the email.

Students may not use administrative, clerical or technical billing errors to absolve any financial responsibilities to pay the correct amount of tuition, fees and other associated financial obligations assessed as a result of registration at the College.

## **Student Financial Obligation**

South Texas College wishes to be transparent about the financial expectations of students to the College. All students must acknowledge that they have read and understand the Financial Obligation Agreement terms, three times during the year of their attendance at the college before they can gain access to student information services via the school's online portal referred to as JagNet. All students are responsible for becoming familiar with the College's policies regarding the student financial account, and the student responsibilities under those policies.

The Student Financial Obligation Agreement terms detail the student's responsibility to remit payment for charges incurred at the College as well as repercussions of nonpayment. Students must meet all financial obligations to the College by established deadlines.

Questions regarding the Student Financial Obligation terms may be directed to the Cashier Department by email at [stc\\_cashiers@southtexascollege.edu](mailto:stc_cashiers@southtexascollege.edu).

## **Contact Consent**

The contact consent, as part of the Student Financial Obligation Agreement, allows South Texas College and its agents and contractors to contact the student to their current and/or future

cellular phone number(s), email address(es) or wireless device(s) regarding delinquent student account(s)/loan(s), any other debt owed to South Texas College.

Agents and contractors may use automated telephone dialing equipment, artificial or prerecorded voice or text messages, and personal calls and emails, in the effort to contact the student. A student may withdraw the Contact Consent by submitting a written request to the South Texas College Cashier's Office.

Questions regarding the Contact Consent may be directed to the Cashier Department by email at [stc\\_cashiers@southtexascollege.edu](mailto:stc_cashiers@southtexascollege.edu).

## **Consent to Do Business Electronically with South Texas College**

As part of the Student Financial Obligation Agreement, the consent to do business electronically with South Texas College covers primary institutional student business functions. Agreeing to receive the 1098-T tax forms electronically through online access.

Students will be able to view and print a paper copy of their 1098-T by accessing their JagNet account. A student may withdraw the consent of receiving the 1098-T tax forms electronically by submitting a written request to the South Texas College Cashier's Office.

Questions regarding the 1098-T opt-in may be directed to the Cashier Department by email at [stc\\_cashiers@southtexascollege.edu](mailto:stc_cashiers@southtexascollege.edu).

## **Authorization To Use Title IV To Pay For Other Educationally Related Charges**

Federal student financial aid can only cover "institutional charges" vs. "non-institutional charges" as defined by the U.S. Department of Education - Federal Student Aid Handbook 2020-2021, Volume 4-Processing Aid and Managing FSA Funds, Chapter 2 Disbursing FSA Funds. This definition includes current year charges for tuition and fees, and on-campus room and board, and other educational expenses that are paid to the school directly; it also includes other fees such as: lab fees, registration fees, and other specialized departmental or college fees associated directly with taking a class. A charge does not have to appear on a student's account to be considered an institutional charge. Unless authorization is received by the student, federal financial aid cannot be used to cover non-institutional charges such as, but not limited to: library fines, parking fines, parking permit fees, returned check fees, installment plan processing fees, repeat fees, or any other charges not directly associated to taking a class.

Students may choose to opt-in to provide authorization to pay for non-institutional or other educationally related charges with federal financial aid, and may still owe a balance on the student account in which the class(es) may be dropped for non-payment if the outstanding balance is not secured on a payment plan. The outstanding balance may cause a "hold" for unpaid charges, which would block registration for future semesters, obtaining grades, and receiving transcripts. In addition, failure to make payment may result in the account being sent to a contracted Third Party (Collection Agency) to file a report with credit bureaus. Student will

be responsible for the fees of any collection agency, which may be based on a percentage at a maximum of thirty percent of the debt, and all costs and expenses, including reasonable attorney's fees, late fees, interest and/or court costs, incurred with the collection of any monies due to the College. Fees will be assessed regardless of payment method.

## **Admittance to Class**

A student who is indebted to South Texas College will not be allowed to register until the student has cleared all financial obligations due to the College and cleared all Business Office and other applicable holds. Failure to pay a debt owed to the College may result in dismissal from attending classes after a specific announced date, ineligibility to take final examinations, or to register until such debts are paid. Transcripts, grades, or information about the student will not be released until such debts are paid.

Any unpaid and outstanding balance(s) may be forwarded within 60-90 days after the semester has ended to a contracted Third Party (Collection Agency) to reflect the student's credit worthiness. The student will be responsible for the fees of any collection agency, which may be based on a percentage at a maximum of thirty percent of the debt, and all costs and expenses, including reasonable attorney's fees, late fees, interest and/or court costs, incurred with the collection of any monies due to the College.

Bankruptcy: College tuition, fees and other charges are a debt incurred for educational purposes and are considered a Qualified Educational Loan as defined in section 221 (D)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code. Therefore, this debt is not dischargeable pursuant to United States Bankruptcy Section 523(a)(8) and may not be dischargeable in bankruptcy.

In addition, student may still owe the debt to the college after the bankruptcy.

## **Registration**

A time period will be set aside each term or semester to permit students to register. For registration open enrollment periods, visit the Enrollment Center; total tuition and fees will be due at this time. Installment payment plans and an Emergency Loan Program are available during the open enrollment period.

South Texas College students are responsible for becoming familiar with the current tuition and fee charges. The estimated tuition and fee charges are per semester and are subject to change upon approval of the Board of Trustees of South Texas College and upon changes in the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board requirements or other regulatory entity requirements and may be found online at: [southtexascollege.edu/go/cashiers](http://southtexascollege.edu/go/cashiers) > Under Quick Links click: Tuition & Fee Rates.

## **Payments**

Students are responsible for paying the total cost for tuition and fees on the day of registration by means of money order, personal check, credit card (Visa, Discover, and MasterCard), or a cashier's check. Students may mail-in their payment. Mailed payments must be received and

processed by the due date. Credit card and check payments are accepted online via JagNet and CWA.

Failure to pay the required amount for tuition and fees may cause your classes to be automatically dropped; however, be aware that you may still be liable for certain fees.

This also applies to student accounts that have a remaining outstanding balance and are under financial aid or are being sponsored by a third party, i.e., Texas Rehabilitation Commission, employer or any other source.

Failure to make payment or payment arrangements on any outstanding balance(s) may result in the account being sent to a contracted Third Party (Collection Agency) to file a report with credit bureaus. Student will be responsible for the fees of any collection agency, which may be based on a percentage at a maximum of thirty percent of the debt, and all costs and expenses, including reasonable attorney's fees, late fees, interest and/or court costs, incurred with the collection of any monies due to the College.

Fees will be assessed regardless of payment method. To make payment before the account is referred to an external collection agency, log into JagNet and click: CWA under Student Apps or log into <https://cwa.southtexascollege.edu>.

Financial Aid credits may be applied to any prior term balances. It is the student's responsibility to follow up on any unpaid balances; and must be paid by the student directly. Failure to pay a debt owed to the College may result in dismissal from attending classes after a specific announced date, ineligibility to take final examinations, or to register until such debts are paid. Transcripts, grades, or information about the student will not be released until such debts are paid.

## Refund Options

### e-Refunds: Sign up for Direct Deposit!

- Quick, Safe, and Convenient
- Funds are transferred instantly to your preferred bank checking account.
- Eliminate the risk of stolen or lost checks in the mail.
- Cash is accessible electronically.

### Steps:

1. Update your address and phone number
2. Complete the Two-Step Verification Enrollment  
Then follow these steps to enroll in e-Refunds:
  - a. Log-in to JagNet
  - b. At menu to left, click: Student Accounts
  - c. Click: Pay My Bill
  - d. At top of the page, click: Refunds Tab

- e. Click: Set up Account to get started.

### **Paper Check (default method)**

- South Texas College processes all student refunds and disbursements in the form of a paper check which are mailed to the address on file.
- In order to avoid any possible delays in receiving your disbursements, please update your address and phone number in JagNet.
- For your convenience, PNC Bank, the college's depository bank, has agreed to cash South Texas College's student refund checks free of charge. You will be required to present a photo ID to cash your refund check to comply with banking regulations.
- Your refund preference is automatically defaulted to paper check; however, you have the choice to select other refund preferences such as Direct Deposit to electronically deposit funds to your existing bank account.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the South Texas College Cashiers' Department at 956-872-3455.

For more details about your Refund Options visit

<https://finance.southtexascollege.edu/businessoffice/cashiers/>

### **Refund Guidelines**

The *effective date* of a class drop or add is the date the course schedule in JagNet Registration or by the authorized STC staff. The refund policy also applies to courses dropped due to advisement from faculty. *Class days* refers to South Texas College's scheduled class days, not the students' class meeting days.

- The College may apply existing credits to the student's delinquent outstanding debt.
- All students who are eligible for a cash refund will receive the refund via mail or direct deposit.
- Refunds made in accordance with NACHA (National Agency Clearing House Association) and the Merchant Services Agreement (merchant shall make no cash refunds to purchasers on Card sales):
- If classes are paid with a credit card, a refund is to be first applied to the original credit card payment.
- Any Financial Aid posted after the account has been paid by a credit card is refunded back to the credit card before any money is refunded to the student.
- There will be NO exceptions to this procedure.
- If the donor issues a scholarship check made payable to the student or South Texas College and the student is initially presented a scholarship award letter to South Texas College, it is the student's responsibility to present the check to South Texas College.

As prescribed by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, the South Texas College refund policy is as follows:

## **Tuition (Excludes Minimesters)**

### **Fall and Spring Semesters**

- Prior to or on the second-class day: 100 percent
- During the next 13th class days: 70 percent
- During the 16th through 20th class days: 25 percent
- After the 20th class day: None

### **Summer I and II Sessions**

- Prior to or on the first-class day: 100 percent
- During the next four class days: 70 percent
- During the sixth-class day: 25 percent
- After the sixth-class day: None

### **Summer Session**

- Prior to or on the first-class day: 100 percent
- During the next eight class days: 70 percent
- During the 10th through 12th class days: 25 percent
- After the 12th class day: None

Range of days in each percent category is subject to change based on the length of the semester and in accordance with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

## **Incidental Fees (Excludes Minimesters)**

### **Other Fees**

Audit Fee, Credit by Exam Fee, Reinstatement Fee, Installment (Processing and Late) Fee, Emergency Loan Late Fee, and any other fee approved by the Board of Trustees of South Texas College.

- Prior to the first-class day: 100 percent
- First class day and after: None

### **Minimester Refunds**

A 100% refund is to be made for courses dropped (drop or withdraw) prior to or on the first-class day. Refer to the Cashiers Department for more information on refund percentages after the first-class day.

Tuition and fees are per semester and are subject to change upon approval by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and/or the Board of Trustees of South Texas College.

## **Insufficient Funds, Stop Payment and Other Returned Checks**

Immediate restitution of funds must be made when a check is returned by a bank. Students who have established an insufficient check status on their student account will be required to pay by means of money order, cashier's check, or credit card. Checks will not be accepted.

To clear a returned check, the student must contact the Cashiers' office to pay for the check. A \$30 fee will be charged on all returned check items.

If the check is not paid by the end of the semester, the account becomes delinquent and consequently will be released to one of the external collection agencies or to the District Attorney. Any fees assessed by the collection agency, which may be based on a percentage at a maximum of thirty percent of the debt, and all costs and expenses, including reasonable attorney's fees, late fees, interest and/or court costs incurred will be the student's responsibility.

Checks returned by the bank due to accounts closed or stop payments are not redeposited. Stopping payment on tuition checks will be considered as an NSF item. Stop payments do not constitute an official withdrawal from the College. An official withdrawal must be processed at the Enrollment Center.

A student who is indebted to South Texas College will not be allowed to register, request official transcripts, receive grades, or receive any other information.

## **Schedule Changes (Adding and Dropping Courses)**

If you add a class after your initial payment, it is your responsibility to pay the additional tuition and fees immediately. Failure to do so may result in a drop for non-payment and fees may apply.

Students must not assume that they will automatically be dropped or withdrawn from their classes if they do not attend.

Stopping payment on a tuition check does not constitute an official withdrawal from classes. An official withdrawal occurs when courses are dropped online or processed by personnel from the Office of Admissions and Records.

Dropping and adding a course of equal value is considered an even exchange when done on the same day before the twelfth-class day during the Fall and Spring semesters, and fourth-class day during the Summer sessions.

South Texas College will refund a percentage of collected tuition and mandatory fees to students who officially withdraw from their classes, according to the refund schedule established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.



## Payment Options

Payment options such as Installment Plans or Emergency Loans are subject to availability and are offered during the open enrollment period to pay for tuition and registration fees in payments and must be renewed each term.

Payment options are a contractual agreement, failure to make payment may result in the account being sent to a contracted Third Party (Collection Agency) to file a report with credit bureaus. Student will be responsible for the fees of any collection agency, which may be based on a percentage at a maximum of thirty percent of the debt, and all costs and expenses, including reasonable attorney's fees, late fees, interest and/or court costs, incurred with the collection of any monies due to the College. Fees will be assessed regardless of payment method.

In addition, students who fail to make payment arrangements or full payment of tuition and fees, including any incidental fees, by the due date may be prohibited from registering for classes until arrangements or full payment is made.

### Processing period:

Fall/Spring Semesters - Available during the processing period: up until the twelfth day of the semester only.

Summer Session - Available during the processing period: up until the seventh day of the semester only.

## Installment Plans

Eligible students may select an Installment Plan to pay for tuition and registration fees by installment payments. For payment plan details visit the Cashiers' website at

[SouthTexasCollege.edu/go/cashiers](https://SouthTexasCollege.edu/go/cashiers) > Installment Plans & Emergency Loans > Installment Plans

- To apply, complete the Installment Plan Agreement online via JagNet. For step-by-step instructions follow: [SouthTexasCollege.edu/go/cashiers](https://SouthTexasCollege.edu/go/cashiers) > Installment Plans & Emergency Loans > Installment Plans > Instructions: How to Enroll in a Payment Plan
- Eligibility Requirements:
  - Be enrolled at South Texas College for the semester
  - Must be current on any prior term payment arrangements
  - Minors younger than the applicable age of majority may apply in person to execute the installment agreement. Executing this agreement for educational services provided by South Texas College are a necessity, and the minor is contractually obligated pursuant to the “doctrine of necessities.”
  - Complete the installment plan agreement available online.
- Incidental fees associated with the Installment Payment Plan:

- A processing fee is due at time of enrollment in a plan.
- A late payment fee is assessed if the total balance due is not paid by “each” scheduled due date.
- Fees can be found at the tuition and fees schedule.
- Installment Plan Payment Due Dates, as per Installment Agreement and Cashiers' website.

## **Emergency Loan Program (subject to availability)**

The Emergency Loan program is a short-term loan to pay for textbooks and/or tuition & fees; therefore, the loan must be repaid. For Emergency Loan details visit the Cashiers' website at [SouthTexasCollege.edu/go/cashiers](http://SouthTexasCollege.edu/go/cashiers) > Installment Plans & Emergency Loans > Emergency Loans.

### **Emergency Textbook Loan:**

- Used to pay for textbooks and/or school supplies
- No initial payment required
- Textbook loan will be disbursed on the next scheduled refund date

### **Emergency Tuition & Fee Loan:**

- Used to pay for Tuition & Fees
- Initial payment is due at time of application, required percentage is to be paid by the student.
- Emergency Loan will cover the remaining balance

Student may apply for an emergency loan during the processing period until funds are exhausted. Please note that the student is responsible for 100% of tuition and fees if Emergency Loan funds are not available.

- Apply online via the Cashiers' website: [SouthTexasCollege.edu/go/cashiers](http://SouthTexasCollege.edu/go/cashiers) > Installment: Plans & Emergency Loans > Emergency Loans > Emergency Loan Request > Review application process and requirements before submitting the Emergency Loan Request.
- Eligibility Requirements:
  - Be enrolled for a minimum of three credit hours
  - Must be current on any prior term payment arrangements and not be in default with any student loans
  - Minors younger than the applicable age of majority may apply. Executing this agreement for educational services provided by South Texas College are a necessity, and the minor is contractually obligated pursuant to the “doctrine of necessities.”
- Emergency Loan Payment Due Dates are published in the Emergency Loan Agreement and Cashiers' website.

## **Third Party Contracts and Scholarships**

Third Party contracts constitute written agreements between a third party (i.e., Texas Rehabilitation Commission, WIA) and South Texas College; wherein, payment for tuition and fees for a student is to be paid to South Texas College by a third party. The student must provide the written agreement prior to or on census day and present such agreement or document as a third-party voucher, deferment form, or contract to the Student Financial Services office. However, any student registration activity generating a credit balance on the student account may be returned to the third party.

Scholarship checks or scholarship award letters received by the student must be presented to the Student Financial Services office at South Texas College.

Students are responsible to ensure that all requirements of grantors, lenders, employers and other third-party payers are met on a timely basis. Students anticipating payment from financial aid or other sources are ultimately responsible for all charges incurred.

## **Concurrent Enrollment Fees**

*Students enrolled at two Texas public institutions of higher education.*

The total amount of tuition charged at South Texas College may be determined differently if the student registers at more than one Texas public institution of higher education at the same time. Incidental fees are billed by each institution at its regularly authorized rates. The student in this situation is liable for full tuition payment at registration as per Texas Education Code, Title 3 Higher Education, Chapter 54 - Tuition and Fees, Sec. 54.011 Tuition Limit In Cases Of Concurrent Enrollment.

Proof of enrollment in the form of a payment receipt from the concurrent institution is required at the Enrollment Center on a semester basis. During the Fall and Spring semesters, proof must be submitted before the twelfth "class day". During the summer sessions, proof must be submitted before the fourth "class day" for evaluation and necessary adjustments. "Class day" refers to South Texas College's scheduled class day, not the students' class meeting days.

Appropriate refunds will be determined by payment method and will be issued either by mail to the student's address on file at the Enrollment Center, or by credit card.

## **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

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The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and the Texas Open Records Act are federal and state laws, respectively, that provide for the review and disclosure of academic records. In accordance with these laws, South Texas College will not permit access to or the release of personally identifiable information contained in academic records to any party without the written consent of the student, except:

- to appropriate South Texas College officials, who require access to academic records in order to perform their legitimate duties, which means the information or records

requested is relevant and necessary to accomplish a task or make a determination, and the task or determination is an employment-related responsibility of the inquirer or is a properly assigned duty for the inquirer.

- to officials of other schools in which the student seeks or intends to enroll, upon request of these officials, and upon the condition that the student be notified and receive a copy of the record, if desired.
- to federal, state or local officials or agencies authorized by law.
- in connection with a student’s application for or receipt of financial aid.
- to accrediting agencies or organizations conducting educational studies, provided that these entities do not release personally identifiable data.
- to the parents of a dependent student, as defined in section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, provided a reasonable effort is made to notify the student in advance.

As permitted under section 99.34 (a)(1)(ii) of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 as amended, and upon request of The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, South Texas College will forward academic records for students who seek or intend to enroll at UTRGV.

## **Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)**

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The HIPAA Privacy Rule requires covered entities to protect individuals’ health records and other identifiable health information by requiring appropriate safeguards to protect privacy, and by setting limits and conditions on the uses and disclosures that may be made of such information without a student’s authorization. The rule also gives students rights over their health information, including the right to examine and obtain a copy of their health records, and to request corrections.

## **Where FERPA and HIPAA May Intersect**

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When a school provides health care to students in the normal course of business, such as through its health clinic, it is also a “health care provider” as defined by HIPAA. If a school also conducts any covered transactions electronically in connection with that health care, it is then a covered entity under HIPAA. As a covered entity, the school must comply with the HIPAA Administrative Simplification Rules for Transactions and Code Sets and Identifiers with respect to its transactions.

However, many schools, even those that are HIPAA covered entities, are not required to comply with the HIPAA Privacy Rule because the only health records maintained by the school are “education records” or “treatment records” of eligible students under FERPA, both of which are excluded from coverage under the HIPAA Privacy Rule. See the exception at paragraph (2)(i) and (2)(ii) to what is considered “protected health information” (PHI) at 45 CFR § 160.103. In addition, the exception for records covered by FERPA applies both to the HIPAA Privacy Rule, as well as to the HIPAA Security Rule, because the Security Rule applies to a subset of information covered by the Privacy Rule (i.e., electronic PHI). Information on the HIPAA Privacy Rule is available at <https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/>.

Information on the other HIPAA: <https://dshs.texas.gov/hipaa/default.shtm>

## **Career & Employer Services**

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The Office of Career & Employer Services at South Texas College assists alumni and the student body achieve career-related goals by offering job search guidance and resources while fostering positive partnerships with the community to provide students and graduates access to an extensive network of employers and to successfully become gainfully employed.

### **College Central Network Online Services:**

The Office of Career & Employer Services provides a variety of online student/alumni and employers services via College Central Network (CCN). Career Services Central's (CSC) is a web-based system which provides solutions to meet the unique needs of South Texas College's Office of Career & Employers Services as well as for employers searching for all levels of talent. CSC's modular and comprehensive tool advances connectivity and productivity between students, alumni and employers. Students and Alumni have access to over 500,000 nationwide job postings, 25,000 internship postings and jobs posted exclusively for STC students and alumni. The following features are currently being utilized to serve the students, alumni and employer network.

- Enable employer job posting and resume searching
- Communicate with job seekers and employers via email and mass notifications
- Social Media Integration. Recommend, Tweet, and Share jobs, events, and announcements, via Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn
- Manage all real time job fairs online- employer registrations/ event participation
- Manage students and alumni records (administer resume submissions, referrals, and distribution; monitor employer job postings and resume searches; maintain student, alumni, employer contact information)
- Generate reports instantly by selecting pre-configured reports created in response to Network member input. Tracking capabilities; document employer activities, set follow ups alerts, generate reports such as hires/offers, resumes reviewed and submitted, candidate referrals, track number of job postings, student/alumni registrations, student/alumni activity, Employers Notes and Notes Manager Module for Career Center Staff to document counseling sessions and appointments.
- Centralized job seeker record search and tracking (concise display of virtually all job seeker information at a glance)
- On- Campus Recruitment Module (employer recruiting events, scheduling interviews, select and assign interviews)
- Generate fully integrated online career portfolios and resumes with Resume Central – Free Online Resume Builder (Upload multiple resumes) enable job seekers to create and upload resumes in Word or PDF formats and submit to employers.
- Download and distribute free Career Advice Documents and Podcasts
- Delivers timely, relevant content to job seekers user accounts with topics from industry experts on career, health, real world issues, and personal finance

- Calendar of Events
- Surveys for students, alumni and employers

## **Career Coach**

Career Coach is an online career guidance resource that helps students choose the best academic pathway to a successful career in their local community. The website aligns high school, college, and career pathways into a single system, so schools can better track and measure their college and career readiness goals, while students prepare for and land internships, jobs, and more.

The software includes the following key features:

- Virtual Profiles and Resumes
- Regional Online Job board
- Built in career interest inventories/assessments
- Job placement and other key reports

## **Career & Employer Services Events:**

### **#JaguarsGetHired - Spring District Wide Career Expo**

The Office of Career & Employer Services has developed a network of employers who actively participate in the South Texas Spring Career Expos. Career Expos provide an awareness and expose students/alumni to the vast employment opportunities in our region. These events bring local & regional employers to our campus to provide insight and potential employment opportunities to our students/alumni.

### **Career Exploration Day**

The Career Exploration Day – Explore Your Way is an event which hosts middle to high school students on campus to explore South Texas College’s career pathways and programs. This is an all hands-on deck career exploration opportunity for students as they transition to college. The event showcases information related to a day in life of a specific career so that students begin to think of which career they want to pursue. Information on salaries, labor market and occupational growth projections is presented to students to assist them with making a sound career choice as they transition from high school to college.

### **College Wide - Talent Connection Professional Guest Speaker Series**

The Talent Connection Professional Guest Speaker Series is a district wide event and is held throughout the academic year. Professionals from a wide variety of industries are invited to share their professional experience with students seeking a career in the field the speaker represents. Students are given the opportunity to interact and engage in conversations with Human Resource contacts, CEO’s, and Hiring Managers working in related fields of study.

## **Threads Closet - Suited for Success at South Texas College Campaign**

The Office of Career & Employer Services at South Texas College has built a Career Closet for students who are seeking professional attire to accommodate a job interview or to attend a professional function of a club or organization they may belong to at STC. The philosophy behind this project is that “There’s never a second chance to make a first impression.” This campaign was launched to help students transition into the job market with confidence.

## **On Campus Employer Recruitment**

The Office of Career & Employer Services has built a network of employers who participate in the On-Campus Recruitment on a college wide level. Employers are invited to conduct recruitment initiatives on campus. Employers register online to recruit and schedule interviews on campus. Students are outreached based on the program of study which corresponds to the career industry in which the company is recruiting. Events are announced via online calendar of events, electronic notifications and to the program of study.

## **Financial Wellness Center**

The Financial Wellness Center provides up-to-date news and information on loans, budgeting, managing debt, and more. It offers students a free online platform *iGrad* to help improve money management skills and personal finances. It serves as a guide to become financially healthy by effectively managing their economic life and in turn helps students take control of becoming financially secure while navigating through one’s education, work, and over all life and beyond.

## **Veteran Affairs**

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The South Texas College Office of Veterans Affairs provides support services to our military veterans and their dependents and assists them in applying for and obtaining their educational benefits under the Department of Veteran Affairs Educational Assistance Programs. Contact the Office of Veterans Affairs at 956-872-6723 or email at [vaoffice@southtexascollege.edu](mailto:vaoffice@southtexascollege.edu) for questions or to set an appointment.

<https://www.southtexascollege.edu/veterans/>

## **Centers for Learning Excellence**

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The Centers for Learning Excellence provide individual and group tutoring, computer labs, content-specific and learning skills workshops, and other course-based learning assistance programs.

<https://www.southtexascollege.edu/cle/>

## **Student Activities & Wellness**

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The Department of Student Activities and Wellness enhances the student experience through the development and delivery of programs and services complimenting South Texas College's efforts towards student access, retention and ultimate graduation ensuring that students are engaged and receive a complete college experience. Additional information can be found by calling 956-872-3530.

## **Student Events and Activities**

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Student activities aim to promote active student participation through events geared towards social responsibility, leadership, education, cultural and civic engagement, etc. Such activities support and enhance the student's collegiate experience and their education outside the classroom.

<https://life.southtexascollege.edu/activities/>

## **Student Organizations**

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Student organizations at South Texas College contribute to a vibrant college community by providing invaluable experiences and opportunities for students to grow as individuals, leaders, and community members. Each year, student organizations sponsor conferences, seminars, lectures, debates, cultural and social events, and fine arts programs. These programs allow students to meet and interact with local, state, and nationally renowned scholars, artists, politicians, academicians, and other professionals.

<https://life.southtexascollege.edu/activities/student-organizations/>

## **First Year Experience**

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The First Year Experience at South Texas College is the combination of orientations, services, programs, curricular and co-curricular activities that support a student's transition from high school to South Texas College, while providing a foundation for academic success.

<https://life.southtexascollege.edu/activities/fyc/>

## **Student Government Association**

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The Student Government Association at South Texas College is the representative organization for the student body at South Texas College. The Student Government Association provides a forum for open discussion of matters affecting students at South Texas College.

<https://life.southtexascollege.edu/activities/student-government-association/>

## **Student Leadership Academy**

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The Student Leadership Academy encourages and aids in the development of student leaders. Through interactive workshops and seminars, this prestigious program allows students to



develop their personal leadership style and put their leadership skills into practice; allowing them to gain experience, confidence and positively contribute to the community through volunteering opportunities.

<https://life.southtexascollege.edu/activities/sla/>

## **Intramural Sports and Wellness**

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Intramural Sports and Wellness Programming provides opportunities for students to positively use their leisure time to engage in recreational sports and activities in a supportive and safe environment that enhances personal development, increases physical and mental health, encourages social interaction, and develops lifetime patterns for healthful living.

<https://life.southtexascollege.edu/intramural-sports/>

## **Student Food Pantry**

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The Student Food Pantry has locations at the following campuses: Pecan, Mid-Valley and Starr. Services to current students extend beyond food donations. By connecting them with counselors as well as staff at the college, students can have potential access to a wide range of assistance that can enable them to succeed while attending school. Enrollment for the pantry is done by the department of Student Activities and Wellness.

<https://life.southtexascollege.edu/food-pantry/>

## **Academic Advising**

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Academic advising is available to assist students in defining and developing realistic educational goals and help students understand the requirements necessary to meet those goals. Academic advising promotes advisor/student shared responsibility. Students are encouraged to meet with their respective advisor on a regular basis to monitor progress towards completion and are highly encouraged to utilize all resources available to them to help them persist and complete a credential.

## **Academic Advisors**

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During a student's first year in college, Academic Advisors utilize a case management approach to provide advisement sessions at critical points in the semester in order to help students stay on track for completion of their educational pathway.

Services offered by the Advisement Centers:

- Point of contact for students during their first year of college
- Academic Advising
- Assistance with preparing student education plan
- Degree Progress Reports
- Referrals to appropriate services

- Case Management Services

NOTICE: The student is responsible for seeking academic advisement, for knowing and complying with South Texas College's assessments and the State of Texas-Texas Success Initiative Rule (TSI) requirements of their declared degree or certificate program, and for taking courses in the proper sequence to ensure progress toward his/her educational goals. Students are encouraged to connect with an advisor every semester for academic advisement. Advisors are available by phone, email, and/or virtual advising sessions. Please email us at [advising@southtexascollege.edu](mailto:advising@southtexascollege.edu) or call one of the numbers listed below for additional information. 956-872-8372 / 1-800-742-7822

## **Providing Academic Support to Students (PASS)**

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The PASS Program was initially created in 1993 as Project HOPE. The Program's goal was to assist single mothers in completing a postsecondary education by helping them pay for childcare. As the program grew, it became apparent that Program participants were facing a number of barriers, which required additional support, such as financial, academic and emotional support. The program underwent changes to accommodate those needs and became known as the Together in Achievement (TIA) and Striving Towards A Non-traditional Degree (STAND) Programs. Demand for the services offered through TIA and STAND grew to such an extent that in the Fall of 2000, the Program was expanded to include all Career & Technical Education (CTE) majors. At that time, the Program was renamed PASS (Providing Academic Support to Students) Program.

The PASS Program is funded through the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act (Perkins V) grant, which is a grant awarded by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). The Perkins V grant focuses on the following:

Career and Technical Education programs

Student persistence and completion

Eliminating barriers for special population students (single parents, displaced homemakers, non-traditional students, economically disadvantaged, and individuals with disabilities).

PASS provides specialized case management services for students enrolled in Career and Technical Education majors, Associate of Applied Science majors, or Certificate majors. The PASS program provides eligible students with the following areas:

- Case Management
- Career/Academic Advising
- Referral Services
- Child Care Assistance (for Students Enrolled Full-Time)
- Lending Library (Instructional Supplements and Electronics Assistance)

Contact 956-872-6315 or [advising@southtexascollege.edu](mailto:advising@southtexascollege.edu)

## Student Rights and Responsibilities

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As a premier learning-centered higher education institution, South Texas College is committed to academic integrity and standards of excellence of the highest quality in all courses and programs and to providing an environment that fosters the educational process and the well-being of the campus community.

South Texas College recognizes that student success is a shared responsibility between the student and the College. Students attending South Texas College are expected to accept and adhere to the following responsibilities:

1. Student attendance and participation is paramount to academic success. Regular and punctual attendance in class and laboratories is expected of all students.
2. Students are expected to exercise personal responsibility and self-discipline as they engage in the rigors of discovery and scholarship. Inappropriate behavior may result in disciplinary action against the student.
3. Students attending South Texas College are responsible for adhering to standards of academic integrity. Academic dishonesty may result in disciplinary action against the student.

In support of the rights of its students, South Texas College is committed to:

1. A consistent and fair evaluation of student performance and an impartial process for grade appeals that allows students to appeal academic decisions or actions which they consider manifestly unjust or improper.
2. Ensuring that students are treated with fundamental fairness and personal dignity that includes an impartial process for students to appeal disciplinary sanctions imposed by the College or to file a complaint or grievance when they believe that they were unjustly or improperly treated by the College, College employees, or other students.

Detailed information regarding South Texas College's expectations for students is presented in the Student Code of Conduct. The Student Code of Conduct is an articulation of South Texas College's commitment to maintaining an environment that recognizes and supports the rights of its students and provides a guide for defining behaviors the College considers inappropriate.

For more information see Chapter 2 of this handbook.

### Services

- **Consultations:**  
The consultation is the opening step of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Process. It is a meeting in which the Ombudsperson talks to a person about the problem, question, or concern they have brought forward.

- **Mediation:**  
Mediation is a structured process in which an impartial person, the mediator, facilitates communication between the parties to promote reconciliation, settlement, or an understanding between them.
- **Conflict Coaching:**  
Conflict Coaching is a specialized one-on-one process that helps clients optimize the way they engage in their interpersonal disputes.

## **Behavioral Intervention Team**

The College’s Behavioral Intervention Team is a highly trained panel of professionals advancing campus safety and collegiality for the College Community. The Behavioral Intervention Team is a district wide threat assessment and behavioral intervention team that monitors threats to the campus community and intervenes in the concerning behaviors of all individuals who work at, attend or have business with the College.

The Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities – Student Conduct, when deemed appropriate, may request that the Behavioral Intervention Team complete an evaluation of an individual’s case and assign a threat level. The threat assessment may be used in determining risk factors as well as a means of developing an overall treatment plan for the individual.

Note: Threat Assessment is never used in isolation when determining a student’s ability to remain on campus. The Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities - Student Conduct uses all available information and endeavors to make the most informed and fair decisions when making a determination to remove an individual from or allow an individual to remain on campus.

For more information about the role of the South Texas College Behavioral Intervention Team please click on the following link: <https://life.southtexascollege.edu/student-rights-and-responsibilities/behavioral-intervention-team/>

## **C.A.R.E. Team**

The acronym C.A.R.E. stands for Collaboration, Assistance, Resource and Education. The South Texas College C.A.R.E. Team is a collaborative team of professional dedicated to assisting students in achieving their education goals. The members of this team combine their knowledge, experience, and commitment to design an individualized educational program to meet the needs of the student, and assist with their development throughout their educational programming.

The C.A.R.E. Team works collaboratively to assist students who are referred from the Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities -Student Conduct. The C.A.R.E. Team provides a host of services ranging from social and mental health to referrals to community resources in an effort to assist students in their development, maturation, and matriculation. The C.A.R.E. Team works collaboratively with the Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities - Student Conduct to implement customized strategies and interventions to meet the needs of the individual.

For more information about the role of the South Texas College C.A.R.E. Team please click on the following link: <https://life.southtexascollege.edu/student-rights-and-responsibilities/care-team/>

## **Classroom Expectations**

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### **Class Attendance and Participation**

Class attendance and participation are essential to student success. Regular and punctual class attendance is expected at South Texas College. Student absences will be recorded from the first day the class meets. It is imperative that students attend on the first day of class. This is when the course syllabus, schedule, deadlines, and class expectations will be discussed.

In case of absence, it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor prior to the absence.

The student is expressly responsible for any work missed regardless of the cause of the absence. The student must discuss such work with the instructor and should do so immediately on returning to school. Communication between the student and faculty member is most important, and it is the student's responsibility to initiate such communication. The faculty member will determine, based on policies outlined in the course syllabus, whether the student will be permitted to make up work and will decide on the time and nature of the makeup. If a student does not appear at the prearranged time or meet the prescribed deadline for makeup work, they forfeit their rights for further makeup of that work. A student who stops attending class for any reason should contact the faculty member and the Admission's office to officially withdraw from the class. Failure to officially withdraw may result in a failing grade for the course.

The following attendance guidelines will apply. Some departments or divisions may have stricter policies:

- A student in an on-campus course missing a cumulative of 10 percent (10%) of the class meetings may be dropped by the faculty member in accordance to the policy or policies outlined in the course syllabus.
- A student in an online course is required to successfully complete the online course orientation, if applicable, and actively participate in the course as described in the faculty member's course requirements. A student not meeting these requirements may be dropped in accordance to the policy outlined in the course syllabus.
- A student's absence on official school business is entitled to make up coursework missed but should contact the faculty member prior to scheduled absence to make proper arrangements on course work that will be missed.
- In addition to published guidelines related to attendance, faculty may drop a student prior to the withdrawal deadline when the faculty member determines that the student will be unable to successfully complete the course.

### Example Calculations of 10% Absence

Term	# of Meetings	10% of Class Meetings	Student Dropped after X Days
16 week-1 day a week	16	1.6	2
16 week-2 days a week	31	3.1	4
16 week-3 days a week	46	4.6	5
5 week MTF (Summer I & II)	15	1.5	2
5 week MTR (Summer I & II)	19	1.9	2
10 week MTW (Summer III)	33	3.3	4
10 week MTWR (Summer III)	38	3.8	4

### Title IX and Pregnancy Related Absences

South Texas College does not discriminate against any student on the basis of pregnancy, parenting or related conditions. Under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and its implementing regulations (34 C.F.R. Part 106*et seq.*), and under Texas Education Code Sec. 51.982, schools may be required to, among other possible accommodations, excuse absences for students as a result of their pregnancy and childbirth for as long as such accommodations are medically necessary. At the conclusion of that period, the student must be given a reasonable amount of time to make up the work they missed. In addition, pregnant and parenting students, pursuant to the Texas Education Code, may be entitled to take a leave of absence and, if in good academic standing at the time, return to the student's degree or certificate program in good academic standing without being required to reapply for admission.

Pregnant or parenting students seeking accommodations should contact Office of Counseling and Student Accessibility Services as soon as possible by phone at 956-872-2173 or by email at [counseling@southtexascollege.edu](mailto:counseling@southtexascollege.edu).

### Course Syllabus

A syllabus is a document that an instructor distributes to provide students with an overview of a college course. The syllabus is usually distributed on the first day of class and contains the following information:

- Course name and meeting times
- Name of instructor and their contact information
- Expectations for behavior
- Attendance policies
- Required texts and topics and chapters covered
- Test dates and other relevant dates
- Grading policy

The syllabus is your key to success. Make sure you read the syllabus completely and refer to it regularly.

## Grading Policies

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### Instructor of Record

South Texas College's policies, procedures, and practices are all clear regarding the instructor of record as the sole individual authorized to issue grades. The instructor of record is responsible for maintaining the academic rigor of each class, ensuring that the course syllabus is followed, assessing the skills and competencies of each student, and issuing appropriate grades.

According to STC Policy 3312, "the primary responsibility for assigning grades in a course belongs to the faculty member, and in the absence of compelling evidence of discrimination, differential treatment, or procedural irregularities, the judgment of the faculty member responsible for the course must remain determinant."

Faculty bears a heavy responsibility in the issuance of grades. A faculty member may not independently accept grades from another faculty member for students in his/her classes. No individual, except the instructor of record, is allowed to make grade changes or to influence the grading process.

<https://admin.southtexascollege.edu/president/policies/pdf/3000/3312.pdf>

### Guidelines for Issuing a Grade of "I" (Incomplete)

When a faculty member issues a grade of "I" (Incomplete), documentation should be provided to both the student and the faculty member's department/program chair which includes the following:

- The student's name, A#, and contact information
- The faculty member's name
- The course, section number, and semester for which the I is being awarded
- A brief explanation of the reason for which the I is being awarded
- A summary of the coursework already completed by the student, and the grades, points, and/or scores earned and recorded for that work
- A summary of the coursework still required from the student in order to merit a change of grade from an I to a letter grade (A, B, C, D, F), and the relative weight of each pending item toward the final course grade
- The date by which all of the coursework needs to be completed by the student

All of the above should be contained on a single form, with signature lines for the student, the faculty member, and the faculty member's department/program chair, each of whom should receive a copy.

A copy of the course syllabus, or section outline, specific to the section in which the student is enrolled, should also be attached.

## **Grade Appeals – Policy 3312**

If a student requests a grade change in writing, justifying the change, and the instructor agrees to change the grade, the instructor initiates the online Change of Grade Request form and once approved by the Chair, the Office of Admissions and Records will process and complete the request. The Dean must approve changes made later than one year after the end of the semester in which the course was taken. Grade changes or appeals must be made no later than 30 days from which the grade was issued.

<https://admin.southtexascollege.edu/president/policies/pdf/3000/3312.pdf>

## **Online Grade Submission**

Instructors submit grades online and should observe the deadlines indicated on the final examination schedule. Students receive an “I” for incomplete when grades are not submitted on time, or when a student is not issued a grade. The instructor is then required to complete an online Change of Grade Form for each student to correct the transcript file.

While college policy prohibits the public posting of final grades, students may get their grades online at any College computer lab or kiosk after grades have been posted to the system. Students should not call the Enrollment Center or the faculty secretary for grade results; grades cannot be given out by phone. A copy of grade book sheets with grade weighting and attendance rosters should be given to the chairperson at the end of each semester. If teaching at an off-campus location, these can be turned in to the Site Coordinator. This information must remain on file for questions concerning grades.

## **Dual Credit Faculty Responsibilities When Teaching A STC Dual Credit Course**

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- Dual Credit Faculty will develop the course outlines or syllabi, including the following: a description of content, teaching strategies, performance measures, grading standards, resource materials, objectives/outcomes, and course calendar. The syllabus must be reviewed and approved by the STC Department Chair of the discipline within the first week of instruction. The syllabus for the dual credit course reflect comparable academic rigor, curriculum, academic integrity, reference to hand-held electronics use, attendance requirements, participation, level and pace of instruction, content, learning outcomes, and assessment as the corresponding course held on an STC campus;
- Dual Credit Faculty will complete all STC departmental requirements such as diagnostic tests and Student Learning Outcomes/Exemplary Educational Objectives (for appropriate courses) according to the deadlines set by the College;
- Dual Credit Faculty will teach the course. College policy calls for faculty to meet each scheduled class at the designated place for the entire class period. STC policy on the use of a qualified substitute for a class meeting needs to be adhered to. Because of the



THECB and SACSCOC requirements, if a Dual Credit Faculty is unable to teach the course, arrangements must be made by contacting the Department Chair prior to absence. The Department/Program Chair must approve any substitute, and the substitute's documentation forwarded to the Dean.

- Dual Credit Faculty will advise students concerning their academic progress prior to the last day to drop/withdraw from STC;
- Dual Credit Faculty will assign the student a letter grade for STC through JagNet. Once grades are entered into JagNet, grades can only be changed as a result of an error in the grade issued, an error in processing the grade, or in the instance with an "Incomplete" grade, student completion of course requirements. A grade change form should be submitted to the Department Chair. Should a Dual Credit faculty member continue instruction beyond the STC semester, the grade reported to the high school might differ as the grade might include additional work or work differing from the requirements of the college course;
- Dual Credit Faculty will provide the Department Chair, as requested, a copy of the grade sheet for the class showing all exam scores, the term paper score (if any), the final exam score, and the final course grade;
- Dual Credit Faculty will attend STC planning meetings and staff development activities, including Dual Credit training workshops, discipline and course-specific professional development, and the professional development days scheduled prior to the beginning of each long semester; so, time needs to be provided by ISDs for DCF to participate in these activities. STC strives to minimize the number of meetings that conflict with the high school teaching day, since this places an undue hardship on the hiring and paying of substitutes. STC Department Chairs are encouraged to schedule meetings after school as much as possible.

## **Dual Credit Students and the South Texas College Code of Conduct**

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Dual credit students are subject to discipline and appropriate sanctions, ranging from verbal or written warning to suspension and expulsion from South Texas College and all related programming, under the South Texas College Student Handbook and Code of Student Conduct.

The Code of Student Conduct is an articulation of South Texas College's commitment to maintaining an environment that recognizes and supports the rights of its students, while providing a guide for defining behaviors the College considers inappropriate. Dual credit students who are found in violation of the Code of Student Conduct and are sanctioned, suspended or expelled from South Texas College, will be removed from the dual credit course and the district may place them in regular high school credit courses or at a traditional high school setting.

Procedures, including a list of violations, potential sanctions and a list of individual rights for each student are list in the South Texas College Student Handbook, Chapter 2, Code of Student Conduct.

Further, South Texas College and the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities reserves the right to refer cases to the Behavioral Intervention Team for review and threat assessment to assist in determining if the dual credit student poses a continuing or significant risk to the safety or well-being to the South Texas College campus community.

## **South Texas College Honor Code**

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South Texas College students demonstrate integrity, civility and service to our community and inspire others to cultivate the same principles.

## **Office of Ombuds Services**

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The Ombudsperson provides guidance to the South Texas College community regarding South Texas College protocol and procedures and assists and counsels students in resolving disputes and conflicts in a way that facilitates individual responsibility, contributes to their maturation, and promotes the development of self-advocacy skills.

- Do you have a question regarding a South Texas College policy or procedure?
- Do you have a problem at South Texas College and you are not sure how to proceed?
- Do you feel you have been treated unfairly?
- Do you think the College made an error?

Contact the Office of Ombuds Services for Assistance.

The Ombudsperson serves as an informal, independent, neutral, confidential, problem-solving resource for student-related issues. The Ombudsperson is able to provide services as an intermediary/facilitator or to mediate when disputing parties are deadlocked. The Ombudsperson staff are available to listen, provide information, reframe issues, develop options, and make referrals when appropriate. The Ombudsperson staff will explain and clarify College policies and procedures while encouraging complainants to follow the approved policies and procedures. The Ombudsperson staff may conduct informal fact-finding interviews when appropriate.

Office of Ombuds Services

Pecan Campus Student Services Building, Room 2.1106

Voice: 956-872-2180

Fax: 956-872-2500

Email: [osrr@southtexascollege.edu](mailto:osrr@southtexascollege.edu)

Web: <https://life.southtexascollege.edu/student-rights-and-responsibilities/ombuds-services/>

## **Counseling and Student Accessibility Services**

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Counseling and Student Accessibility Services reflects South Texas College's commitment to provide access to higher education and support the educational goals of students from diverse backgrounds. The staff at Counseling and Student Accessibility Services helps achieve academic

success through the following services: academic counseling, career and mental health counseling, services for students with disabilities, students with pregnancy, parenting or related needs, and assistance to vulnerable populations.

Counseling and Student Accessibility Services offers students and the campus community a variety of services. Most services are pre-paid through your student service fee. These services are offered in a confidential atmosphere where the student may discuss concerns that are important to their educational and personal success.

Counselors are available during the day on a walk-in basis or by appointment; however, appointments are preferred. Services for evening hours are by appointment only. Counselors are available at the Pecan Campus, Nursing and Allied Health Campus, Technology Campus, Mid-Valley Campus, and Starr County Campus locations.

## **Student Appeal Of Course Grades**

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Students at South Texas College have the right to appeal final course grades which they consider manifestly unjust or erroneous, as outlined in South Texas College [Policy #3312](#).

The primary responsibility for assigning grades in a course belongs to the faculty member, and in the absence of compelling evidence of discrimination, differential treatment, or procedural irregularities, the judgment of the faculty member responsible for the course must remain determinant. Complaints based on discrimination, harassment, or retaliation should be reported here: <https://www.southtexascollege.edu/report/>

No grade appeals will be accepted with the desired resolution being anything other than a change of grade. Complaints and grievances must follow the procedures outlined in [South Texas College Policy #3313 – Student Grievance or Complaint](#).

The student is expected to follow the appropriate procedures as outlined in this document. Deviating from the approved grade appeal process includes skipping steps in the process, continuing to contact college staff regarding your appeal after the appeal process is complete, or any other activity outside the approved grade appeal process.

Group appeals will not be considered. Students must file appeals individually.

If the student fails to comply with the designated time frames (as outlined below in Steps 1, 2, and 3 the appeal process may be terminated. If terminated, the student will not be allowed to begin the process again or to appeal outside the approved South Texas College grade appeal process. Only under conditions warranting exception will the time constraint for initiating the grade appeal process be extended. Exceptions might include unexpected call to military service, extreme health issues and severe life disruption. Exceptions to the time constraint require verifiable documentation.

The Office of Admissions & Records staff will explain and clarify College policies and procedures while encouraging all parties to follow the approved policies and procedures.

To appeal a grade, the following procedures must be observed:

## **Step 1**

It is the responsibility of the student to initiate the grade appeal process by contacting the appropriate faculty member no later than 30 calendar days after the end of the semester in which the grade was issued.

1. The student is required to provide notice in writing to the faculty member that they are appealing their grade.
2. The faculty member is required to meet with the student that has initiated an appeal of course grades. If the student is not living within the service delivery area of STC, communication can be electronic. The student is required to present the South Texas College Grade Appeal form to the faculty member. Appeals submitted without using the approved form will not be heard. The burden of proof lies with the student and it is the student's responsibility to provide evidence that the grade should be changed.
3. The faculty member may choose to deny the appeal, approve the appeal or work with the student to reach a solution that is agreeable to both parties.
4. If the faculty member is not currently teaching, is no longer employed at South Texas College, or the student is simply unable to reach the faculty member; the student must contact the appropriate Division Dean no later than 30 calendar days after the end of the semester in which the grade was issued to initiate the grade appeal process.
  - a. If the faculty member is still employed at South Texas College but not currently teaching, the Division Dean will attempt to contact the faculty member to address the issue. If they are unable to reach the faculty member, the grade appeal will be delayed until the faculty member returns to teach, as long as the faculty member returns no later than the next full (fall or spring) semester.
  - b. If the faculty member is no longer employed at South Texas College or is not scheduled to return for the next full (fall or spring) semester, the student will advance to Step 3 of the grade appeal process. If the student wishes to continue the Grade Appeal Process, it is their responsibility to contact the Office of Admissions & Records no later than 15 calendar days from the date of being notified that the faculty member is no longer available.
5. Once a decision is reached by the faculty member, the faculty member will note the decision on the Grade Appeal Form, sign the form, and return the completed form to the student. The student is responsible for submitting the completed form to the Office of Admissions & Records.
  - a. The faculty member should maintain a completed Grade Appeal Form for their records.
  - b. If necessary, the faculty member must submit a signed Change of Grade form to the appropriate Department Chair/Dean within 15 calendar days. The Department Chair/Dean must forward a signed change of grade form to the Office of Admissions & Records and Records within 15 calendar days.
6. If the student appeal is denied, the student will then have 15 calendar days to initiate Step 2 of the Grade Appeal process.

## Step 2

If speaking with the faculty member does not resolve the issue to the student's satisfaction, it is the responsibility of the student to continue the grade appeal process by contacting the Office of Admissions & Records no later than 15 calendar days from the date Step 1 is completed.

1. The student must submit the South Texas College Grade Appeal Form with the signature of the faculty member to the Office of Admissions & Records to document they completed Step 1 of the grade appeal process.  
[https://academicaffairs.southtexascollege.edu/grade\\_appeals/](https://academicaffairs.southtexascollege.edu/grade_appeals/)
2. The student must submit their grade appeal in writing to the Office of Admissions & Records. The burden of proof lies with the student and it is the student's responsibility to provide evidence that the grade should be changed.
3. The Office of Admissions & Records will forward the written appeal to the appropriate Division Dean for review.
4. Upon receiving the grade appeal, the Division Dean will consult with the Department Chair and faculty member to attempt to resolve the dispute. The Division Dean may not initiate a grade change without consent from the faculty member.
5. Once a decision is reached, the Division Dean will notify the Office of Admissions & Records and the Office of Admissions & Records will advise the student regarding the outcome.
  - a. If the solution offered is accepted by the student, the Division Dean and faculty member will be informed in writing by the Office of Admissions & Records.
  - b. If the student is not satisfied with the resolution offered by the Division Dean and faculty member, the student will then have 15 calendar days to initiate Step 3 of the Grade Appeal process.

## Step 3 - Final Review

If the student does not accept the decision or solution offered by the Division Dean and faculty member from Step 2, it is the responsibility of the student to continue the grade appeal process by contacting the Office of Admissions & Records no later than 15 calendar days from the date Step 2 is completed.

1. The student must inform the Office of Admissions & Records that they wish to progress to Step 3 of the grade appeal process. The Office of Admissions & Records will then forward the written appeal to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.
2. The Vice President for Academic Affairs will request written responses from the faculty member and Division Dean.
3. The Vice President for Academic Affairs will convene the South Texas College Grade Appeal Committee. The Grade Appeal Committee consists of two faculty representatives from each of the instructional divisions. The chair of the committee will be selected from the faculty on the committee. To meet quorum, a minimum of six committee members must be present at the meeting.
4. The Grade Appeal Committee's responsibility will be:
  - a. To review the student's written appeal and evidence.

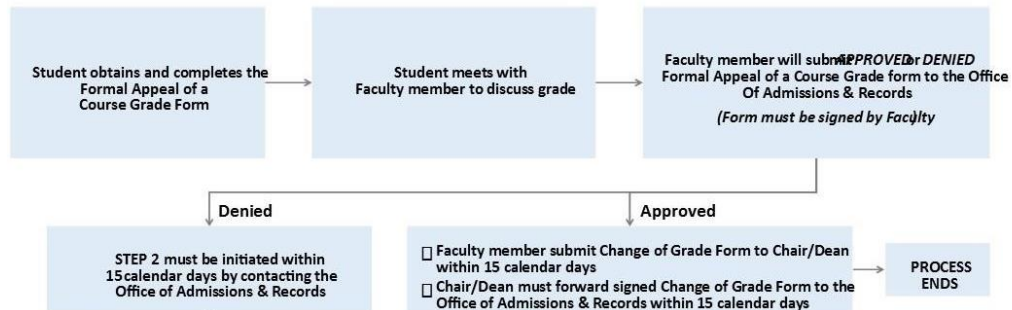
- b. To consider all written responses addressed towards the complaint.
  - c. To call any witnesses, if appropriate, to corroborate documentary evidence directly related to the specific grade being appealed. If summoned, the student, faculty member, Program Chair or Division Dean may decline in writing to testify
  - d. To inform the Vice President for Academic Affairs of their recommendation. The Grade Appeal Committee may recommend:
    - letting the grade stand
    - initiating a grade change by submitting a grade change form to the VP for Academic Affairs
    - offering a solution of having the student withdraw from the class or being dropped without consent from the faculty member, Program Chair or Division Dean.
5. The Vice President for Academic Affairs will communicate the final decision in writing, to the student, faculty member, Program Chair, Division Dean and Office of Admissions & Records. This step concludes the approved South Texas College Grade Appeal Process.
- [https://academicaffairs.southtexascollege.edu/grade\\_appeals/](https://academicaffairs.southtexascollege.edu/grade_appeals/)

## Student Appeal of Course Grades South Texas College

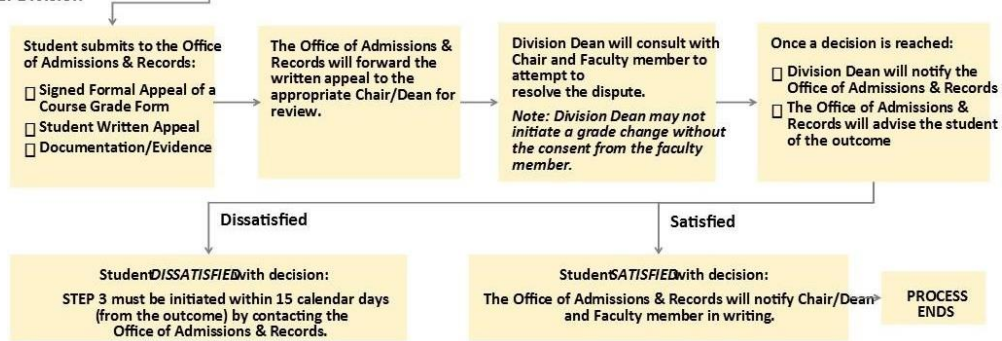
Students at South Texas College have the right to appeal final course grades which they consider manifestly unjust or erroneous. The student will initiate the grade appeal process by contacting the appropriate faculty member **No later than 30 calendar days** after the end of the semester in which the grade was issued.

Updated: 7/25/16

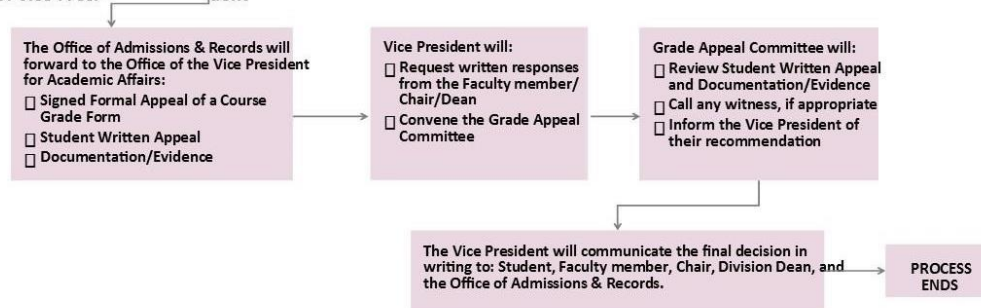
### STEP 1



### STEP 2: Division



### STEP 3: Vice President



## Student Complaints

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Students have the right to submit a complaint if they believe they were unjustly or improperly treated by staff, faculty or students of the College.

A complaint can be used to express dissatisfaction with a procedure or policy, address an issue, communicate the actions of an individual, or otherwise make a student's opinion known. Submitting a complaint does not guarantee the complainant will receive their desired outcome.

No complaints will be accepted if the desired resolution is a grade change or academic decision. Examples of an academic decision include, not accepting a late assignment, taking points off an exam, not allowing make-up work, etc. Requests for grade changes must follow the procedures outlined in [South Texas College Policy #3312 - Student Appeal of Course Grades](#).

Nursing and Allied Health program progression issues must be addressed according to the procedures detailed in the [Nursing and Allied Health Division Handbook](#).

All complaints, whether student to student, student to employee, employee, or to employee, must follow the procedures outline in [Policy 4216: Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Stalking and Retaliation Prohibited](#).

Students may also rely on [Policy 3313 Student Grievance and Complaint](#).

### Complaint Procedures/-Steps (student against a student, employee against a student):

1. The student selects in the following, completes and submits the appropriate form (Complaint or Incident), related to either a student or an employee of the College: <https://www.southtexascollege.edu/report/>.
2. Report is received by the Office of Student Conduct or Human Resources
  - a. Case is reviewed and assigned to a case manager
  - b. Case manager may contact the student who submitted the complaint for additional information
  - c. Case manager initiate an investigation
3. The investigator completes a formal impartial and thorough investigation on the basis of which either;
  - a. The case is closed
  - b. The case is referred for administrative hearing
  - c. The case is referred to the appropriate employee supervisor
4. If the investigation results in an administrative hearing, the following procedures take place:
  - a. The parties are advised their rights
  - b. The parties are advised of the date, time and location of the hearing
  - c. A hearing takes place
  - d. A decision/outcome of the hearing is issued
  - e. The parties are notified of the decision/outcome of the hearing



- f. The parties are notified of their right to appeal the decision/outcome of the hearing.

## Reporting Sexual Discrimination

For complaints concerning discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct or retaliation, please refer to [Policy 4216: Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Stalking and Retaliation Prohibited](#). Reports can be made online, in person, by mail, by telephone, by electronic mail, or by any other means that results in receipt of the verbal or written report. Such a report may be made at any time (24/7) and may be made anonymously. Although there is no time limit following the incident by which a report must be filed, the actions the College can take to resolve a complaint may be limited if significant time has passed. Appropriate supportive measures will always be provided upon request.

Reports can be filed anonymously online at <https://www.southtexascollege.edu/report/>. If you are unsure about filing a report, you may seek confidential [Counseling Services](#) or speak privately with an [Ombudsperson](#) about your options. Additionally, South Texas College has a memorandum of understanding (or MOU) with Mujeres Unidas to provide services to students. Please visit the [Mujeres Unidas website](#) for more information.

Pursuant to Texas law, the College encourages all victims of sexual violence to seek immediate resources for treatment and to preserve evidence at a local hospital. Resource information is available from the [Title IX website](#) or by contacting the Title IX Coordinator (contact information listed below).

Contact the Title IX Coordinator if you need help making any of these connections or for assistance with reports to law enforcement. The following person has been designated as the Title IX Coordinator to handle inquiries regarding these non-discrimination policies and/or laws:

Todd C. Nelson, J.D.  
Title IX Coordinator  
3200 W. Pecan Blvd., N150  
McAllen, TX 78501  
956-872-4664  
[TitleIX@southtexascollege.edu](mailto:TitleIX@southtexascollege.edu)

Online reports can be made here: <https://www.southtexascollege.edu/report/>

**In an emergency your first call should be to 911 or the STC Security Department at 956-872-2589.**

## Guidelines for the Acceptable Use of Information Resources

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These guidelines, under the authority of [South Texas College Policy #4712](#) titled Information Resources Security, outline the acceptable use of South Texas College's information resources and provide users with basic knowledge and general rules for proper, fair, efficient and effective use of those resources. These rules are in place to protect students, employees and

the college. Inappropriate use exposes STC to risks including virus attacks, compromise of network systems and services, and legal issues.

<https://isp.southtexascollege.edu/service/acceptable-use/>

# Chapter 2: Student Code of Conduct

## Attribution:

The South Texas College Code of Student Conduct is adapted in part from The NCHERM Group Model Developmental Code of Student Conduct and is used here with permission.

## Preface

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### South Texas College Core Values:

- Student Success
- Excellence
- Opportunity
- Community
- Integrity

### Students Responsibility for Information Contained Within this Code

South Texas College students are responsible for knowing the information and complying with the policies and procedures outlined in the Code of Student Conduct (the Code). All questions arising from the verbiage of this Code are subject to the interpretation of the Director of Student Rights and Responsibilities. South Texas College reserves the right to make changes to this Code at any time and as necessary; once these changes have been made they will be posted online, whereby they will take effect. Students are encouraged to check online at <https://www.southtexascollege.edu> for the updated versions of all South Texas College Board of Trustees approved policies and procedures. This Code is not intended to create any legal rights beyond the background laws framing such codes, generally.

### Notice of Right and Authority to Update this Code

To assure continued compliance with Title IX and/or any other state or federal laws, if state or federal statutory provisions, regulatory guidance, or court interpretations or guidance provided by any authorized regulating agency change, or conflict with current college policy and/or procedure including but not limited to the hearing procedures set forth in this Code, the College's procedures will be amended and put into practice, as soon as practicable to comply with the law.

This chapter "South Texas College Code of Student Conduct" is superseded by [Policy 4216: Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Stalking and Retaliation Prohibited](#) in the event of any conflict of provisions.

### Revision

The *Code of Student Conduct* will be updated annually under the direction of the Dean of Student Affairs and the Office of Student Conduct with a comprehensive revision process being conducted every 3 years.

The current version of the South Texas College Code of Student Conduct supersedes all previous versions of this Code.

### **Dates Revised:**

- Update September 1, 2012
- Update September 1, 2013
- Update September 1, 2014
- Update September 1, 2015
- Update September 1, 2016
- Update September 1, 2017
- Update June 4, 2018
- Update September 1, 2019
- Update September 1, 2020
- Updated September 1, 2021
- Updated October 17, 2022
- Updated June 29, 2023
- Updated July 18, 2024

### **Definition of Terms**

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*Administrative Decision* - Outcome of an investigation by the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct. An administrative decision may be followed by a sanction.

*Administrative Student Conduct Process* - An administrative process designed to offer fair and equitable treatment of the parties involved in resolution of alleged violations of the Code of Student Conduct.

*Bystander* - a person who observes a conflict or unacceptable behavior. The behavior may be serious or minor, one-time or repeated, but the bystander should recognize that the behavior is destructive or potentially harmful.

*College Administrator* - All College Executive and Administrative staff members as defined by the Office of Human Resources.

*College Community* - All South Texas College faculty, staff, board members, students and guests of the College.

*Conduct Hold* – Restricts the ability to add or drop courses, review grades, and request official transcripts, without the permission of the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct.

*Conduct Violations* - Actions or behaviors listed within the Code of Student Conduct that violate the behavioral standards of the college community.

*Expulsion* - The permanent removal and/or separation from South Texas College for violations of the Code of Student Conduct and/or [Policy 4216: Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Stalking and Retaliation Prohibited](#). The student is banned from College property and the student's presence at any College-sponsored activity or event is prohibited. This action may be enforced by the issuance of a no-trespass warning.

*Expunging Conduct Records* - Expunging is a process in which a determination has been made by the Dean of Student Affairs, their designee or an Ad Hoc Hearing Panel that a conduct record be set for destruction; this most often occurs when a student who is alleged to have violated that Code of Student Conduct is found Not in Violation at the conclusion of the Student Conduct Hearing, and at the written request of that student. This process would include the destruction of all records pertaining to the student conduct proceeding. Conduct Records that are expunged are either destroyed or deleted.

*Firearm* - means any device designed, made, or adapted to expel a projectile through a barrel by using the energy generated by an explosion or burning substance or any device readily convertible to that use.

*Force* – Force is the use of physical violence and/or imposing on someone physically to gain sexual access. Force also includes threats, intimidation and/or implied threats and/or coercion that overcomes resistance or produces consent.

"You're making this difficult. It's going to hurt more if you don't cooperate." Response: Silence while thinking, "I just want this over."

*Gambling* - Gambling as prohibited by the laws of the State of Texas. (Gambling may include raffles, lotteries, sports pools, and online betting activities. For more information, see *Student Handbook*.)

*Hazing* - Defined as an act that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student, or that destroys or removes public or private property, for the purpose of initiation, admission into, affiliation with, or as a condition for continued membership in a group or organization. Participation or cooperation by the person(s) being hazed does not excuse the violation. Failing to intervene to prevent (and/or) failing to discourage (and/or) failing to report those acts may also violate this policy. For more information, see *Student Handbook*.

*Interim Suspension* - The temporary removal of an individual from the college community, including access to staff, functions, events, and services of the college, until the completion of a formal investigation and the resolution of any alleged violations of the Code of Student Conduct.

*Intimidation* – An implied threat that would make a reasonable person feel fear.

*Investigation* - The detailed inquiry into alleged violations of the Code of Student Conduct. This may include review of documents or video, interviewing the parties, and potential witnesses.

*Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct* - The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct enforces South Texas College policies to promote a safe and supportive learning environment that treats each student fairly, equally, and with respect. The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct nurtures student learning and growth by encouraging student accountability, academic integrity and responsible decision making.

*Physical Abuse* - is an act of a person involving contact of another person intended to cause feelings of physical pain, injury, or other physical suffering or bodily harm.

*Preponderance of the Evidence* - also known as balance of probabilities, is the standard required in the College's Administrative Student Conduct Process. The standard is met if the proposition is more likely to be true than not true, if there is greater than a 50 percent chance that the proposition is true it is "more likely than not" to be true.

*Probation* - The supervised monitoring of an individual, by the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct, who have been found to have violated the Code of Student Conduct and required to complete conduct sanctions within a prescribed period of time.

*Protected Class* – Any category of person protected by the College's non-discrimination policies (sex, gender expression, gender identity, race, color, age, creed, national or ethnic origin, physical or mental disability, veteran status, pregnancy status, religion, sexual orientation, predisposing genetic characteristic, or other status protected by law).

*Reasonable Person* - a composite of a relevant community's judgment as to how a typical member of the community should or would behave in the same or similar circumstances to a person whose decisions/behaviors are being subject to evaluation.

*Reporting Party* – the person or persons alleging a violation of the Code of Student Conduct.

*Responding Party* – the person or persons who have allegedly violated the Code of Student Conduct.

*Sanction* – Penalties, education, or corrective actions imposed on a student for violating the Code of Student Conduct that are intended to correct inappropriate behavior and ensure future compliance.

*Sensitive Imaging* - Images, photos, videos or other materials that depict nude or partially nude individuals taken or obtained with or without consent.

*Service Animals* Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a Service Animal is defined as..."...any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability." Animals other than dogs are not considered Service Animals, nor are animals that provide emotional support, comfort or companionship.

*Student* - For the purposes of the Code of Student Conduct, the College considers any individual to be a student who is assigned a Student ID Number (A00000000), is enrolled in a course (for credit or non-credit course work), within one academic year of last attendance, and has a continuing educational interest in the College.

*Summons* - An official notification of the date and time of an Administrative Hearing or other proceeding pertaining to an alleged violation of the Code of Student Conduct.

*Suspension* - The temporary removal and/or separation of an individual from the South Texas College community for a period of time, with the potential for return under a set of conditions, imposed for violations of the Code of Student Conduct and/or the College [Policy 4216: Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Stalking and Retaliation Prohibited](#). The student is banned from College property and the student's presence at any College-sponsored activity or event is prohibited. This action may be enforced by the issuance of a no-trespass warning.

*Threat* - An expression of a sincere intention to inflict pain, injury, and/ or harm.

*Weapons and Explosives* – Any device or item, whether possessed legally or illegally, including but not limited to fireworks or explosive, or dangerous chemicals, excluding personal defensive sprays which are legally allowed to be carried. The term weapon may also define any object or substance designed or used in a manner to inflict a wound, cause injury or pain, or to incapacitate.

## **Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct Departmental Contact Information**

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Office Location

Pecan Campus

Student Service Building, Room 2.1106

Voice: 956-872-2180

Fax: 956-872-2500

Web: <https://life.southtexascollege.edu/student-rights-and-responsibilities/student-conduct/>

### **Dean**

Mr. Pablo Hernandez Jr., LPC.S

Dean of Student Affairs

### **Director**

Ms. Maria Alonso, MBA

Director of Student Rights and Responsibilities

## **Coordinator**

Mr. Josue De La Cruz, MADS  
Coordinator of Student Rights and Responsibilities

## **Student Conduct Specialist**

Ms. Alexandra Cantu  
Student Conduct Specialist

Ms. Melina Campos  
Student Conduct Specialist

## **Administrative Assistant**

Ms. Claudia Tovar  
Administrative Assistant

## **Section 1: Mission and Vision Statement**

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### **South Texas College Vision Statement:**

South Texas College will be a global model in educational innovation serving as a catalyst to drive regional prosperity, economic development, and the social mobility of those we serve.

### **Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct Vision Statement:**

The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct at South Texas College is committed to fostering a campus environment that is conducive to academic inquiry, a productive campus life and thoughtful study and discourse. The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct is committed to an educational and developmental process that balances the interests of individual students with the interests of South Texas College.

## **Section 2: Introduction to the Code of Student Conduct**

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The Code of Student Conduct is an articulation of South Texas College's commitment to maintaining an environment that recognizes and supports the rights of its students, while providing a guide for defining behaviors the College considers inappropriate. When students fail to act in accordance with the rules and regulations of the South Texas College community the College holds them accountable for their actions.

The purpose of the Administrative Student Conduct Process is not to punish students for transgressions. Sanctions for violations of the Code of Student Conduct are intended to be educational in nature.

The Office of Student Conduct has primary and sole authority and responsibility for the administration of student discipline at the College. No other department or unit of the College



may impose discipline on students independent of the College's Conduct Process, except for enforcing standards of professionalism and academic integrity.

South Texas College Policy 3650, Student Conduct and Discipline:

<https://admin.southtexascollege.edu/president/policies/pdf/3000/3650.pdf>

## Section 3: Jurisdiction

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Students at South Texas College are provided a copy of the Code of Student Conduct annually in the form of a link on the South Texas College website. Hard copies are available upon request from the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct. Students are responsible for having read and abiding by the provisions of the Code of Student Conduct.

The Code of Student Conduct and the Administrative Student Conduct Process apply to the conduct of individual students, and all College-affiliated student organizations. For the purposes of student conduct, the College considers any individual to be a student who is assigned a Student ID Number (A00000000), is enrolled in a course (for credit or non-credit course work) and as long as the individual has a continuing educational interest in the College. The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct is unable to sanction non-students, but may work with other offices and law enforcement to impose appropriate restrictions when necessary.

The College retains conduct jurisdiction over students who choose to take a leave of absence, withdraw or have graduated, for any misconduct that occurred prior to the leave, withdrawal or graduation. If sanctioned, a hold may be placed on the student's ability to re-enroll, to obtain official transcripts or to graduate, and all sanctions must be satisfied prior to re-enrollment eligibility. In the event of serious misconduct alleged to have occurred while a student was still enrolled but reported after the student has graduated, the College reserves the right to invoke these procedures and should the former student be found responsible, the College may revoke that student's degree.

The Code of Student Conduct applies to behaviors that take place on the campus, at College sponsored events and may also apply to off-campus incidents when the Dean of Student Affairs or designee determines that the off-campus conduct affects a substantial College interest. A substantial College interest is defined to include:

- Any situation where it appears that the student's conduct may present a danger or threat to the health or safety of him/herself or others; and/or
- Any situation that significantly impinges upon the rights, property or achievements of self or others or significantly breaches the peace and/or causes social disorder; and/or
- Any situation that evidences criminal behavior and/or is detrimental to the educational mission and/or interests of the College.

The Code of Student Conduct may be applied to behavior conducted online, via email or any other electronic medium. Students should also be aware that online postings such as blogs,

web postings, chats and social networking sites are in the public sphere and are not private. These postings can subject a student to allegations of conduct violations if evidence of policy violations is posted online. The College does not regularly search for this information but may take action if and when such information is brought to the attention of College officials.

Please note that most online speech by students not involving College networks or technology will be protected as free expression and not subject to this Code, with two notable exceptions:

- A true threat, defined as “a threat a reasonable person would interpret as a serious expression of intent to inflict bodily harm upon specific individuals”;
- Speech posted online about the College or its community members that causes a significant on-campus disruption.

The Code of Student Conduct applies to guests of community members whose hosts may be held accountable for the misconduct of their guests. The Code may also be applied to resident nonstudents, campers and high school bridge/extension/partner/dual-credit and continuing education programs by contractual agreements. Visitors to and guests of the College may seek resolution of violations of the Code of Student Conduct involving members of the College community.

There is no time limit on reporting violations of the Code of Student Conduct; however, the longer someone waits to report an offense, the harder it becomes for College officials to obtain information and witness statements and to make determinations regarding alleged violations.

Though anonymous allegations are permitted, doing so may limit the College’s ability to investigate and respond to a complaint. Those who are aware of misconduct are encouraged to report it as quickly as possible to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct and/or to the Department of Public Safety.

A responding party facing an alleged violation of the Code of Student Conduct may withdraw from the College with permission of the Dean of Student Affairs; however, the Administrative Conduct Process will typically continue as outlined within this document. Students wishing to withdraw must follow the College’s stated withdrawal policy and may be subject to the College’s refund policy. Once the Administrative Student Conduct Process is completed, if the former student is sanctioned, the former student must complete the sanctions before becoming eligible to re-enroll, if at all.

College email is the primary means of communication with students by the Office of Student Conduct and the College. Students are responsible for all communication delivered to their College email address.

The Code of Student Conduct and Administrative Student Conduct Process outline the community standards and resolution process applicable to students and student organizations at South Texas College. The Code of Student Conduct applies to all College-sponsored events, activities, trips, etc., which may occur on- or off-campus, students are also subject to the

Student Travel Code of Conduct. Any student who violates the Code of Student Conduct and/or breaks the law is subject to College, civil, and/or criminal authorities. The College, at its sole discretion, may pursue disciplinary action involving a student while the student is also subject to criminal proceedings. The College reserves the right to proceed with an Administrative Hearing even if criminal charges are pending, reduced, or dismissed.

The South Texas College Administrative Student Conduct Process is the responsibility of the Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management and the Dean of Student Affairs. The Dean of Student Affairs and the Director of Student Rights and Responsibilities or designee of the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct is responsible for the day-to-day operation and administration of the Administrative Student Conduct Process. The Director or designee will develop procedures for the administration of the Administrative Student Conduct Process, which includes procedural rules for conducting investigations and hearings. The Director or designee, in consultation with appropriate College officials and students, will revise and update all regulations and processes; conduct training sessions for investigators, hearing officers and decision-makers; and manage and maintain all general student disciplinary records. Records related to Title IX and [Policy 4216: Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Stalking and Retaliation Prohibited](#) violations are maintained by the Title IX Coordinator.

## **Parental Notification**

South Texas College and the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct reserve the right to notify parents/guardians of dependent students regarding any health or safety risk, change in student status or conduct situation, particularly alcohol and other drug violations. South Texas College and the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct may also notify parents/guardians of non-dependent students who are under age 21 of alcohol and/or drug policy violations.

When a student is not a dependent, South Texas College and the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct may contact parents/guardians/emergency contact to inform them of situations in which there is a significant and articulable health and/or safety risk with/without the consent of the student. South Texas College and the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct also reserve the right to designate which college officials have a legitimate educational interest in accessing student conduct records pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

## **Notification of Outcomes**

The outcome of an Administrative Student Conduct Hearing is part of the education record of the responding party and is protected from release under FERPA, except under certain conditions. As allowed by FERPA, when a student is accused of a violation of the Code of Student Conduct or a South Texas College policy that would constitute a “crime of violence” the College will inform the reporting party in writing of the final results of the process regardless of whether the College concludes that a violation was committed. Such release of information will typically include only the responding party’s name, any violation committed, and the sanctions

assigned, when applicable. The rationale for the outcome will also be shared with all parties in addition to the finding and sanction(s), and will be delivered to the parties without significant delay between notifications. The notice of outcome will also detail whether the determination is final, and the right to appeal.

In cases where the College determines through the Administrative Student Conduct Process that a student violated a policy that would constitute a “crime of violence,” the College may also release the above information publicly and/or to any third party.

Release of records and outcomes related to [Policy 4216: Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Stalking and Retaliation Prohibited](#) are handled by the Title IX Coordinator.

FERPA defines “crimes of violence” to include:

1. Arson
2. Assault offenses (includes stalking)
3. Burglary
4. Criminal Homicide - manslaughter by negligence
5. Criminal Homicide - murder and non-negligent manslaughter
6. Destruction/damage/vandalism of property
7. Kidnapping/abduction
8. Robbery
9. Forcible sex offences
10. Non-forcible sex offences

## **Failure to Complete or Comply with Conduct Sanctions**

All students are expected to complete and/ or comply with conduct sanctions within the timeframe specified by the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct. Failure to follow through on conduct sanctions by the date specified, whether by refusal, neglect or any other reason, may result in additional sanctions and/or suspension from the College.

A suspension will only be lifted when compliance with conduct sanctions is satisfactorily achieved, a Conduct Hold may be placed on the students account which restricts the ability to add or drop courses, review grades, and request official transcripts, without the permission of the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct, the Dean of Student Affairs or their designee.

## **Student Conduct Records**

The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct has adopted a policy with respect to student conduct records consistent with the requirements and regulations of FERPA.

FERPA is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. FERPA places limitations on the disclosure of personally identifiable information maintained by South Texas College with respect to students and limits access to education records, including the right to access, the right to obtain copies, the right to seek correction of such records through informal and formal internal procedures, and the right to place a statement in such educational records explaining any information which the student believes to be inaccurate or misleading.

## **Behavioral Intervention Team**

The Behavioral Intervention Team at South Texas College is a highly trained panel of professionals advancing campus safety and collegiality for the South Texas College community. The Behavioral Intervention Team at South Texas College is a district wide risk assessment and behavioral intervention team that monitors threats and risks to the campus community and intervenes in the concerning behaviors of all individuals who work at, attend, or who have business with South Texas College.

The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct, when deemed appropriate may request that the Behavioral Intervention Team complete an evaluation of an individual's case and assign a risk level. The Behavioral Intervention Team has several tools at their disposal from which they may choose. The risk assessment may be used in determining risk factors, as well as a means of developing an overall treatment plan for the individual.

Note: Risk Assessment is never used in isolation when determining a student's ability to remain on campus. The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct uses all available information, and endeavors to make the most informed and fair decisions when deciding to remove an individual from or allow an individual to remain on campus.

For more information about the role of the South Texas College Behavioral Intervention Team please click on the following link: <https://life.southtexascollege.edu/student-rights-and-responsibilities/behavioral-intervention-team/>

## **C.A.R.E. Team**

The acronym C.A.R.E. stands for Collaboration, Assistance, Resource and Education. The South Texas College C.A.R.E. Team is a collaborative team of professionals dedicated to assisting students in achieving their educational goals. The members of this team combine their knowledge, experience, and commitment to design an individualized educational program to meet the needs of the student and assist with their development throughout their educational programming.

The C.A.R.E. Team works collaboratively to assist students who are referred from the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct. The C.A.R.E. Team provides a host of services ranging from social and mental health to referrals to community resources in an effort to assist students in their development, maturation, and matriculation. The C.A.R.E. Team works collaboratively with the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct to implement customized strategies and interventions to meet the needs of the individual.

For more information about the role of the South Texas College C.A.R.E. Team please click on the following link: <https://life.southtexascollege.edu/student-rights-and-responsibilities/care-team/>.

## **Inspection, Review, and Retention of Student Conduct Records**

The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct will maintain general student conduct records, which contain all necessary and appropriate student conduct correspondence, hearing officer and student conduct panel decisions, and other documentation pertinent to any proceedings involving a student. Student conduct records will be maintained as follows:

1. Student conduct records will be maintained for a period of seven (7) years.
2. Student conduct records pertaining to suspension and expulsion.
3. Records and outcomes related to [Policy 4216: Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Stalking and Retaliation Prohibited](#) are maintained for at least seven (7) years by the Title IX Coordinator.
4. The College reserves the right to retain all disciplinary files for longer periods as may be deemed necessary.
5. Complete the request to [Review or Receive Copies of Student Conduct Records](#).

FERPA defines records of a student engaged in a disciplinary process as private. Information about the disciplinary process may only be shared with the student(s) of record, their parents or guardian if a dependent, or school officials with a legitimate educational interest. The student must give written permission for anyone else to have access to this information, unless otherwise permitted by federal or state law. For additional information regarding FERPA, see the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#).

South Texas College will not deny a student access to their education records; however, the College reserves the right to deny a request for copies of education records, including transcripts, diplomas, and certificates, unless a student is physically unable to access records where they are maintained, in which case the College will furnish copies. To request a review of or to receive copies of conduct records, students must complete the Request to [Review or Receive Copies of Student Conduct Records](#) form.

In accordance with FERPA, South Texas College will provide access to education records upon request within a reasonable period of time, but not more than **45 calendar days** after receipt of a request in writing. The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct will also provide an explanation and interpretation of educational records within a reasonable period of time, but not more than **45 calendar days** after receipt of a request in writing.

The College will hold an administrative hearing within a reasonable time after it has received a request from the parent or eligible student disputing the content of the student's education records on the grounds that the information contained in the education records is inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the privacy rights of the student.

Additionally, consent to inspect or review records cannot be given orally; consent for disclosure of information from education records must:

1. Be given in writing
2. Be signed and dated
3. Specify the records to be disclosed
4. State the purpose of the disclosure
5. Identify the party or class of parties to whom the disclosure may be made.

Please note: Electronic documents/signatures from verified email address will be accepted.

## **Storage, Censor, and Viewing of Sensitive Images**

The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct will strive to protect the privacy of individual parties who participate in the Administrative Student Conduct Process to the extent permitted by law. The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct will also strive to treat the parties with dignity and respect.

An appropriate school administrator may possess or access sensitive photos or video images when necessary to fulfill their assigned role in accordance with the South Texas College Code of Student Conduct or to resolve complaints related to [Policy 4216: Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Stalking and Retaliation Prohibited](#) and Procedures. The school administrator must take reasonable steps to prevent unnecessary viewing of and to collect and destroy, when appropriate, any remaining copies of the material within an appropriate period following the resolution of the case. Parties should be aware that the College also regulates the taking, possession, and sharing of certain sensitive material under [Policy 4216: Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Stalking and Retaliation Prohibited](#).

Consistent with those aims, sensitive images, photos and videos that are maintained in a student's conduct file will be stored in one of two ways.

1. Original sensitive images, photos and videos received will be maintained in the form they are received and will be marked as follows:
  - a. ATTENTION – Explicit Image – Contact Student Conduct Prior To Viewing (Reporting or Responding Party)
2. When feasible, a duplicate set of the sensitive imaging, photos and videos will be created using photo editing or publishing software.
  - a. Sensitive or private areas will be censored (i.e. blurred, blotted out, black bar placed over sensitive areas) to conceal the area from view.
  - b. These images will be available for distribution as part of the final draft of the investigation report to both parties and for review by sanctioning officials, including Conduct Panels, members of the Behavioral Intervention Team (when necessary), Public Safety officials, and Title IX Administrators or personnel.

- c. Use of uncensored images, photos, or videos will be limited to the extent possible unless deemed necessary to make a final determination of the facts of the case.
  - d. Uncensored images, photos or videos will also be provided to Public Safety when requested in furtherance of their duties. Public Safety will maintain the privacy of such.
3. The censored and uncensored images, photos, or videos will be retained as long as the case file is maintained by the College.

## **Sensitive image, photos and videos of a child younger than 18 years of age**

Sensitive image, photos and videos of a child younger than 18 years of age at the time the sensitive imaging, photo or video image of the child was made shall be maintained and managed in accordance with Federal and State law. Please refer to [Policy 4216: Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Stalking and Retaliation Prohibited](#) for additional policies concerning the creation, possession, storage, handling or sharing of sensitive images.

## **Expunging Student Conduct Records**

In instances where a student has been found to have violated the South Texas College Code of Student Conduct, Student Conduct Records will be retained for seven years from the date of the student's graduation or the date of last attendance. However, student conduct records may be retained for as long as administratively valuable or permanently if the student was expelled, dismissed, suspended or blocked from reenrollment and in situations that may result in future litigation.

Reports concerning alleged violations of [Policy 4216: Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Stalking and Retaliation Prohibited](#) may contain references to the student who filed the report, an alleged victim, an alleged violator, or other witnesses. These records will be maintained by the Title IX Coordinator and will be retained in accordance with federal and state laws.

While student conduct records are destroyed seven years after the final decision is delivered, except as required by law, student conduct records may be expunged earlier by the Dean of Student Affairs upon written request from the student by completing the Request to Expunge Student Conduct Records form.

A decision to expunge records is strictly a courtesy provided by the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct and the Dean of Student Affairs and is not a requirement of law. A request to Expunge Student Conduct Records will only be considered for students i) who did not receive suspension or expulsion, ii) whose violations were determined not to have threatened or endangered the health or safety of any person, and iii) who were not found to have committed a violation of [Policy 4216: Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Stalking and Retaliation Prohibited](#)



Some factors that may be considered in reviewing a Request to Expunge Records include, but are not limited to:

1. The present demeanor of the student.
2. The conduct of the student subsequent to the violation.
3. The nature of the violation and the severity of any resulting damage, injury, or harm.
4. The input of the impacted parties.
5. Whether all sanctions must have been completed on time.
6. Whether at the time of consideration, the student is in good standing with the College.

### **Steps to submit a Request to Expunge Student Conduct Records**

1. To submit a Request to Expunge Student Conduct Records, students must complete the Expunge Records Request Form, provided by the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct, and provide a written statement outlining the basis for the request.
2. Student conduct records are eligible to be expunged if the incident(s) in question are minor and do not result in suspension or expulsion and where further violations would not likely result in suspension or expulsion from South Texas College.
3. A student may submit a written request to have their records expunged 1 year after an investigation has been completed and the case has been closed, except in cases governed by Title IX and [Policy 4216: Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Stalking and Retaliation Prohibited](#).
4. A student conduct record may be expunged upon the receipt of a Request to Expunge Student Conduct Records, in writing, to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct. Requests should be submitted to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct by completing the online [Request to Expunge Student Conduct Records Form](#) and provide a written statement outlining the basis for the request.
5. Once the Request to Expunge Conduct Records is received, the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct will verify that the conduct records are eligible to be expunged. If the records are eligible to be expunged the request will then be forwarded for review by an Ad Hoc Committee to determine if it meets the criteria to expunge conduct records.
  - a. The Ad Hoc Committee will review and render a decision in writing not more than 30 calendar days from the receipt of the Request to Expunge Student Conduct Records.
  - b. After the meeting, the committee will issue a recommendation to the Dean of Student Affairs. The Dean of Student Affairs will provide a decision to the student, in writing, within 14 business days of receipt of the decision by the Ad Hoc Committee.
  - c. If the recommendation is to deny the Request to Expunge Student Conduct Records the Dean of Student Affairs will include a concise written statement that explains the basis for the decision.

- d. All other requests that are not eligible to be expunged will be denied without review by Ad Hoc Committee; the student will be notified, in writing, within 14 business days of that decision.
6. The Ad Hoc Committee will be appointed by the Dean of Student Affairs from a pool of trained Student Conduct Review Panel members.
7. In instances where a request has been denied, the Student Conduct Records shall be maintained by the Office of Student Conduct for seven years after the final decision on the matter.
8. There is no appeal process for a denial of a request to Expunge Student Conduct Records.

## **Section 4: Violations of the Law**

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Alleged violations of federal, state, and/or local laws may be investigated and addressed under the Code of Student Conduct. When an offense occurs over which the College has jurisdiction, the Administrative Student Conduct Process will usually go forward notwithstanding any criminal complaint that may arise from the same incident.

The College reserves the right to exercise its authority of interim suspension upon notification that a student is facing criminal investigation and/or complaint. For additional information on Interim Suspension please see page 98. Interim suspensions are imposed until a hearing on the matter can be held, typically within two weeks of the suspension. Students objecting to interim measures or suspension can request an immediate hearing with the Dean of Student Affairs to show cause why the restrictions or suspension should be limited or lifted. That decision is at the sole discretion of the Dean of Student Affairs, or their designee, or Student Conduct Review panel. The interim suspension may also be extended if a danger to the community is present and the College may be delayed or prevented from conducting its own investigation and resolving the allegation because of concurrent criminal proceedings. In such cases, the College will only delay its resolution until such time as it can conduct an internal investigation or obtain sufficient information independently or from law enforcement upon which to proceed. This delay will typically be no longer than two weeks from notice of the incident unless a longer delay is necessary given the circumstances.

Students accused of crimes may request to take a leave from the College until the criminal charges are resolved. In such situations, the College procedure for voluntary leaves of absence is subject to the following conditions:

- The parties must comply with all campus investigative efforts that will not prejudice their defense in the criminal trial; and
- The parties must comply with all interim actions and/or restrictions imposed during the leave of absence; and
- The parties must agree that, in order to be reinstated as an active student, they must first be subject to, and fully cooperate with, the Administrative Student Conduct Process and must comply with all sanctions that are imposed.

## Section 5: Conduct Violations

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The College reserves the right to take necessary and appropriate action to protect the safety and interests of the College community. Such action may include administering sanctions when students violate the Code of Student Conduct or College policy, whether such violation takes place on-campus or off-campus.

Violations affecting the health and safety of members of the College community are deemed to be the most serious. Therefore, acts of violence, sexual misconduct, threats, dangerous behavior, or failure to complete prior sanctions may result in suspension or expulsion from the College. Students committing multiple acts of academic dishonesty may also face suspension or expulsion from the institution. Students with an extensive conduct history may also face suspension or expulsion as the result of progressive discipline. Students do not need to have an extensive record with the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct to warrant suspension or expulsion based on the severity of the incident.

This code treats attempts to engage in any offense below, or collusion to engage in any offense below, as a violation of that offense. Specific examples of misconduct occurring on-campus or off-campus for which students may be subject to sanction include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Commission of or Being Charged With any Criminal Offense. The commission of or being charged with any criminal offense under federal, state, or local law; or advocating or recommending, either orally or in writing, the conscious and deliberate violation of any federal, state, or local law.
2. Failure to Report an Arrest. Failure of any student to accurately report an arrest by any law enforcement agency for any crime, including but not limited to non-custodial or field arrests to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct within **72 hours of release**.
3. Dangerous Conduct. Engaging in conduct that injures or endangers the health or safety of any person. This includes threats of violence. Threats of violence are considered a serious infringement upon the learning environment and will be acted upon accordingly.
4. Arson. The intentional and unauthorized burning, whether the fire continues after ignition, or causes an explosion with intent to destroy, of the property of another or the College. Intentionally or recklessly causing a fire which damages College or personal property or which causes injury.
5. Assault/Fighting. Intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly causing bodily injury, threatening to cause imminent bodily injury to another person, or physical contact with another person when the person knows or should reasonably believe that the other will regard the contact as offensive or provocative. Engaging in a physical or verbal

confrontation, however so slight, between two or more parties with the intent to cause harm, or gain power over the other, with bodily force or weapons.

**Harm to Persons.** Intentionally or recklessly causing physical harm or endangering the health or safety of any person.

6. Burglary/Theft. Entering any portion of a building or habitation, without the effective consent of the owner, not then open to the public, with intent to commit a theft, or an assault. Taking of another person property without the owner's effective consent.

**Taking of Property.** Intentional and unauthorized taking of University/College property or the personal property of another, including goods, services and other valuables;

7. Destruction, Damage, and Vandalism of Property. Intentionally or knowingly damaging, destroying, or defacing, however so slight, the property of another or the College without the effective consent of the owner.

**Damage and Destruction.** Intentional, reckless and/or unauthorized damage to or destruction of College property or the personal property of another.

8. Damage, Destruction, Destroying or Defacing Property. Intentional or reckless and unauthorized damage to or destruction of College property or the personal property of another.
9. Taking of Property or Services. The intentional and unauthorized taking of College property or the personal property of another, including goods, services and other valuables. This includes knowingly taking or maintaining possession of stolen property including goods, services and other valuables.
10. Falsification of Documents and/or Records. Knowingly furnishing or possessing false, falsified or forged materials, documents, accounts, records, identification or financial instruments.
11. Election Tampering. Tampering with the election of any College-recognized student organization or club, including Student Government Elections (SGA).
12. Unauthorized Trademark Use. Unauthorized and/or misuse of College or organizational logos, names and/or images.
13. Instructional Technology (IT) and Acceptable Use. Use of College equipment, computers or network resources for illegal or inappropriate purposes such as, but not limited to, gambling; accessing pornographic web sites; sending threatening e-mails; illegally downloading, sharing or printing copyrighted material.

14. Revealing your Personal Account Password. Revealing your College issued account (i.e. JagNet, Blackboard, BANNER, or ARGOS) or password to others or allowing use of your account(s) by others.
15. Use of Another's Account or Password. Use of another's College issued account (i.e. JagNet, Blackboard, BANNER, or ARGOS) or password.
16. Use of Another's Identification. Use of another's identification, or transferring, lending, or altering a college identification card or any other record or instrument of identification.
17. Failure to Provide Identification. Failing or refusing to present a valid photo ID card when requested by a College official, Campus Law Enforcement or Security Officer. All individuals present on South Texas College property, property controlled by the College, and/or attending a College-sponsored event are required to present a Student Identification Card or other form of valid photo identification for access to services and activities.
18. Illegal Gambling. Gambling as prohibited by the laws of the State of Texas, as defined by Chapter 47 of the Texas Penal Code. Gambling may include raffles, lotteries, sports pools and online betting activities.
19. Failure to Comply with a Reasonable Directive. Failure to comply with the reasonable directive of a College official, Campus Law Enforcement or Security Officer acting in the performance of his/her duties; this includes failure to heed an official summons or request for a meeting by any College official, Campus Law Enforcement or Security Officer, or the Office of Student Conduct within the designated time.
20. Giving False Testimony or Evidence. Giving false testimony or evidence to the Office of Student Conduct, a College official, Campus Law Enforcement or Security Officer; including giving false identification or a fictitious name, address, or telephone number at any point of an investigation, hearing or other administrative process.
21. Failure to Meet Financial Responsibilities. Failure to promptly meet financial responsibilities to the College, including, but not limited to; knowingly passing a worthless check or money order in payment to the institution or to an official of the institution acting in an official capacity.
22. Failure to Comply with Sanctions or Violations of Probationary Status. Failure to comply with sanctions imposed by the Office of Student Conduct in accordance with the procedures described herein. This includes violating the terms or conditions of disciplinary probation.

23. Failure to Maintain Current Contact Information. Failure to maintain a current official mailing address, telephone number and email address, or giving a false or fictitious address, telephone number, or email address to any College official acting within the capacity of their office and/or duties.
24. Misuse of Fire or other Safety Equipment. Violation of local, state, federal or campus fire policies including, but not limited to:
- a. Intentionally or recklessly causing a fire which damages College or personal property or which causes injury.
  - b. Failure to evacuate a College-controlled building during a fire alarm.
  - c. Improper use of College fire safety equipment.
  - d. Tampering with or improperly engaging a fire alarm or fire detection/control equipment while on College property. Such action may result in a local fine in addition to College sanctions.
  - e. False Alarm or Report. Knowingly initiating, communicating, or circulating a false alarm or report which would ordinarily result in action by an emergency response agency (Police, Fire Dept., etc.)
  - f. Interfering with, Obstructing or Disrupting Police or Fire Responses. This includes but is not limited to failing to abide by the directions of police, security, fire or other emergency personnel.
25. Unauthorized Entry, Access, Use, or Trespass. Trespass; Unauthorized access into or onto any College building, room, structure or facility, or property of the college or property under the control of the College including the misuse of access privileges to College premises, propping or unauthorized use of alarmed doors for entry into or exit from any College building or property; Unauthorized use, distribution, duplication or possession of any keys issued for any college building, laboratory, facility, room, or vehicle owned or operated by the College.
26. Weapons and Explosives Other Than Firearms. Possession, ignition, detonation, use, or distribution of any explosive or explosive device; which includes fireworks, liquids, or objects which maybe flammable or which may cause damage by fire or explosion to persons or property, including but not limited to facsimile weapons, or knives with a blade of longer than 5-1/2 inches, including the storage of any item that falls within the category of a weapon other than firearms and ammunition for which an individual has a Texas issued License to Carry or Concealed Handgun License, in a vehicle parked on College property, or property controlled by the College. South Texas College Policy 6326, Concealed Carry and Weapons on Campus, prohibits a person from intentionally, knowing, or recklessly possessing a firearm, illegal knife, club, ammunition, or prohibited weapon listed in Section 46.05(a) of the Texas Penal Code, on the premises (as defined by law) or physical grounds of any campus or other property owned, leased, or controlled by the College. Any activity, use of, or brandishing of any such item, even if

legally possessed, in a manner that harms, threatens or causes fear to others is prohibited.

27. Possession of a Firearm, Rifle, Shotgun, Long Gun, or Cannon. Possession of a rifle, shotgun or other long gun, a handgun or other firearm, including but not limited to air or gas pressure guns or cannon, or any cannon, BB, paintball, or pellet gun, other than a concealed handgun and ammunition for which an individual has a Texas issued License to Carry or Concealed Handgun License, is prohibited on college property. Individuals with a Texas issued License to Carry or Concealed Handgun License are prohibited from areas designated by Texas state law and in an area that has been designated as a gun or firearm free zone by the College. Open Carry of firearms is not permitted on college campuses.
28. Intimidation and/or Threatening Behaviors. An implied threat that would make a reasonable person feel fear. An expression of a sincere intention to inflict pain, injury, and/ or harm.
29. Disruptive Behavior. Disruptive activities that substantially interfere with instructional activities or the functions that support the college, or surrounding community. Disruption of College operations including obstruction of teaching, research, administration, other College activities, and/or other authorized non-College activities which occur on campus. Includes disruption of guest speakers, inciting substantial disruption, and rioting.
30. By standing. Being complicit with or the failure of any student to appropriately address known or obvious violations of the South Texas College Code of Student Conduct or law; being complicit with or failure of any organized group to appropriately address known or obvious violations of the South Texas College Code of Student Conduct or law by its members.
31. Bullying and Cyberbullying. Repeated and/or severe aggressive behaviors that intimidate or intentionally harm or control another person physically or emotionally, and are not protected by freedom of expression. This includes but is not limited to in person or direct contact, by phone, text, or email, by using social media, or by sending messages by a third party, in writing or any other form.
32. Hazing. Any act that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a member of the South Texas College community, or that destroys or removes public or private property, for the purpose of initiation, admission into, affiliation with, or as a condition for continued membership in a group or organization. Participation or cooperation by the person(s) being hazed does not excuse the violation. Failing to intervene to prevent and/or failing to discourage and/or failing to report those acts may also violate this policy.

33. Drug and Alcohol Violations. The use or possession of drugs, prescription medications, alcohol, or other intoxicating substances or being intoxicated on South Texas College property, property controlled by South Texas College or at an event sponsored by South Texas College. Illegal possession, use, sale, manufacture or distribution of any quantity, whether usable or not, of any illegal drug, narcotic, controlled substance or drug paraphernalia except as expressly permitted by law or being under the influence of said drug, narcotic, or controlled substance. Abuse, misuse, sale, and/or distribution of prescription or over-the-counter medications. The use, possession, or distribution of alcoholic beverages or paraphernalia except as expressly permitted by law.
34. Bringing Animals or Pets onto College property or any College-sponsored Event. Bringing animals or pets of any type on College property or at any College-sponsored event, except as permitted by law. Exception: Service Animals
35. Bribery. This offense includes, but is not limited to, bribery, attempted bribery, acceptance of a bribe, and/or failure to report a bribe. It is also a violation to request, receive, or attempt to get money and/or anything of value, including a letter grade, by the use of violence, threats, intimidation, and/or misuse of authority.
36. Academic Negligence - consists of a minor unintentional lapse of ethical academic behavior that the student should have known. It may result from misunderstanding expectations, inadequate pre-college preparation, or inattention to differences in cultural or disciplinary citation practices. Regardless of the lack of intent, academic negligence is a serious matter that identifies a need for further education on academic honesty or the use of sources in academic writing.

Examples of behaviors that may in an isolated instance constitute academic negligence include, but are not limited to:

Failure to acknowledge another's words or research due to misunderstanding or carelessness concerning rules of attribution or citation. In particular:

- a. poor paraphrasing of another's work (with or without a citation)
- b. inadequate citation not rising to the level of complete misrepresentation

Appropriating another's ideas without credit on an assignment that allows collaboration.

37. Academic dishonesty. Students attending South Texas College are responsible for adhering to standards of academic integrity. Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner. Academic integrity is a basic guiding principle for all academic activity at South Texas College and students are expected to act in accordance with this principle. Failing to adhere to academic integrity



constitutes academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty is considered to be a violation of the behavior expected of a student in an academic setting as well as a student conduct violation. A student found responsible for academic dishonesty is subject to appropriate academic penalty as determined by the faculty member. Students who engage in academic dishonesty also face additional sanctions from the Office of Student Conduct, including expulsion from the College, as outlined in the South Texas College Code of Student Conduct.

Students are responsible for adhering to course requirements as specified by the faculty member in the course syllabus. Students assume full responsibility for the content and integrity of the coursework they submit. Information from instructors regarding the rules and guidelines for examinations, papers, projects, presentations, and other assignments are included in the course syllabus.

Any assessment/exam administered by Student Assessment Center including, but not limited to, ACT, GED, GED Online, TSI Assessment On Campus, TSI Online, Pearson Vue, HESI, and TCOLE/TCFP are subject to sanctions imposed by vendor.

A student's lack of understanding is not a valid defense to a charge of academic dishonesty. Types of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to:

- a. **Cheating** - Using or intending to use unauthorized materials, information, notes or study aids in any academic exercise; or any other actions taken to gain unfair advantage over others.
  1. Copying from another student's exam or quiz or providing answers to another student during an exam or quiz.
  2. Substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for one's self, in taking an exam or completing an assignment.
  3. Using, buying, stealing, transporting or soliciting some or all of the contents of an un-administered test, homework answer sheet, computer program or answer key.
  4. Looking at another student's paper, talking or using an external aid such as notes, books, calculators or cell phones (unless the course instructor has indicated in advance that this will be allowed) during an exam or quiz.
  5. Obtaining answers or information for a homework assignment, exam or quiz from an unauthorized source. This includes, but is not limited to, using commercial term paper companies, purchasing answer sets to homework from tutoring companies, and obtaining information from students who have previously taken the course.
  6. Reviewing previous copies of an exam or quiz without the permission of the course instructor.
- b. **Plagiarism** - Using someone else's words, ideas or images and submitting that work for credit as if it were one's own without appropriate acknowledgment to the author.

1. Submission of any written assignment or oral presentation implies that the work is the result of that student's own thought.
  2. Use of someone else's words, ideas and images must be documented by proper use of quotation marks, references, and footnotes. This includes Internet sources.
  3. Students must be able to authenticate their work if requested by their course instructor.
  4. The unauthorized use or misuse of Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- c. **Multiple Submissions** - Multiple submissions are submissions of the same or substantially the same work for credit in two or more courses, including but not limited to courses being retaken for credit. Multiple submissions include the use of any prior academic effort previously submitted for academic credit at this or a different institution. Multiple submissions will not include those situations where the prior written approval by the instructor in the current course is given to the student to use a prior academic work or endeavor.
- d. **Fabrication** - The intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of information or citation in an academic exercise.
1. Inventing data or results, and recording or reporting them as factual.
  2. Inventing or altering citations, footnotes, etc.
  3. Providing a fabricated document to a course instructor in order to obtain an excused absence or to satisfy a course requirement.
- e. **Collusion** - Unauthorized collaboration with another person in the preparation of an academic assignment. All assignments are to be completed individually unless the course instructor indicates otherwise.
- f. **Complicity** - Assisting or attempting to help another student commit academic dishonesty.
1. Providing information about test questions before a scheduled exam or quiz unless authorized to do so by the course instructor.
  2. Allowing another student to copy from one's paper during an exam, quiz or homework assignment.
  3. Taking an exam or quiz for another student.
  4. Signing another student's name on an academic exercise or attendance sheet.
  5. Conspiring with one or more persons to commit, or to attempt to commit, any act of scholastic dishonesty.
- g. **Failing to Report Academic Dishonesty** - Failing to report an incident of academic dishonesty to your course instructor.
38. Other Policies. Violations of other published College regulations or policies not listed in the Code of Student Conduct. This includes but is not limited to, computer use, use of College facilities, parking rules and regulations and regulations governing student organizations.

## **Section 6: Student Conduct Authority**

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Usually, only the Dean of Student Affairs or the Director of the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct may find a student responsible for violating the Code of Student Conduct. However, the Title IX Coordinator, the College President, Vice-Presidents, the Director of Human Resources and the Dean of Student Affairs are designated as “Officials with Authority” under [Policy 4216: Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Stalking and Retaliation Prohibited](#) who may also institute corrective measures on behalf of the College.

In cases where faculty maintain (initial, original) jurisdiction over matters such as Academic Negligence and Academic Dishonesty, the faculty member may administer discipline in accordance with class syllabi and program/ department standards as outline under Section 8 of this code. Faculty are required to notify the student of their due process right to appeal any imposed sanctions as described within this code under Section 8: Student Discipline in the Classroom. Faculty are encouraged to notify the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct of instances of academic dishonesty to ensure that institutional standards for academic dishonesty are maintained.

### **College as Convener of the Student Conduct Administrative Process**

South Texas College is the convener of every action under this code and, as such, carries out several roles in the process. The responding party is the person who is alleged to have violated the Code of Student Conduct. The reporting party, who may be a student, employee, visitor, or guest, is the person alleging a policy violation, and may choose to be present and participate in the process as fully as the responding party. There are witnesses, who may offer information regarding the allegation. There is an investigator(s) whose role is to present the allegations and share the evidence or information that the College has obtained during the course of their investigation. Individuals who provide written statements or verbal statements may be required to participate in indirect questioning. Individuals who choose not to participate in indirect questioning may have written statements or verbal statements excluded from consideration in the final decision of the live hearing.

### **Authority**

The Dean of Student Affairs is vested with the authority over student conduct by the President of South Texas College. The Dean of Student Affairs appoints the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct, to oversee and manage the student conduct process. The Dean of Student Affairs and Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct, may appoint investigators, administrative hearing and appeals officers as deemed necessary to efficiently and effectively supervise the student conduct process.

The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct, will assume responsibility for the investigation of an allegation of misconduct to determine if the allegation has merit.

In cases governed by [Policy 4216: Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Stalking and Retaliation Prohibited](#), the College President, Vice-Presidents, Director of Human Resources, and the Title IX Coordinator may implement corrective measures that may be necessary to address issues affecting the health and safety of the college community.

The Title IX Coordinator coordinates the resolution of complaints of discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct or retaliation governed by [Policy 4216: Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Stalking and Retaliation Prohibited](#). For more information or for the procedures related to reports of discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct or retaliation please see the corresponding Title IX Procedures here:

<https://www.southtexascollege.edu/title-ix/files/Title-IX-Procedures.pdf>

## Interim Suspension and Interim Action

Under the South Texas College Code of Student Conduct, the Dean of Student Affairs may impose restrictions and/or separate a student from the College community pending an Administrative Student Conduct Hearing on alleged violation(s) of the Code of Student Conduct when, but not limited to the following:

- a student represents a threat of serious harm to others,
- a student is facing allegations of serious criminal activity,
- necessary to preserve the integrity of an investigation, or
- necessary to preserve College property and/or to prevent disruption of, or interference with, the normal operations of the College.

Interim Suspension and Interim Actions can include separation from the College or restrictions on participation in any South Texas College sponsored or supported events typically for no more than **10 business** days pending the scheduling of a campus hearing on the alleged violation(s) of the Code of Student Conduct. At the end of **10 business** days a hearing will be held on the alleged violation(s), or to determine if the Interim Suspension should be extended or if alternative arrangements may be implemented.

Any individuals who are separated or receive Interim Suspension or Actions may request a meeting with the Dean of Student Affairs to show cause why an Interim Suspension/Actions are not merited or should be modified. Regardless of the outcome of this meeting, the College may still proceed with the scheduling of a hearing.

During an Interim Suspension, a student may be denied access to the College campus, facilities, and sponsored events. As determined to be appropriate by the Dean of Student Affairs, this restriction may include classes and/or all other College activities or privileges for which the student might otherwise be eligible. At the discretion of the Dean of Student Affairs and with the approval of, and in collaboration with, the appropriate Dean(s), alternative coursework options may be pursued to ensure as minimal an impact as possible on the responding party.

If Interim Suspension is deemed appropriate, the student will immediately be removed from campus and/or College related, sponsored or supported activities, or restrictions will be imposed. Students placed on Interim Suspension may be banned from all College property, including related, sponsored or supported activities; and may be subject to arrest for trespassing if they violate this ban.

Interim Suspension and/ or Interim Action should normally be imposed no later than **48 hours** after the Dean of Student Affairs is notified of an incident. A student placed on Interim Suspension is not permitted to return to campus until the Interim Suspension has been lifted or a hearing has concluded. The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct must provide the student with notice of the suspension and the alleged violations of the South Texas College Code of Student Conduct; this notice may be delivered in writing or verbally. The student will be contacted by the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct to discuss the disciplinary process.

The student may request an appointment with the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct and request further explanation of the alleged violations of the South Texas College Code of Student Conduct or to request that a hearing be held to lift the Interim Suspension or Interim Action. The Dean of Student Affairs may:

- Uphold the Interim Suspension or Interim Action, requiring the student to remain off campus and/or out of classes until the Administrative Conduct Hearing has concluded, where appropriate.
- Administrative Conduct Hearings are scheduled as early as possible to avoid undue delay in a student’s return to campus.
- Lift the Interim Suspension or Interim Action(s) and allow the immediate return of the student to campus. If an Interim Suspension is lifted, Interim Actions or other restrictions may be imposed upon the returning student pending the outcome of the investigation and Administrative Student Conduct Hearing, where appropriate. Students may resume their coursework where they left off.

## **Interim Suspension Steps**

1. The Dean of Student Affairs reserves the right to impose or overturn any Interim Suspension and/or Interim Action.
2. A student may be placed on Interim Suspension or Interim Action for behavior that occurs on or off campus. Campus Coordinators and the Chief of Police/Director of Campus Security may request that the Dean of Student Affairs impose Interim Suspension or Interim Action.
3. In instances where Interim Suspension or other Interim Actions are imposed, cases should be evaluated by the South Texas College Behavioral Intervention Team for risk assessment and impose the least restrictive alternatives.

## Interim Measures

Interim measures are individualized actions taken by the Dean of Student Affairs in an effort to stop, remedy and prevent future occurrences, incidents, or behaviors that are not conducive to the mission of South Texas College. Interim measures are designed to foster a safe learning environment and contribute to the maturation of South Texas College's students.

When implementing Interim measures, South Texas College takes every precaution to minimize the burden on the parties. As such, South Texas College will take necessary steps to ensure equal access to its education programs and activities and to protect the parties as necessary, including taking Interim measures before the final outcome of an investigation.

Upon receipt of a report the Dean of Student Affairs will impose reasonable and appropriate Interim measures designed to protect the parties. When imposing Interim measures, the College will make a reasonable effort to communicate with the parties to ensure that all safety, emotional and physical well-being concerns are being met. The College may implement Interim measures, as appropriate, regardless of whether a reporting party seeks an investigation or resolution.

When determining Interim measures, the following items may be taken into consideration:

- the specific needs expressed by the parties;
- the age of the parties involved;
- the severity or pervasiveness of the allegations;
- any continuing effects on the parties;
- whether the parties share the same class, transportation, or job location;
- other non-college measures or actions taken such as civil protection orders or filing of criminal charges.

The administrator or investigator conducting the Initial Assessment may conduct a Pre-Investigation Risk Assessment to assist in determining if a continuing or significant risk of harm to self or if a health or safety emergency exists. If it is believed that a continuing or significant risk to the safety or well-being of that student, other students, or other members of the community exist the case will be forwarded to the full South Texas College Behavioral Intervention Team for further risk assessment.

Interim measures may be imposed at any time for all parties and may include but are not limited to the following:

- Extensions of time or other course-related adjustments
- Alterations to course schedules or work schedules
- Arranging for a campus escort
- Leaves of absence
- Increased monitoring of certain areas of the campus
- No Contact Directive

- Support for both parties for navigating the disciplinary process; and assisting with other questions and concerns
- Interim Suspension
- Referral to counseling
- Educating and training for the campus community
- Assistance with extracurricular organization(s) and activities
- On-campus parking considerations
- Assistance with financial concerns, including providing financial aid guidance
- Imposition of a no trespass order
- Limit an individual or organization's access to certain College facilities or activities pending resolution of the matter

### **Notice of Alleged Violation(s)**

Any member of the South Texas College community, visitor or guest may allege a policy violation(s) by any student for misconduct under the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct by following the steps listed on this web page:

<https://life.southtexascollege.edu/student-rights-and-responsibilities/student-conduct/>

Notice may also be given to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct when appropriate. Additionally, Dean of Student Affairs may act in accordance with this code on notice of a potential violation whether a formal allegation is made or not. All allegations can be submitted by a reporting party or as a third-party report, and should be submitted as soon as possible after the alleged violation(s). South Texas College has the right to pursue an allegation or notice of misconduct on its own behalf and to serve as convener of the subsequent campus conduct process even without the participation of the reporting party.

### **Accommodations in the Administrative Student Conduct Process**

The College affords reasonable accommodations for disability within the Administrative Student Conduct Process to any student. To receive accommodations, the participant must make a request in person or in writing to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct. The request must state what specific accommodations are being requested. Once requested, the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct will work with the Student Accessibility Services to determine eligibility for accommodations and approval of appropriate accommodations. Please note that the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct does not approve accommodations or determine what accommodations are appropriate, but will provide any accommodations approved by Student Accessibility Services.

### **Standard of Proof**

The standard of proof for all hearings is a preponderance of evidence. Formal “Rules of Evidence” do not apply to Administrative Student Conduct Process. A hearing officer and panel will weigh all information, or "the Totality of the Evidence" presented when deciding of whether there has been a violation of the Code of Student Conduct. Any information relevant

to the Administrative Student Conduct Process will be considered, if credible, if information is deemed to be not creditable or relevant an explanation will be provided. Unduly repetitive evidence, or evidence solely relating to character, may be excluded.

## **Polygraph Examinations**

The Office of Student Conduct endeavors to find the truth and ensure that all parties are treated fairly throughout the Administrative Student Conduct Process. As such, the Office of Student Conduct will accept and review information presented by or on behalf of any party to the Administrative Student Conduct Process; a polygraph examination, if provided by either party and if conducted by a reputable professional in appropriate conditions, will be given the same weight as any other information or evidence that is presented. Polygraphers may be called as witnesses to verify the accuracy of any results. The College does not administer or pay for polygraphed examinations. Information obtained as a result of a polygraph examination **will not** be enough on its own to determine whether or not an individual has or has not violated the Code Student of Conduct.

## **Initial Assessment and/or Educational Conference**

The College conducts an initial assessment inquiry into the nature of the incident, allegation or notice, the evidence available, and the parties involved. The initial assessment may lead to:

1. A determination that there is insufficient evidence to pursue the investigation, because the behavior alleged, even if proven, would not violate the Code of Student Conduct, (e.g.: for reasons such as mistaken identity or allegations of behavior that falls outside the code).
2. A more comprehensive investigation, when it is clear more information must be gathered (see detailed procedures below).
3. A formal allegation of a violation and/or an educational conference with the responding party.

When an initial educational meeting/conference is held, the possible outcomes include:

1. A decision not to pursue the allegation based on a lack of or insufficient evidence. The matter should be closed and records should so indicate.
2. A decision on the allegation, also known as an “informal” or “administrative” resolution to an uncontested allegation (see below).
3. A decision to proceed with additional investigation and/or referral for a “formal” resolution.

## **Gatekeeping and Intake**

No allegation will be forwarded for a hearing unless there is reasonable cause to believe the Code of Student Conduct or a Board Approved South Texas College policy has been violated. Reasonable cause is defined as some credible information to support each element of the offense, even if that information is merely a credible witness or a reporting party’s statement.



An allegation that is wholly unsupported by any credible information will not be forwarded for a hearing.

Following receipt of notice or a complaint, the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct (or designee) will make an initial determination as to whether the information has merit to reasonably indicate there may have been a violation of College policy.

The following are recommended elements of a report:

- Detailed explanation of the alleged incident(s) (e.g.: who, what, when, where, and how it occurred);
- Any supporting documentation and evidence;
- The desired remedy (interim sanction) sought;
- Name and all contact information for the reporting party;
- Clear demonstration of all informal efforts, if any, to resolve the issue(s) with the person involved and the person's supervisor;
- This includes names, dates and times of attempted or actual contact along with a description of the discussion and the manner of communication made in the course of each effort;
- If the investigator cannot contact the person involved and/or the supervisor, the reporting party should state the reasons why.

The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct has primary authority and responsibility for the administration of student discipline.

### **Informal /Administrative Resolution**

Informal resolution is an alternative to the formal complaint resolution process. The Dean of Student Affairs or their designee will determine if informal resolution is appropriate, based on the willingness of all parties and the nature of the alleged conduct.

The following are elements of an informal resolution process:

1. If a decision on the allegation is made and the initial finding is that the responding party is not responsible for violating the [Code of Student Conduct](#), or that there is insufficient information to warrant further investigation, the Administrative Student Conduct Process will end.
  - a) Upon notification, the reporting party may request that the Dean of Student Affairs or their designee reopen the investigation and/or grant a hearing.
  - b) This decision will be at the discretion of the Dean of Student Affairs or their designee and will only be granted for extraordinary cause such as.
    - i) A procedural error occurred that significantly impacted the outcome of the hearing (e.g. substantiated bias, material deviation from established procedures, etc.);
    - ii) The finding is not supported by the preponderance of the evidence;

- iii) To consider new evidence, unavailable during the original hearing or investigation, that could substantially impact the original finding or sanction. A summary of this new evidence and its potential impact must be included;
    - iv) The sanctions imposed are substantially outside the parameters or guidelines set by the College for this type of offense or the cumulative conduct record of the responding party.
2. During the initial intake, the administrator or investigator conducting the Initial Assessment may conduct a Pre-Investigation Risk Assessment to assist in determining if a continuing or significant risk of harm to self or if a health or safety emergency exist. If it is believed that a continuing or significant risk to the safety or well-being of that student, other students, or other members of the community exist the case will be forwarded to the full South Texas College Behavioral Intervention Team for further risk assessment.
3. If the administrator or investigator conducting the Initial Assessment makes an initial finding that more likely than not the responding party is responsible for violating the [Code of Student Conduct](#), or that there is sufficient information to warrant further investigation, the responding party may be offered an opportunity to resolve the matter informally.
4. If the responding party accepts or admits responsibility to the initial finding of in violation of the Code of Student Conduct, the College will consider this an “uncontested allegation”, and the administrator or investigator will move the initial assessment meeting to an informal sanction hearing.
  - a) The informal sanctions hearing may continue at that time or be postponed, at the request of either party, for a reasonable period of time, normally 10 business days.
  - b) Either party may request that a conduct panel of 3 to 5 members administer sanctions.
5. Once informal sanctions are recommended, either party may accept or reject. If accepted, the process ends. For Conduct Sanction Review Appeal Panel, refer to Appeal/Sanctions Review Process.

## **Dispute Resolution Options**

The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct, has discretion to refer an allegation for mediation or other forms of appropriate dispute resolution, including, but not limited to, restorative circle options. All parties must agree to dispute resolution and to be bound by the decision with no review/appeal. Any unsuccessful dispute resolution can be forwarded for formal processing and hearing; however, at no time will allegations of physical violence be mediated as the sole institutional response. The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct, may also suggest that allegations that do not involve a violation of the Code of Student Conduct be referred for mediation or another appropriate dispute resolution.

## **Advisor / Support Person**

All parties are entitled to an advisor of their choosing to guide and accompany them throughout the College's Student Conduct Process, including assisting and participating in Indirect Questioning. The advisor may be a friend, mentor, family member, attorney or any other supporter a party chooses to advise them.

The parties are entitled to be accompanied by their advisor in all meetings and interviews at which the party is entitled to be present, including intake, interviews, hearings, indirect questioning, and appeals. Advisors should help their advisees prepare for each meeting, and are expected to advise ethically, with integrity and in good faith. The College cannot guarantee equal advisory rights, meaning that if one party selects an advisor who is an attorney, but the other party does not, or cannot afford an attorney, the College is not obligated to provide one.

A pre-meeting may be requested that will allow advisors to clarify any questions they may have, and allows the College an opportunity to clarify the role the advisor is expected to take. All advisors are subject to the same College rules, whether they are attorneys or not. Advisors may not address College officials in a meeting, interview or hearing unless invited to, during indirect questioning, or during a side caucus conference is requested. Advisors may confer quietly with their advisees as necessary, as long as they do not disrupt the process. For longer or more involved discussions, the parties and their advisors should ask for breaks or step out of meetings to allow for private conversation. Advisors are expected to refrain from interference with the College investigation and resolution. Any advisor who steps out of their role in any meeting will be warned once and only once. If the advisor continues to disrupt or otherwise fails to respect the limits of the advisor role, the advisor will be asked to leave the meeting. When an advisor is removed from a meeting, that meeting will typically continue without the advisor present. Subsequently, an appropriate administrator will determine whether the advisor may be reinstated, may be replaced by a different advisor, or whether the party will forfeit the right to an advisor for the remainder of the process.

A party may elect to change advisors during the process.

## **Notice of Hearing**

- a) Once a determination is made that reasonable cause exists for the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct to refer an allegation for a hearing, notice will be given to the parties. Notice will be in writing and may be delivered by one or more of the following methods:
  - i) in person by the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct;
  - ii) mailed to the local or permanent address of the student as indicated in official College records;
  - iii) or emailed to the student's South Texas College-issued email account or other primary email account. Once mailed, emailed and/or received in -person, such notice will be presumptively delivered.
- b) The letter of notice will:

- i) Include the alleged violation(s) and notification of where to locate the Code of Student Conduct and procedures for resolution; and
  - ii) Direct the parties to contact the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct within a specified period of time to address the allegations or meet with an investigator. This time period will generally be no less than 2 days and no more than 12 from the date of confirmed delivery of the summons letter.
  - iii) Summarize all relevant information collected during the investigation.
  - iv) Summarize all potential sanctions that could result from a finding of violation.
  - v) A list including the names of the Hearing Office/ Panel Chair, and the names of the members of the hearing panel when appropriate.
  - vi) A list of the parties' rights.
  - vii) The name of the investigator(s).
- c) A meeting with the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct may be arranged to explain the nature of the allegations and the conduct process. At this meeting, the responding party may indicate, either verbally or in writing, to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct, whether they admit to or deny the allegations of the complaint.

## **Administrative Student Conduct Process Time Frames**

### **Student Conduct Referrals**

Any member of the South Texas College community may submit a report alleging that an act of misconduct has been committed. The report will be reviewed and the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct, will make a preliminary determination typically within 7 calendar days of whether there is enough information to notify the parties that a potential violation(s) of the Code of Student Conduct may have occurred or if there is need for further investigation and information gathering. The parties will be notified in writing and directed to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct, typically within **7 days calendar** after the College receives notice of an alleged violation.

In all instances, reporting parties are encouraged to make a report as soon as they become aware of a potential violation of the Code of Student Conduct. It is the position of the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct, that all allegations of student misconduct will be reviewed and investigated as soon as they are reported.

All alleged violations of the Code of Student Conduct will be presented to the parties in written form at least **7 days calendar** in advance of any hearing before a representative from the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct, or the Sanction Review Panel, unless that period is waived by the party.

### **Investigations**

The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct, may conduct an initial assessment investigation to determine if the allegations have merit and what the next steps of the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct may take. When possible,

investigations into allegations of misconduct will be completed within 14 days. In instances where an investigation cannot be completed within **14 days**, the parties will be notified of the delay in writing.

## Investigation Procedures

The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct may appoint an investigator(s) for allegations under this Code. The investigator(s) will take the following steps, if not already completed:

1. Initiate any necessary remedial actions, when appropriate, on behalf of the parties;
2. Determine the identity and contact information of the parties;
3. Conduct an immediate initial assessment to identify an initial list of all policies that may have been violated, to review the history of the parties, the context of the incident(s), any potential patterns and the nature of the allegations;
  - a. If the reporting party is reluctant to pursue the allegations, determine whether the allegations should still be pursued and whether sufficient independent evidence could support the allegations without the participation of the reporting party in the investigation;
  - b. Notify the reporting party of whether the College intends to pursue the allegations regardless of their involvement, and inform the reporting party of their rights in the process and option to become involved if they so choose;
  - c. The preliminary inquiry usually takes about **7 days** to complete.
4. If indicated by the initial assessment and authorized by the Coordinator or Director of the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct, conduct a comprehensive investigation to determine if there is reasonable cause to believe that the responding party violated the South Texas College Code of Student Conduct or other College policy, and to determine what specific policy violations should be addressed;
  - a. If there is insufficient evidence through the investigation to support reasonable cause, the investigation will be closed with no further action;
  - b. If reasonable cause is found, the process will continue.
5. Meet with the reporting party to take or finalize a statement, which will be drawn up by the investigator as a result of this meeting, or submitted electronically by the reporting party if they do not wish to be interviewed;
6. Commence a thorough, reliable, and impartial investigation by developing a strategic investigation plan, including a witness list, evidence list, intended timeframe, and order of interviews for all witnesses and the responding party. The responding party will usually be given at least 48 hours advance notice of an investigation interview, unless it requires less notice or no notice, as in the case of potential destruction of evidence.
  - a. Prepare the notice of alleged policy violation(s) and a summary of the allegations, on the basis of the reasonable cause determination. This notice may be delivered prior to, during, or after the responding party is interviewed, at the discretion of the investigator(s), but with a preference for delivery prior to the interview, where possible.

7. Interview all relevant witnesses, summarize the information they are able to share, and have each witness sign the summary to verify its accuracy or submit their statement electronically;
8. Obtain all documentary evidence and information that is available;
9. Obtain all physical evidence that is available;
10. Complete the investigation promptly by analyzing all available evidence without unreasonable deviation from the intended timeline;
11. Make a recommended finding, based on the **Preponderance of the Evidence** whether a policy violation is **More Likely Than Not**;
12. Provide comprehensive review of the investigation to all parties.

Provide all parties an opportunity to respond within 48 hours;

Once finalized, present the comprehensive review of the investigation to the responding party, who may:

- a. accept the recommended findings,
  - b. accept the recommended findings in part and reject them in part, or
  - c. reject all recommended findings;
13. If the comprehensive review of the investigation is accepted, they become final. If the findings are fully or partially rejected, the Student Conduct Administrative procedures for a hearing, will commence.
  14. A reporting party may make a request that the Director of Student Rights and Responsibilities require a hearing if a finding of no violation has been recommended, but that request will only be granted under extraordinary circumstances at the sole discretion of the appropriate administrator. Otherwise, the no violation determination is final.
  15. Share the recommended findings and update the reporting party on the status of the investigation and the outcome.
  16. If findings are accepted, and a policy violation(s) has been found, the investigator will recommend sanction(s). If the sanctions are accepted, they become final, subject to any appeal of sanctions that may be requested.
  17. If the recommended sanctions are rejected fully or in part, a sanction hearing will be held in accordance with the procedures outlined.
  18. The investigator will provide the comprehensive review of the investigation to the Hearing Office or Hearing Panel for review and evaluation. The Dean of Student Affairs, Student Conduct Panel or designee will determine policy violations based on a preponderance of the evidence standard (whether a policy violation is more likely than not) and sanctions.
  19. Both parties will be given an opportunity to review the comprehensive review of the investigation, meet with the administrator or investigator conducting the investigation, submit additional information, identify any additional witnesses or information they believe that investigator should pursue.

## **Investigation Findings / Notification of Hearing**

Upon the completion of the comprehensive review of the investigation, the administrator or investigator conducting the investigation will forward the report to the Dean of Student Affairs or designee for an appropriate hearing in accordance with South Texas College [Code of Student Conduct](#).

## **Indirect Questioning During the Investigation**

At the conclusion of the investigation, both parties will be allowed to review the comprehensive review of the investigation. The comprehensive review of the investigation will summarize the information gathered during the investigation, and include all contested and uncontested information. At the comprehensive review of the investigation, the administrator or investigator conducting investigation or comprehensive review of the investigation will include a set of findings.

Both parties will be given an opportunity to review the comprehensive review of the investigation, meet with the administrator or investigator conducting the investigation, submit additional information, identify any additional witnesses or information they believe that investigator should pursue, and submit a list of questions that they would like for the other party or their witness(es) to answer under indirect cross examination.

Both parties may request a three-day extension to gather further information or to develop the list of questions they wish to submit, if either party wishes to request additional time they **must** submit a written request to the assigned administrator or investigator. A final decision in the Conduct Hearing may be delayed for a reasonable amount of time to allow the administrator or investigator, hearing officer, or conduct panel time to facilitate the indirect cross examination.

## **Notification of Investigative Findings**

If it is found there is a violation of the South Texas College [Code of Student Conduct](#), the Dean of Student Affairs (or designee) will impose appropriate sanctions for the violation. In the event that the accused individual rejects the findings in part or entirely, the Dean of Student Affairs (or designee) will convene a hearing under its respective procedures to determine whether the accused individual is in violation of the contested aspects of the complaint. At the hearing, the findings of the investigation will be admitted, but are not binding on the decider(s) of fact.

The administrator or investigator conducting the investigation may give evidence. The hearing will determine whether it is more likely than not that the accused individual violated the South Texas College [Code of Student Conduct](#) forming the basis of the charge. The goal of the hearing is to provide an equitable resolution via an equitable process, respecting the civil and legal rights of all participants. The Dean of Student Affairs (or designee) has final decision-making authority with regard to formal complaints, subject to appeal. Where an accused individual is found in violation, preferably in the form of a recommendation of finding and sanction to the Dean of Students Affairs, the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct will impose appropriate sanctions for the violation. Appeal proceedings will apply to all parties to the complaint.

## **Investigation Party Withdrawal**

Should a responding student(s) decide to withdraw from the College and/or not participate in the investigation and/or hearing, the process will proceed in the student's absence to a reasonable resolution and that student(s) will not be permitted to return to the College unless any and all sanctions have been completed.

## **Hearing Options and Preparation**

The following sub-sections describe the College's conduct hearing process. Except in an allegation involving failure to comply with the summons of the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct, no student may be found to have violated the South Texas College Code of Student Conduct solely as a result of the student's failure to appear for a hearing. In all such instances, conduct hearings will proceed as scheduled and all the available information will be presented to, and considered by, the Dean of Student Affairs, the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct, or panel presiding over the hearing.

Where the responding party accepts a recommended finding or admits to violating the South

Texas College Code of Student Conduct, the Dean of Student Affairs and/ or Office of Student Conduct, may invoke Informal /Administrative Resolution procedures to determine and administer appropriate sanctions without a formal hearing, as outlined in this code. In an Informal /Administrative Resolution, allegations will be heard and determinations will be made by the Dean of Student Affairs and/or Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct.

## **Section 7: Administrative Student Conduct Process**

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When a student is alleged to have violated the Code of Student Conduct or a College policy, the Office of Student Conduct will resolve the allegation according to the following process, unless the above investigation process is used instead, at the discretion of the Director of Student Rights and Responsibilities:

1. The student will be notified of the allegations and all specific policies that may have been violated. This notification may be verbal but will also be provided in writing. The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct will schedule a meeting with the student.
2. The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct may seek professional assistance and advice or take other measures to ensure fair disposition of the matter.
3. In the meeting, the responding party will be afforded the opportunity to admit or deny the allegations and present information to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct. If the student admits the violation(s), the following procedures or informal resolution will apply. If the student denies the alleged violation(s), the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct will refer the matter for informal resolution, investigation and/or a hearing.



- a. The responding party will meet at a time and location designated by the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct. The responding party must attend the scheduled meeting, but is not required to answer questions or to give evidence.
  - b. The purpose of the meeting will be to review the alleged misconduct or policy violation and information obtained from witnesses. During the meeting formal rules of process, procedure, and/or technical rules of evidence as applied in criminal or civil court will not be used.
  - c. If the student admits the violation, or if the alleged violation is a minor offense (meaning it will not result in suspension or expulsion), the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct may render an administrative decision based upon a “preponderance of evidence or more likely than not” standard of proof. A preponderance of evidence standard of proof requires a finding that the facts asserted are more likely to be true than not.
4. The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct, will present an explanation of the administrative decision to the parties, detailing any sanctions to be imposed. The explanation will include information regarding the appeal process should any party wish to challenge the decision. The explanation may be verbal or in writing.

Where the responding party denies violating the South Texas College Code of Student Conduct, and the offense could result in suspension or expulsion, a formal hearing will be conducted. This process is known as an Administrative Student Conduct Hearing. At the discretion of the Dean of Student Affairs and/ or Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct, a request by one or more of the parties for an Informal /Administrative Resolution may also be considered. The parties will be given a minimum of **7 days** to prepare for a hearing unless all parties wish to proceed more quickly. Preparation for a formal hearing is summarized in the following guidelines:

1. Notice of the time, date and location of the hearing will be made in writing to the parties and may be delivered by one or more of the following methods: in person by the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct; mailed to the local or permanent address of the student as indicated in official College records; or emailed to the student’s College-issued email account. Once mailed, emailed and/or received in person, such notice will be presumptively delivered.
2. If there is a reporting party of the conduct in question, the reporting party may bring the allegation forward or may elect to have the College administration bring the allegation forward. Where there is no reporting party, the College administration will serve as the party bringing the allegation forward.
3. If a responding party fails to respond to notice from the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct, the Office may initiate an action for failure to comply with the directives of a College official and give notice of this offense. Unless the student responds to this notice within **3 days** by answering the original notice, a Student Conduct Hearing may be scheduled and held in the student’s absence. As a result, the student may be administratively withdrawn from attending classes or a disciplinary hold

may be placed on their College account, deeming them ineligible to register for courses until such time as the student responds to the initial allegations.

The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct will ensure that the hearing information and any other available written documentation, include any comprehensive review of the investigation, is shared between the parties at least **2 days** before any scheduled hearing. In addition, the parties will be given a list of the names of all the panelists in advance. Should any party object to any panelist, that party must raise all objections, in writing, to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct immediately. Hearing officers will only be unseated if the Dean of Student Affairs concludes that their bias precludes an impartial hearing of the allegations. Additionally, any panelist who feels they cannot make an objective determination must recuse themselves from the proceeding once they receive a list of the names of all parties and witnesses prior to the hearing.

## **Section 8: Student Conduct Hearing Procedures**

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The Dean of Student Affairs or the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct will appoint one panelist as the Chair for the hearing. The parties have the right to be present at the hearing; however, they do not have the right to be present during deliberations. If a student cannot attend the hearing, it is that student’s responsibility to notify the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct no less than **3 days** prior to the scheduled hearing to arrange for another date, time and location. Except in cases of extenuating or unforeseen circumstances, if a party fails to give the requisite minimum **3-day** notice, or if the student fails to appear, the hearing will proceed as scheduled. If the reporting party fails to appear, the allegations may be dropped or the College may choose to pursue the allegation on its own behalf, as determined by the Dean of Student Affairs and/or the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct.

Student Conduct Hearings will be conducted according to the following guidelines:

1. Hearings will be closed to the public.
2. Admission to the hearing of persons other than the parties involved will be at the discretion of the panel chair, Dean of Student Affairs and/or the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct.
3. In hearings involving more than one responding party, the standard procedure will be to hear the allegations separately;
4. The parties have the right to an advisor of their own choosing, pursuant to the policy on advisors.
5. The panel, and the Dean of Student Affairs, the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct, will have the privilege of questioning all present witnesses and questioning all present parties directly or through the Chair, at the discretion of the Chair. Unduly repetitive witnesses can be limited at the discretion of the panel Chair, Dean of Student Affairs, or the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct.

6. Pertinent records, exhibits, and written statements may be accepted as information to be considered by the panel, Dean of Student Affairs, and the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct.
7. Formal rules of evidence are not observed. The panel Chair, Dean of Student Affairs, or the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct may limit the number of witnesses presented or may accept written affidavits.
8. All procedural questions are subject to the final decision of the Dean of Student Affairs, Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct, or panel Chair.
9. After the conclusion of the hearing, the Dean of Student Affairs, Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct, or panel will deliberate and determine using the preponderance of the evidence standard, whether it is more likely than not that the responding party has violated the South Texas College Code of Student Conduct. For panel hearings, decisions will be made by majority vote. The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct will be present and available as a resource during all deliberations. Once a finding is determined, if the finding is that of a policy violation, the Dean of Student Affairs, Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct, or panel will determine an appropriate sanction(s). The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct is responsible for informing the panel of applicable precedent and any previous conduct violations or other relevant pattern information about the responding party. The Dean of Student Affairs, Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct, or panel Chairperson will prepare a written recommendation and deliver it to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct, detailing the recommended finding, how each member voted, the information cited in support of the recommendation, and any information that was excluded from its consideration and why. This recommendation should conclude with any recommended sanctions. This recommendation should not normally exceed **2 pages** in length and must be submitted to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct within **2 days** of the end of deliberations.
10. The Dean of Student Affairs and/or Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct will consider the recommendations of the panel, may make appropriate modifications to the panel’s recommendation, and will then render a decision and inform the parties of the final determination, normally within **5 days** of the hearing. Notification will be made in writing and may be delivered by one or more of the following methods: in person by the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct; mailed to the local or permanent address of the student as indicated in official College records; or emailed to the student’s College-issued email account. Once mailed, emailed and/or received in-person, such notice will be presumptively delivered. In cases of crimes of violence, notice of the outcome will be delivered to all parties simultaneously, meaning without substantial delay between the notifications to each.
11. There will be a single verbatim record for all panel hearings. All information, evidence, and reports will be maintained in the College’s Student Conduct Electronic Database; currently Maxient Student Conduct Software.

## **Indirect Questioning During the Hearing**

At the conclusion of the investigation, both parties will be allowed to review the comprehensive review of the investigation. The comprehensive review of the investigation will summarize the information gathered during the investigation, and may outline contested, and uncontested information. The comprehensive review of the investigation report may include findings.

Both parties will be given an opportunity to review the comprehensive review of the investigation, meet with the administrator or investigator conducting the investigation, submit additional information, identify any additional witnesses or information they believe that investigator should pursue, and submit a list of questions that they would like for the other party or their witness(es) to answer under indirect cross examination.

Both parties may request a reasonable amount of time to gather further information or to develop the list of questions they wish to submit. A final decision in the Conduct Hearing may be delayed for a reasonable amount of time to allow the administrator or investigator, hearing officer, or conduct panel time to facilitate the indirect cross examination.

## **Composition of the Hearing Panel**

The Dean of Student Affairs or the Office of Student Conduct will be responsible for assembling the Hearing Panel according to the following guidelines:

- 1) The membership of the panel is selected from a pool of at least 6 faculty, and 6 staff/administrative members appointed and trained for at least 8 hours annually by the Dean of Student Affairs or Office of Student Conduct.
- 2) For each hearing, a panel will be randomly selected from the available pool, and is usually comprised of one faculty member, and one staff member, one administrator and a nonvoting chair. Availability may determine a different composition for the Panel. The Dean of Student Affairs and the Office of Student Conduct appoints the non-voting chair of the Hearing Panel, who assures that all South Texas College procedures are followed throughout the hearing.

## **Rights of the Parties**

1. The right to receive notification of the allegedly violations of the Code of Student Conduct and the date, time, and location of any conference, meeting, interview, or hearing.
2. The right to question the objectivity or fairness, or to raise a conflict-of-interest regarding any of the persons through the Student Conduct Process. The decision rests with the chair of the proceeding, or the Director of Student Rights and Responsibilities.
3. The right to consult with and be accompanied by an advisor of choice through all phases of the Student Conduct Process as previously stated.
4. The right to review all information pertinent to the alleged violation before a final determination is made.
5. The right to notification of the name of each person expected to serve as a witness.
6. The right to introduce documents, to identify witnesses, and present other evidence.

7. The right to be present at any hearing on the alleged violation and to make or refrain from making statements, but not to be present during deliberations.
8. The right to suggest questions to investigators and to ask questions of any person participating in or providing information at a hearing. All questions asked are to be directed towards the Student Conduct Review Panel.
9. The right to receive timely written notification of any decision made.
10. The right to appeal the decision of a hearing in accordance with College procedures.
11. The right to review the record of any investigation or hearing in accordance with all state laws and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.
12. The right to request postponement of a hearing. The decision to postpone a hearing rest with the director or designee of Dean of Student Affairs or Office of Student Conduct. In most cases, a postponement will only be granted due to an academically related commitment or extenuating circumstances.
13. The right to be kept informed of the status of proceedings throughout the process.
14. The right to request the ability to pose and answer questions outside of the physical presence of the other party.
15. The right to submit an impact statement in writing to the decision-maker(s).
16. The right to be granted, if these changes are reasonably available, academic arrangement, or other steps necessary to prevent unnecessary or unwanted contact.
17. The right to not disclose past behavioral history during the Student Conduct Process unless it is determined to be relevant by an appropriate administrator.
18. The right to be notified of rights and the institution's responsibilities regarding orders of protection, no contact orders, restraining orders, or similar lawful orders issued by a criminal, civil, or tribal court.
19. The right to a prompt, fair, and impartial investigation and resolution.
20. The right to have the proceeding conducted by officials who have neither a conflict of interest nor bias for or against either party.
21. The right to have the proceeding conducted by officials who receive annual training on how to conduct an investigation and hearing process that protects the safety of the reporting party and promotes accountability.
22. The right to simultaneous notification, in writing, of:
  - a. the outcome of any institutional disciplinary proceeding that arises from an allegation of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking;
  - b. the institution's procedures for both parties to appeal the results of the institutional disciplinary proceeding;
  - c. any change to the results that occurs prior to the time that such results become final; and
  - d. when such results become final.
23. The right to confidentiality for reporting parties, including how publicly-available recordkeeping will be accomplished without the inclusion of identifying information about the reporting party, to the extent permissible by law.
24. The right to written notification about existing counseling, health, mental health, advocacy, legal assistance, and other services available both on-campus and in the community.

25. The right to be notified, in writing, about options for, and available assistance in, changing academic, transportation, and working situations, if so requested and if such accommodations are reasonably available, regardless of whether a crime is reported to the Department of Public Safety or local law enforcement.
26. The right to be provided with a written explanation of the rights afforded by this process.
27. The right of the parties to receive timely notice of meetings at which one or the other or both may be present.
28. The right to have the proceeding completed in a reasonably prompt timeframe.
29. The right to timely and equal access to information that will be used during informal and formal disciplinary meetings and hearings.

## Sanctions

Dean of Student Affairs and the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct reserves the right to impose conduct sanctions that may include changes in programs, courses, schedules, policies, services, and requirements with or without advance notice.

All sanctions listed may be imposed upon groups or organizations found to have violated the Code of Student Conduct. This includes but is not limited to deactivation, de-recognition, loss of all privileges, or revocation of status as a registered group or organization by the College, for a specified period of time.

## Types of Sanctions

Should it be determined that the responding party has violated the Code of Student Conduct, the Dean of Student Affairs or designee will issue an administrative decision imposing one or more of the following sanctions:

1. **Verbal or Written Warning:** Continuation or repetition of prohibited conduct or the commission of additional violations of this Code may be cause for additional sanctions.
2. **Restitution:** Compensation for damage caused to the College or any person's property. This could also include situations such as failure to return a reserved space to proper condition – labor costs and expenses. This is not a fine but, rather, a repayment for labor costs and/or the value of property destroyed, damaged, consumed, or stolen.
3. **Probation:** Imposed for a defined period of time. The student is put on official notice that, should further violations of South Texas College policies occur during a specified probationary period, the student may face suspension or expulsion. Regular probationary meetings may also be imposed. Violation of the terms of probation or any other violation of the Code of Student Conduct or College policy during the period of probation may result in additional sanctions, including suspension or expulsion from the College.
4. **Community Service:** A specific number of hours of community service to be served per the terms of the sanction.
5. **Loss of Privileges:** The student will be denied specified privileges for a designated period of time.

6. **Confiscation of Prohibited Property:** Items whose presence or possession is in violation of South Texas College policy will be confiscated and will become the property of the South Texas College. Prohibited items may be returned to the owner at the discretion of the Dean of Student Affairs, the Office of Student Conduct, and/or Campus Police.
7. **Behavioral Requirement:** This includes required activities including, but not limited to, seeking academic counseling or substance abuse screening, writing a letter of apology, completion of a reflection or research paper, attending a class, program or lecture, etc.
8. **Educational Program:** Requirement to attend, present and/or participate in a program related to the violation. It may also be a requirement to sponsor or assist with a program for others on campus to aid them in learning about a specific topic or issue related to the violation for which the student or organization was found responsible. Audience may be restricted.
9. **Campus or Academic Reassignment:** Reassignment to another South Texas College campus or academic setting.
10. **Suspension:** Separation from South Texas College for a specified minimum period of time, after which the student is eligible to return. Eligibility may be contingent upon satisfaction of specific conditions noted at the time of suspension. The student is required to vacate the campus immediately upon notification of the action, though this deadline may be extended upon application to, and at the discretion of, the Dean of Student Affairs or the Office of Student Conduct. During the suspension period, the student is banned from college property, functions, events, sponsored activities, and contacting college personnel without prior written approval from the Dean of Student Affairs or the Office of Student Conduct. This sanction may be enforced with a trespass action as necessary.
11. **Expulsion:** The removal and permanent separation from the South Texas College. The student is banned from College property and the student's presence at any College-sponsored activity or event is prohibited. This action may be enforced with a trespass action as necessary.
12. **Eligibility Restriction:** Restricted from use of or denial of specified College services, including participation in College activities. The student is deemed "not in good standing" with South Texas College for a specified period of time. Specific limitations or exceptions may be granted by the Dean of Student Affairs or the Office of Student Conduct and terms of this conduct sanction may include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - a. Ineligibility to hold any office in any student organization recognized by the South Texas College or hold an elected or appointed office at the College; or
  - b. Ineligibility to represent South Texas College to anyone outside the College community in any way including: participating in the study abroad program, attending conferences, or representing the College at an official function, event or intercollegiate competition as a player, manager or student coach, etc.
13. **Delayed Conferral of Degree:** Delay of issuance of a student's degree for a specified period of time or until the student meets certain conditions.
14. **Strike or Ban:** Denial of the right of a student club or organization, including but not limited to clubs, organizations, students' groups, or intramural sports teams, to

participate in any activity sponsored by or presented at any college function, on or off campus, or be officially recognized by the College, for violations of the Code of Student Conduct.

15. **Mental Health Assessment and/or Mandatory Treatment:** As a condition for either remaining in school or returning once a sanction is completed, the College may require an assessment for risk of self-harm or harm toward others or that the student attend mandatory treatment for such conduct.
16. **Withholding of Official Transcript, Degree, or Certificate:** The College may withhold the official transcript, degree, or certificate of completion; or deny, not recognize or revoke a degree. The College reserves the right to revoke an awarded degree for fraud in receipt of the degree, or for serious disciplinary violations committed by a student prior to the student's graduation.
17. **Withdrawal from a Course:** The Dean of Students or the Office of Student Conduct may issue a withdrawal from a course or courses with a grade of "W" (Withdrawal) or at 100% when deemed appropriate in accordance with this document.
18. **Supervision Plan or Case Management Plan:** Participation in a monitored supervision plan. Case management plans are individualized and developed with the individual. The plan is intended to build on individual strengths, resources and goals. Plans must be realistic and achievable. Case management plans include activities that will support the individual in meeting their goals, which will reduce or eliminate barriers to their success.
19. **Non-Academic Transcript Notation:** In accordance with Texas State law under House Bill 449, postsecondary educational institutions are **required** to include on the student's transcript, official or unofficial, a disciplinary notation stating that the student has been suspended or expelled.

## Sanction Review Panel

The Sanction Review Panel is comprised of three to five members of the Behavioral Intervention Team and the trained pool of eligible Student Conduct Panelist.

The Sanction Review Panel is convened once a student has completed their term of suspension and is eligible to return to South Texas College. The panel reviews return requests pertaining, but not limited, to expulsion and suspension.

Students coming before a review panel will have their violations and subsequent sanction compliance reviewed and a determination will be made on their eligibility to return to the College community and any conditions they will be expected to complete during their probationary period. The student will be assigned a case manager, who will work with the student, the review panel, and the Office of Student Conduct to develop, monitor and complete an Individual Success Plan.

The student should understand that the requirements for returning to the college may change in response to new information, additional violations of the Code of Student Conduct, or other developments during the period of suspension.



For information about a student's potential return to the college, the student is encouraged to contact the Office of Student Conduct for assistance with the transition back to campus and the development of an Individual Success Plan for early intervention should the student begin to experience problems. The Sanction Review Panel may impose conditions on re-entry, including but not limited to, any of the items listed below:

- Submission of a Written Request for Re-Entry, outlining what the student has done during the term of suspension to correct their disruptive behaviors.
- Submission of proof of gainful employment or contribution through community service or volunteer activities.
- Research or Personal Essay with the topic assigned by the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct that is related to ethics or topics related to the sanction.
- Submission of proof of completion of chemical dependency or other counseling services.
- Submission of a current mental health evaluation.
- Completion of educational or social skills training as prescribed by the College.
- Submission of a Criminal History Check.
- Participation in the development of and compliance with an Individual Success Plan, developed and monitored by the South Texas College Collaboration, Assistance, Resource and Education (C.A.R.E) Team.

### **Student Conduct Review Panel (Appeals Panel)**

The three to five-member Student Conduct Review Panel hears appeals. Members are drawn from the panel pool, with the only requirement being that they did not serve on the Panel for the initial hearing. Student Conduct Review Panels review appeal requests submitted by the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct. If an all administrative/staff panel is used to hear a sensitive issue, the Appeals Panel will also be comprised of only administrative/staff members.

The Dean of Student Affairs and the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct will have final authority to approve all those serving on the panel. The non-voting advisor to the panel is Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct. This panel uses the same procedures to avoid conflicts-of-interest that are used in the initial hearing process. In the event of a resignation or recusal from the panel, the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct will solicit a replacement from the group from which the representative came. Decisions made, and sanctions imposed during the hearing process will be final and implemented, pending the normal appeal process. At the discretion of the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct implementation of sanctions may be delayed pending review.

### **Appeals (Final Review)**

Any party may appeal the determination made by the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct. This appeal must be made in writing and received in the

Office of the Vice President's for Student Affairs within **5 working days** of receiving notice of the determination by the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct. Appeals received after the deadline may be rejected without review. The parties will be notified in writing of the outcome of the appeal normally within **7 days** after the appeal has been accepted for review. All sanctions originally imposed will be in effect during the appeal.

## **Grounds for Appeal**

Appeal requests are limited to the following grounds:

1. A procedural error occurred that significantly impacted the outcome of the hearing (e.g. substantiated bias, material deviation from established procedures, etc.);
2. The finding is not supported by the preponderance of the evidence;
3. To consider new evidence, unavailable during the original hearing or investigation, that could substantially impact the original finding or sanction. A summary of this new evidence and its potential impact must be included;
4. The sanctions imposed are substantially outside the parameters or guidelines set by the College for this type of offense or the cumulative conduct record of the responding party.

## **Procedures for Student Conduct Review Panel Hearings**

1. The Director of Student Rights and Responsibilities will share the appeal by one party with the other party (parties) when appropriate under procedure or law, giving the party an opportunity to appeal or respond to the other party's appeal in writing. Once all parties have had an opportunity to request appeals and respond to all appeal requests, the Student Conduct Review Panel will meet. The panel will conduct an initial review to determine if the appeal request(s) meets the limited grounds and is timely. They may consult with the Director of Student Rights and Responsibilities on any procedural or substantive questions that arise.
2. If the appeal is not timely or substantively eligible, the original finding and sanction will stand and the decision is final. If the appeal has standing, the panel determines whether to address the appeal itself or to remand it to the original decision-maker(s), typically within 3-5 business days. Efforts should be made to use remand whenever possible, with clear instructions for reconsideration only in light of the granted appeal grounds. Where the original decision-maker may be unduly biased by a procedural or substantive error, a new hearing may be constituted to reconsider the matter, which can in turn be appealed, once. Full review hearings by the Student Conduct Review Panel are very rarely used. In review, the original finding and sanction are presumed to have been decided reasonably and appropriately, thus the burden is on the appealing party(ies) to show clear error. The Student Conduct Review Panel must limit its review to the challenges presented.
3. On reconsideration, the Student Conduct Review Panel or original decision-maker may affirm or change the findings and/or sanctions of the original hearing body according to the permissible grounds. Procedural errors should be corrected, new evidence should

be considered, and sanctions should be proportionate to the severity of the violation and the student's cumulative conduct record.

4. All decisions of the Student Conduct Review Panel are normally to be made within seven days of submission to the Panel and are final, as are any decisions made by the original hearing body or the Director of Student Rights and Responsibilities as the result of reconsideration consistent with instructions from Student Conduct Review Panel.

## **Other Guidelines for Appeals**

Every opportunity to return the appeal to the original decision-maker for reconsideration should be pursued.

Appeals are not intended to be full re-hearings of the determination. In most cases, appeals are confined to a review of the written documentation or record of the original hearing, and pertinent documentation regarding the grounds for appeal; Witnesses may be called if necessary. Appeals are not an opportunity for appeals panelists to substitute their judgment for that of the original decision-maker merely because they disagree with the finding and/or sanctions. Appeals decisions are to be deferential to the original decision-maker, making changes to the finding only where there is clear error and to the sanction only if there is a compelling justification to do so. The decision of the panel concludes the approved South Texas College appeal process. An appeal may result in one of the following:

1. Affirm the finding of the Original Hearing Officer or Panel.
2. Affirm the finding of the Original Hearing Officer or Panel, and return the matter for reconsideration of the sanction.
3. Return the matter to the Original Hearing Officer or Panel for reconsideration of the finding and the sanction.
4. Modify the finding or sanction only where there is clear error and only if there is a compelling justification to do so.

## **Amnesty**

**For Those Who Offer Assistance:** To encourage students who may be accused of minor policy violations to offer help and assistance others, South Texas College reserves the right to reduce or forgo the sanctioning of a student who offers help to others in need. At the discretion of the Dean of Student Affairs and the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct, reducing or declining to sanction an individual may be extended on a case-by-case basis to a person offering assistance; however, individuals may be required to participate in educational options to help ensure their health, safety, and future success without having to face conduct proceedings or having conduct record. Repeated violations of the Code of Student Conduct, however so minor, may result in a decision by the Dean of Student Affairs and Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct not to reduce or forgo the sanctioning of the same person repeatedly.

**For Those Who Report Serious Violations:** For students who are engaged in minor violations but who choose to bring related serious violations by others to the attention of the College, the

College reserves the right to reduce or forgo the sanctioning of a student on a case-by-case basis, when the individual makes a report of serious conduct violations, even cases where the individual may have committed minor violations of the Code of Student Conduct. Individuals may be required to participate in educational activities to help ensure their health, safety, and future success without having to face conduct proceedings or having conduct record. Repeated violations of the Code of Student Conduct, however so minor, may result in a decision by the Dean of Student Affairs and Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct not to reduce or forgo the sanctioning of the same person repeatedly.

**Safe Harbor:** South Texas College has a Safe Harbor rule for students. The College believes that students who have a drug and/or addiction problem deserve help. If any College student brings their own use, addiction, or dependency to the attention of College officials outside the threat of drug tests or conduct sanctions and seeks assistance, no action under this Code will be pursued. A written action plan may be used to track cooperation with the Safe Harbor program by the student. Failure to follow the action plan may nullify the Safe Harbor protection and campus conduct processes may be initiated.

**Student Clubs and Organizations:** Student clubs and organizations will be responsible for the conduct of their members. Student groups, clubs, organizations and/or its individual members may be held accountable for conduct occurring before classes began, after classes end, or if it was discovered after the student graduates or during periods of suspension or other sanctions.

## **Sanctioning of Student Clubs or Organizations**

A student group, club, or organization and its officers and membership may be held collectively and/or individually responsible when violations of this code by the organization or its member(s):

- a. Take place at organization-sponsored or co-sponsored events, whether sponsorship is formal or tacit;
- b. Have received the consent or encouragement of the organization or of the organization's leaders or officers; or
- c. Were known to or should have been known to the membership or its officers.

Hearings for student groups, clubs, or organizations follow the same general student conduct procedures. In any such action, individual determinations as to responsibility will be made and sanctions may be assigned collectively and individually and will be proportionate to the involvement of each individual and the organization.

## **Past History or Character**

The past history or character of a party will not be admissible by the other party(s) in investigations or hearings unless such information is determined to be highly relevant by the appropriate administrator.

All such information sought to be admitted by a party(s) will be presumed irrelevant, and any request to overcome this presumption by the party(s) must be reviewed in advance of the hearing by the Dean of Student Affairs and the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct, who may request written statements by the parties on the issue. While previous conduct violations by the responding party are not generally admissible as information about the present allegations, the Dean of Student Affairs and the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct may supply previous information to the investigators, the hearing panel, or may consider it themselves, only if:

- The previous incident was substantially similar to the present alleged violation;
- Information indicates a pattern of behavior and substantial conformity with that pattern by the responding party;
- Demonstration of a pattern, repeated, and/or predatory behavior by the responding party, in the form of previous findings in any legal or campus proceeding, or in the form of previous good faith allegations.

The parties will be notified in advance if any such information is deemed relevant and may be introduced in the investigation and/or hearing.

### **Amnesty for Reporting Parties**

South Texas College encourages the reporting of violations of the Code of Student Conduct and crimes, especially instances of sexual misconduct. Reporting parties should not be hesitant to report such conduct to College officials because they fear that they may also be accused of policy violations, such as underage drinking at the time of the incident. It is in the best interest of the College community to encourage reporting of possible conduct violations to College officials. As such the College does not charge reporting parties with non-violent violations, such as unauthorized use of alcoholic beverages or drugs or narcotics, related to the incident. The College does take an educational and treatment approach in these instances, and reserves the right to refer reporting parties to appropriate resources at the discretion of the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct.

## **Section 9: Student Discipline in the Classroom**

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Students at South Texas College are expected to exhibit the highest standards of academic integrity. An act of academic dishonesty is considered an offense against the college. For that reason, the College rules prescribe disciplinary consequences for academic dishonesty administered by the faculty member and the Office of Student and Responsibilities - Student Conduct.

South Texas College supports the right of faculty to maintain discipline in the classroom. When a student is alleged to have committed an act academic dishonesty, been disruptive in the classroom, clinical or other academic setting, the course instructor or clinical supervisor (in consultation with the Program Chair, when appropriate) may move to sanction the student, which may include temporarily or permanently removing that student from class according to procedures outlined in this Section of the Code of Student Conduct.

The primary responsibility for managing the classroom environment rests with the course instructor; this includes instances of academic dishonesty. Each course instructor determines what behavior is appropriate or not appropriate in their classroom. For a detailed list of classroom rules, please review the individual course instructor's syllabus, the program handbook or consult with the individual course instructor directly.

An academic unit such as a program, department, or division, may also make an academic assessment in the case of academic dishonesty provided there is a standing review procedure that describes an academic relation between academic dishonesty and progress in the program that the appropriate and the Vice President for Academic Affairs has approved. Students must be notified of additional expectations and procedures in written program materials, including class syllabi.

When a student exhibits inappropriate behavior in the classroom, clinical or other academic setting, the course instructor may move to sanction the student, which may include temporarily or permanently removing that student from class according to the following procedures:

### **Temporary Dismissal from a Course**

The Instructor, at their discretion, may dismiss a student temporarily from a course for no more than two class periods or equivalent. In such instances, and no later than one working day after the dismissal, instructors **must** report the temporary dismissal to their Department Chair, their Dean, and the Office of the Dean of Students/ Office of Student and Responsibilities-Student Conduct by submitting a Complaints Concerning Students.

Students who are dismissed temporarily **must** leave the class while instruction is ongoing, the student **must** comply immediately. After the student has been removed, student and the instructor are required to meet face to face and resolve the matter with their instructor prior to the next regularly scheduled class, lab, or clinical meeting. If this is not possible, they may meet with the Department Chair, Associate Dean, or Dean to review the dismissal and seek resolution.

Instances where there have been multiple temporary dismissals from a course are, at the instructor's discretion, sufficient grounds for permanent dismissal from that instructor's course. The course instructor **must** provide notice to the student of the permanent removal and the reasons for the removal. The instructor must also inform the student of their right to appeal the removal to the appropriate Dean.

### **Steps for Temporary Removal from a Course:**

The instructor **must** speak with the student and inform them of the rule, or standard that the student has violated prior to the next regularly scheduled class, lab, or clinical meeting. Provide written or verbal notice that future violations may result in permanent dismissal from the course, lab or clinical. If the alleged violation is serious enough to warrant immediate removal from class, the course instructor may withdraw the student from class and assign a "W"; if the instructor wishes to assign a letter grade of "F" they must submit a change of grade form to the

Office of Admissions and Records at the end of the semester. The instructor should also notify the student in writing of their intention to assign a letter grade of "F". All removals should be documented and reported to the appropriate Program Chair, Dean and a Complaints Concerning Students should be submitted to the Dean of Students Affairs/ Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct.

### **Steps for Permanent Removal from a Course:**

The instructor may dismiss a student from a course for the remainder of the semester in instances where the student has exhibited multiple infractions of classroom, lab, or clinical rules, or in cases where the alleged violation prevents instruction of the course from taking place or is so egregious that allowing the student to remain in class may pose a danger to the safety of others. Instructors **must** provide a written statement that includes the following:

- The name of the individual(s) being dismissed
- Specific reasons for the dismissal;
- The factual details of the incident;
- The names of any and all witnesses; and
- Any applicable dates, times and location of the incident(s).

Not more than 2 business days, after the incident that caused the dismissible from class, the instructor **must** provide the student with the following information:

- Specific reasons for the dismissal;
- The factual details of the incident;
- The names of any and all witnesses; and
- Any applicable dates, times and location of the incident(s).
- Notification of their right to appeal within 5 working days the removal from class to their Dean in writing.

Not more than 2 business days, after the incident that caused the dismissible from class, the instructor **must** submit their written statement to their Department Chair, their Dean and the submit a Complaints Concerning Students to the Dean of Student Affairs/ Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student Conduct.

In instances where the violation may be so egregious that a faculty member may be concerned about the health and safety of the others students in the course the faculty member may remove the student immediately, without a second occurrence; additionally, it is recommended that the faculty member notify South Texas College Department of Public Safety immediately. Please note, removal of a student from an individual instructors' course may not constitute grounds to removal of a student from the college as a whole, please refer to the Student Administrative Conduct Process outlined on Section 7 of the Code of Student Conduct.

In instances where a student is alleged to have committed a violation of academic dishonesty, the instructor of record shall inform the student at the earliest possible date after becoming

aware of the violation. The student may request a meeting to review the information that was used to determine that a violation has occurred. Both the faculty member and the student have to right to request mediation services from the Office Student Rights and Responsibilities - Ombuds Services to help facilitate the discussion. The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Ombuds Services shall serve in the capacity of third party neutral and shall not be placed in a position to determine if the student has committed an act of academic dishonesty or violation of the Code of Student Conduct.

### **Student Discipline in the Classroom - Appeal Process**

The student may appeal the decision of the course instructor to the appropriate Dean. This appeal must be made in writing and received by the Dean within 5 working days of the student receiving notice of the course instructor's decision. Upon receipt of the appeal, the Dean shall review the appeal, hear witnesses if he/she so chooses, and render a decision.

The Dean shall notify both the student and the instructor of record in writing once a decision has been made. The decision of the Dean concludes the approved South Texas College appeal process for instances of student discipline in the classroom.

An appeal to the Dean may result in one of the following:

1. Affirm the action of the course instructor.
2. Dismiss, reduce, or modify the penalty imposed by the course instructor.

If the student fails to submit their appeal in writing to the program Dean within 5 working days of the student being notified of the instructor's decision, the instructor may then sanction the student.



# Chapter 3: Sexual Misconduct Prohibited

## **Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation Violations**

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Sexual misconduct is defined and governed by [Policy 4216: Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Stalking and Retaliation Prohibited](#). Among other things, Policy 4216 prohibits conduct which violates either state or federal law, or both. Some examples of sexual misconduct offenses, which may include on-line or off-campus conduct, include:

### **Sex Discrimination**

Sex discrimination involves exclusion from or different treatment on the basis of sex in such College activities as recruitment, admission, financial aid, work-study, athletics, counseling, or employment. Sex discrimination may also take the form of sexual harassment which can encompass sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking. The College is committed to eradicating all forms of sex-based discrimination, including sexual harassment, and prohibits its employees and students from engaging in such conduct. Sexual Harassment can occur in any sex or gender configuration without regard to gender identity, gender expression or sexual orientation and may include off-campus or online conduct.

### **Sexual Harassment**

Under Title IX of the Education Amendments 1972 (20 USC §1681 et seq.), sexual harassment is considered a form of sex-based discrimination. The Title IX implementing regulations define sexual harassment as conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

1. Quid Pro Quo harassment. This occurs when an employee of the College conditions the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the College on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct;
2. Unwelcome conduct. This is conduct that a reasonable person would find to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the College's education program or activity; or
3. "Sexual assault" as defined in 20 U.S.C. 1092(f)(6)(A)(v), "dating violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(10), "domestic violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(8), or "stalking" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(30).

### **Sexual Harassment under the Texas Education Code**

Sexual harassment as defined in Chapter 51 of the Texas Education Code is also prohibited by Policy 4216. Under Texas state law, sexual harassment means unwelcome, sex-based verbal or physical conduct that:

1. In the employment context, unreasonably interferes with a person's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment; or

2. In the education context, is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that the conduct interferes with a student's ability to participate in or benefit from educational programs or activities at a postsecondary educational institution

## **Sexual Exploitation**

Sexual exploitation can also be a form of sexual misconduct which is prohibited under Policy 4216. Sexual exploitation occurs when one person takes nonconsensual or abusive sexual advantage of another for their own advantage or benefit, or to benefit or advantage anyone other than the one being exploited. Some examples of sexual exploitation include, but are not limited to:

1. Taking pictures, video or audio recordings of another in a sexual act, in a state of nudity, or in any other sexually-related activity.
2. Disseminating pictures of a sexual nature without the photographed person's consent.
3. Exposing one's genitals or breasts in non-consensual circumstances or inducing another to expose their genitals or breasts.
4. Engaging in consensual sexual activity without informing the other person of a known sexually transmitted disease or infection.
5. Causing or attempting to cause the incapacitation of another person for the purpose of compromising that person's ability to consent to sexual activity.
6. Invasion of sexual privacy.
7. Engaging in sex-trafficking.
8. Knowingly soliciting a minor for sexual activity.
9. Creation, possession or dissemination of child pornography.
10. Sexually-based intimidation, hazing and/or bullying.

## **Policy on Consensual Relationships**

The College prohibits employees in supervisory roles from entering consensual romantic or sexual relationships with any subordinate employee under the supervisor's direct or indirect supervision and prohibits faculty members from entering consensual romantic or sexual relationships with any student enrolled in the faculty member's class. Employees with direct teaching, supervisory, advisory, or evaluative responsibility over other employees, students and/or student employees recognize and respect the ethical and professional boundaries that must exist in relationships with students or employees of the College.

Employees in supervisory roles are prohibited from explicitly or implicitly suggesting or recommending to a subordinate employee that the employee transfer or be transferred to another position or that the subordinate employee leave employment with the intention of circumventing this policy.

A faculty member is prohibited from explicitly or implicitly suggesting or recommending to a student enrolled in the faculty member's class to drop the class or withdraw from enrollment in the College with the intention of circumventing this policy.

## **Victim's Rights Statement**

All victims have a right to a prompt and equitable resolution of reports of violations of the College's policy on sexual misconduct. The College encourages victims of sexual assault to go to a hospital for treatment and preservation of evidence as soon as practicable after the incident.

## **Retaliation**

It is prohibited for any person i) to take any adverse action by intimidating, threatening, coercing, harassing, or discriminating against any individual because the individual has made a report or complaint, testified, assisted, or participated or refused to participate, in any manner, in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing, or ii) to interfere with any privilege provided under Title IX. Retaliation of any form is a separate violation of the College's policy on sexual misconduct. Acts of alleged retaliation should be reported immediately so that the College may attempt to stop the adverse action. For procedures related to complaints of discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct or retaliation governed by [Policy 4216: Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Stalking and Retaliation Prohibited](#), please see the Title IX website at <https://www.southtexascollege.edu/title-ix/>.

## **Consent**

In most cases, an absence of consent is required for a finding of sexual misconduct under the College's Policy. Consent is knowing, voluntary, and clear permission, by word or action, to engage in mutually agreed upon sexual activity. It is the responsibility of each party to make certain that the other has consented before engaging in the activity. Consent can be withdrawn once given, as long as the withdrawal is reasonably and clearly communicated and the activity should cease immediately or within a reasonable time. Resistance is a clear demonstration of non-consent as is knowing that the other person is incapacitated and unable to provide consent. Consent to some sexual contact (such as kissing or fondling) cannot be presumed to be consent for other sexual activity (such as intercourse). A current or previous dating relationship is not sufficient to constitute consent.

In addition, a person may not legally give consent if the person is below a certain age as established by law and/or is incapacitated. In Texas, the age of consent is 17. Sexual activity with someone without clear consent constitutes a violation of this policy.

## **Incapacitation**

Incapacitation is defined as a state where someone cannot make rational, reasonable decisions because they lack the capacity to give knowing/informed consent.

Incapacitation may be due to a person's use of drugs or alcohol; due to an intellectual, mental or physical disability; or due to their state of sleep or unconsciousness. A person who engages in sexual activity with someone whom the individual knows, or reasonably should know, is incapable of knowingly giving consent violates the College's Policy. Intoxication of the individual alleged to have violated the Policy is not a defense.

## **Procedures**

For details concerning grievance procedures related to complaints of discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct or retaliation governed by [Policy 4216: Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Stalking and Retaliation Prohibited](#), please see the Title IX website at [Title IX website at https://www.southtexascollege.edu/title-ix/](https://www.southtexascollege.edu/title-ix/)

# Chapter 4: Student-Related Policies

The South Texas College Board Policy Manual is found at

<https://pol.tasb.org/PolicyOnline?key=632>. Policies relating to specifically to students are found in **Section E – Instruction** and **Section F – Students**.

Listed below are current policies that have not migrated to the new TASB system.

**Policy Chapter 3 – Instruction and Student Services**

<https://admin.southtexascollege.edu/president/policies/ch3.html>

<a href="#">3010</a> Academic Integrity	<a href="#">3330</a> Withdrawal from Semester Credit Courses
<a href="#">3110</a> Access to Instructional Services	<a href="#">3331</a> Students Called to Active Military Duty
<a href="#">3120</a> Field and International Studies Courses	<a href="#">3335</a> Student Attendance
<a href="#">3230</a> Dual Enrollment of High School Students	<a href="#">3336</a> Requirements for Students Registering for a Course More than Once
<a href="#">3232</a> Dual Enrollment Student Eligibility Requirements	<a href="#">3337</a> Program Standards for Student Participation in Nursing and Allied Health Clinical Programs
<a href="#">3240</a> Off-Setting Drops and Adds	<a href="#">3620</a> College Sanctioned Travel for Students
<a href="#">3301</a> Definition of Semester Credit Hours	<a href="#">3630</a> Student Organizations
<a href="#">3312</a> Student Appeal of Course Grades	<a href="#">3631</a> Student Activities
<a href="#">3313</a> Student Grievance or Complaint	<a href="#">3633</a> Intramural and Recreational Sports Program
<a href="#">3323</a> Academic Integrity and Dishonesty	<a href="#">3650</a> Student Conduct and Discipline