South Texas College is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award the Baccalaureate and Associate degrees. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of South Texas College.
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Chapter I
South Texas College
Student Handbook
EQUAL EDUCATION AND EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

South Texas College is an equal education and equal employment opportunity/affirmative action employer. As an equal opportunity employer, the College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, disability, genetic information, or veteran status. Discrimination is prohibited and the College will comply with all applicable College policies, and state and federal legislation. This policy extends to individuals seeking employment with and admission to the College.

RIGHTS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

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 are otherwise qualified to meet the institution's academic and employment requirements will be provided with services and resources accordingly. Students and employees must submit the appropriate documentation of the disability by a qualified professional whose license or credentials are appropriate to diagnose. 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 the documentation of the disability by a qualified professional whose license or credentials are appropriate to diagnose the disability. South Texas College supports efforts in making the campus more accessible and encourages individuals with disabilities to participate in all activities. Students seeking assistance should contact the Office of Student Disability Services. Employees should contact the Human Resources Department.

STATEMENT ON ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, TOBACCO, FIREARMS AND OTHER SUBSTANCES

Statement On Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco, Firearms And Other Substances 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 and the use of tobacco products in all college buildings. 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. Effective August 1, 2017, Legislative Session 84, Senate Bill 11, also known as Campus Carry will permit 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.

DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, RETALIATION, AND SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Sexual harassment in the workplace and schools is an illegal practice under Section 703 of Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act as amended, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. South Texas College complies with Section 703 of Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, as amended, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Sexual harassment of employees or students at South Texas College is strictly forbidden and will not be tolerated in any division, department, or any work unit by any employee or student. For further details please refer to Manual of Policy 4216 - Discrimination, Harassment, Retaliation, and Sexual Misconduct. http://admin.southtexascollege.edu/president/policies/pdf/4000/4216.pdf

Any employee or student who is found to have engaged in such conduct shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal or suspension. This policy shall be applied without regard to the gender of the employee involved.

CLERY ACT

The Department of Public Safety prepares a crime statistics report to comply with the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Crime Statistics Act. Each year, notification is made to all enrolled students providing the web site to access this report. Faculty and staff receive similar notification. Copies of the report may also be obtained at the South Texas College Department of Public Safety, located at 2509 W. Pecan Blvd., McAllen.

TITLE IX

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 protects people from sex discrimination in educational programs and activities at institutions that receive federal financial assistance. We are committed to providing an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sex. Title IX is often perceived as a law that applies only to athletic programs; however, Title IX is much broader and protects all students, employees, and visitors to campus from gender based discrimination.
STC 2013-2018 Comprehensive Mission

Vision Statement:

South Texas College is a world-class institution advancing regional prosperity through education for a better quality of life in our community.

Purpose Statement:

South Texas College is an innovative, public, post-secondary institution providing quality education and career pathways for the people and communities of Hidalgo and Starr counties. The College achieves student success, nurtures talent development, and promotes economic vitality through collaborative and creative approaches to teaching, learning, and support services.

Core Values:

1. **Student Success:** We promote student success and completion through the implementation of diverse strategies and initiatives.

2. **Opportunity:** We value providing access and opportunities to students to meet the needs of our communities.

3. **Excellence:** We value excellence in teaching, learning, and all support services.

4. **Innovation:** We encourage creativity and champion innovative approaches to teaching, learning, and services.

5. **Community:** We value engaging the community in students’ learning experiences and in the positive transformation of our region.

6. **Professionalism:** We demonstrate professionalism through collegiality, respect, and recognition for each other.

7. **Collaboration:** We value collaboration and communication among STC employees and STC constituents.

8. **Integrity:** We value integrity through honest and transparent communication and courageous dialogue.
Guiding Principles:

1. South Texas College shares collective responsibility for student learning, student success, and regional prosperity.
2. Students succeed through mutual engagement with the College at each stage of their educational pathways.
3. South Texas College champions innovation through its willingness to transform the College’s systems to meet the educational and workforce needs and challenges of our region.
4. Collaboration with educational and business partners is key to student, college, and community successes.

Strategic Directions:

(*The development of Strategic Directions incorporated the framework recommended by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)’s report Reclaiming the American Dream. The changes recommended by this framework include changing from Fragmented Course-Taking to Clear Pathways, from Low Success Rate to High Success Rate, from Access to Access and Success, from a Culture of Isolation to Collaboration, and from individual Faculty Prerogative to Collective Responsibility.)

Clear Pathways
- South Texas College provides students with clear pathways to facilitate coherent educational experiences and timely completion of a post-secondary credential leading to relevant employment and/or further educational experiences.

Access and Success
- South Texas College is committed to increasing the college-going and college-completing rates in the region.

High Success Rate
- South Texas College engages in effective, proven efforts to ensure student success and positively affect the economic and social mobility of residents in our region.

Collective Responsibility
- South Texas College empowers faculty to work together within and across disciplines to design best learning experiences for students, leading to their academic success, career readiness, and timely completion.

Collaboration
- South Texas College commits to effective interdepartmental and interdivisional collaborations and advances mutually beneficial community and educational partnerships that create a collective impact on student success.

Cost Efficiency
- South Texas College seeks innovative redesign of college processes to promote new approaches to cost-consciousness and cost-efficiency.
IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Title IX Team

Title IX Coordinator
Mary Elizondo, MBA CFE, CGMA, CPA
Vice President - Finance and Administrative Services
3201 West Pecan Blvd. X224
McAllen, TX 78501
956-872-3558
marye@southtexascollege.edu

Title IX Deputy Coordinators
Brenda Balderaz
Director of Human Resources
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McAllen, TX 78501
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Paul Varville
Chief Administrator of the Department of Public Safety
2509 West Pecan Blvd.
McAllen, TX 78501
956-872-2330
pbvarvil@southtexascollege.edu

Pablo Hernandez, LPC.S
Dean of Student Affairs
3201 West Pecan Blvd. K2.22
McAllen, TX 78501
956-872-2182
phernan@southtexascollege.edu

Janette Garcia
Compliance Coordinator
3201 West Pecan Blvd. N163
McAllen, TX 78501
956-872-2307
jgarcia_3213@southtexascollege.edu
Enrollment Center/ Admissions & Records
  • Pecan Campus 956-872-6401
  • Mid Valley Campus 956-447-6605
  • Starr County Campus 956-488-5845

Advising 956-872-8372

Bookstore 956-872-2075

Campus Police & Security 956-872-2589

Career & Transfer Center 956-872-3593

Cashiers
  • Pecan Campus 956-872-3455 or 956-872-8311
  • Pecan Plaza 956-872-3852 or 956-872-8311
  • Mid-Valley Campus 956-872-3455 or 956-447-6600
  • Starr County Campus 956-872-3455 or 956-488-8181
  • Technology Campus 956-872-3455 or 956-872-6100
  • Nursing and Allied Health Campus 956-872-3455 or 956-872-3100

Counseling 956-872-2173

Centers for Learning Excellence 956-872-8303

Student Rights and Responsibilities (Office of Student Conduct and Office of the Ombudsperson) 956-872-2180

Distance Education 956-872-2598

Financial Aid
  • Pecan Campus 956-872-8375
  • Mid Valley Campus 956-447-6672
  • Starr County Campus 956-488-5803

Career & 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 Disability Services 956-872-2173

Student Information Center 800-742-7822
  • Pecan 956-872-8311
  • Mid-Valley 956-447-1200
  • Starr 956-488-8181
  • Nursing Allied Health 956-872-3100
  • Technology Campus 956-872-6100
  • Veteran Affairs 956-872-6723
COLLEGE CATALOG

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

The College Catalog is available through your campus Student Information Center or online at: http://www.southtexascollege.edu/academics/catalogs/index.html
2017-2018 Calendar

Fall Semester 2017 (August 28 - December 17)

August 16 (Wednesday) .................................................. New Faculty Start Date – New Faculty Benefits & Orientation Human Resources Dept.
August 17 (Thursday) .......................................................... New Faculty Orientation
August 18 (Friday) ......................................................... New Faculty Service Area Tour
August 21 (Monday) ........................................................ Faculty Return – Academic Affairs Convocation / Division Meetings
August 22 (Tuesday) ......................................................... Faculty Preparation Day / Departmental Meetings
August 23 (Wednesday) .................................................. Faculty Preparation Day / FOCUS Academy Kick-Off
August 24 (Thursday) ......................................................... Faculty Preparation Day / Distance Learning Symposium / Full-Time Faculty Teaching Dual Enrollment Courses PD Day
August 25 (Friday) .......................................................... Faculty Preparation Day / Departmental Meetings
August 26 (Saturday) ....................................................... Adjunct & Dual Enrollment Faculty Conference
August 28 (Monday) ....................................................... Classes Begin

September 4 (Monday) ....................................................... College Closed – Labor Day
September 13 (Wednesday) .............................................. Census Day - Twelfth Class Day
September 22 (Friday) ....................................................... College Closed – College-Wide Organizational Development Day
November 17 (Friday) ....................................................... Last Day to Withdraw
November 23-26 (Thursday – Sunday) ......................... College Closed - Thanksgiving Holiday
December 11-17 (Monday – Sunday) .................. Finals
December 16 (Saturday) ...................................................... Graduation
December 17 (Sunday) ....................................................... End of Term
December 18 (Monday) ....................................................... Grades Due Date
December 18-January 2 (Monday - Tuesday) .......... Winter Break (College Closed)

Spring Semester 2018 (January 16 – May 10)

January 3 (Wednesday) ..................................................... College Opens – Staff return
January 8 (Monday) .......................................................... Faculty Return – Division / Department Meetings
January 9 (Tuesday) .......................................................... Faculty Preparation Day / New Faculty Benefits & Orientation – Human Resources Dept.
January 10-12 (Wednesday-Friday) ......................... Faculty Preparation Day / Departmental Meetings
January 13 (Saturday) ....................................................... Adjunct / Dual Enrollment Faculty Professional Development Day
January 15 (Monday) ......................................................... Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – College Closed
January 16 (Tuesday) ....................................................... Classes Begin

January 31 (Wednesday) ..................................................... Census Day - Twelfth Class Day
February 9 (Friday) ........................................................... College Closed - College-Wide Organizational Development Day
March 12 – 18 (Monday - Sunday) ...................... College Closed - Spring Break
March 29 – April 1 (Thursday – Sunday) ............... College Closed - Semester Break
April 16 (Monday) .......................................................... Last Day to Withdraw
May 4-10 (Friday – Thursday) ......................................... Finals
May 10 (Thursday) .......................................................... End of Term
May 11-12 (Friday - Saturday) ........................................ Graduation
May 14 (Monday) .......................................................... Grades Due Date
Summer Sessions 2018

Summer Session I (June 4 – July 6)

May 28 (Monday) .................. College Closed - Memorial Day
May 29-June 3 (Tuesday-Sunday) .................. Final registration dates for Summer I, III

June 4 (Monday) .................. Classes Begin
June 7 (Thursday) .................. Census Day - Fourth Class Day
June 28 (Thursday) .................. Last Day to Withdraw
July 4 (Wednesday) .................. College Closed - Independence Day
July 5 (Thursday) .................. End of Classes
July 6 (Friday) .................. Finals / End of Term
July 9 (Monday) .................. Grades Due Date

Summer Session II (July 10 – August 9)

July 9 (Monday) .................. Final registration dates for Summer II

July 10 (Tuesday) .................. Classes Begin
July 13 (Friday) .................. Census Day - Fourth Class Day
August 2 (Thursday) .................. Last Day to Withdraw
August 8 (Wednesday) .................. End of Classes
August 9 (Thursday) .................. Finals / End of Term
August 13 (Monday) .................. Grades Due Date

Summer Session III (June 4 – August 9)

May 28 (Monday) .................. College Closed - Memorial Day
May 29-June 3 (Tuesday-Sunday) .................. Final registration dates for Summer I, III

June 4 (Monday) .................. Classes Begin
June 12 (Tuesday) .................. Census Day - Seventh Class Day
July 4 (Wednesday) .................. College Closed - Independence Day
July 9 (Monday) .................. No classes
July 25 (Wednesday) .................. Last Day to Withdraw
August 8 (Wednesday) .................. End of Classes
August 9 (Thursday) .................. Finals / End of Term
August 13 (Monday) .................. Grades Due Date
SOUTH TEXAS COLLEGE EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

Receive important alerts and emergency response information by email and on your phone. Login with your JagNet USERNAME and PIN at: http://alert.southtexascollege.edu/

SOUTH TEXAS COLLEGE USERNAME AND PIN

If you do not receive the letter or need to reset your PIN please contact the South Texas College Help Desk at 872-2111, or via email at isphelp@southtexascollege.edu; the Student Information Center can also assist with providing, or resetting, your login at 872-8311.

JAGNET

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.

Point your web browser to jagnet.southtexascollege.edu and login using your South Texas College USERNAME and PASSWORD.

JAGMAIL

Your South Texas College JagMail account is provided by Microsoft Exchange Labs. This e-mail 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: www.SouthTexasCollege.edu/go/cashiers click: STC JagMail. It is the students responsibility to check their JagMail account regularly and will be held responsible for viewing all communication sent by South Texas College.

WIRELESS INTERNET

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. All wireless devices connecting to the South Texas College’s network are required to have current and automatically-updating antivirus software.

http://isp.southtexascollege.edu/service/wireless-faq/

STUDENT I.D. CARDS

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 Student Information AND Enrollment Centers district-wide.

**TEXTBOOKS**

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 [http://studentservices.southtexascollege.edu/finaid/book_allowances.html](http://studentservices.southtexascollege.edu/finaid/book_allowances.html)

**BARNES & NOBLE BOOKSTORE**

Barnes & Noble is the official College Bookstore: [stc.bncollege.com](http://stc.bncollege.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**

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**
   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 hour’s 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 hours to graduate.)

More information on the Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Policy can be found at [http://studentservices.southtexascollege.edu/finaid/academic_progress.html](http://studentservices.southtexascollege.edu/finaid/academic_progress.html)
Eligibility Issues

Eligibility Issues that could affect student’s eligibility or awarding of Financial Aid include but are not limited to:

- Undeclared Majors
- Developmental Coursework
- Over-awards
- Repeat Coursework
- Lifetime Eligibility Used
- Unusual Enrollment History
- Attendance

More information on this can be found at http://studentservices.southtexascollege.edu/finaid/eligibility_issues.html

Net Price Calculator

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: http://www.collegeforalltexas.com/apps/CollegeMoney/

Report Fraud

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

Every motor vehicle parked on a South Texas College campus must have a valid parking permit. The person issued a parking permit is responsible for all violations and tickets cited to that permit.

Students parking vehicles on South Texas College property are required to have a current year parking permit permanently affixed to their vehicle on the inside lower right hand corner (passenger side) of the windshield. Motorcycle permits must be placed in a clearly visible location.
To obtain a permit, all outstanding parking fines must be paid. Each permit, additional permit, or replacement permit will cost $25.00. Parking permits may be purchased as follows:

1. Register vehicle online through JagNet.
2. Pay for permit:
   a. Online through JagNet if paying by credit card or electronic check.
   b. At the Cashiers office if paying by cash only.

Parking permits may be mailed to the address shown in the student record system or students may pick up vehicle permit at the Cashiers offices. Faculty/Staff and motorcycle permits may be picked up at the Department of Public Safety.

Temporary Parking Permits (Expiration dates will be enforced)

- Multiple day permits are available at the Department of Public Safety offices at the college campuses.
- Non-credit bearing students may be issued a temporary parking permit for the period of their sessions.
- Students who have a primary vehicle in a repair shop, purchased a new vehicle etc., may be issued an expiration date of up to 7 days.

For more information call 956-872-2589, or visit the campus parking web site at: police.southtexascollege.edu.

**CAMPUS POLICE & SECURITY**

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 956-872-2589 immediately. To report crimes or for any other assistance contact the South Texas College Department of Public Safety at 956-872-2589 or visit their web site at: [http://police.southtexascollege.edu/](http://police.southtexascollege.edu/)

**Bicycles, Skateboards, In-Line Skates, Roller Skates, Motorized Scooters, Hoverboards, Similar Apparatuses, and Other Modes of Transportation not associated with Disability or Mobility Support**

In accordance with South Texas College Policy 6421 on Bicycles, Skateboards, In-Line Skates, Roller Skates, Motorized Scooters, Hoverboards, Similar Apparatuses, and Other Modes of Transportation not associated with Disability or Mobility Support

In accordance with South Texas College Policy 6421 on Bicycles, Skateboards, In-Line Skates, Roller Skates, Motorized Scooters, Hoverboards, and Similar Apparatuses, hereafter referred to as Wheeled Devices, stipulates that users may operate on campus in areas where permitted. 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 are personally liable for damages caused and associated with their use.

Individuals may be found to have violated South Texas College Policy #6421 or 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:

- Sidewalk curbs
- Garages
- Staircases and steps
- Handrails
- Flower planters
- Ramps
- Benches, table, chairs or stools
- or any other architectural features
- 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.

   a. 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.

   b. 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 devises may park at bike racks and are subject to the same parking regulations as bicycles.

   a. Scooters and bikes are not permitted in buildings or inside any exterior access door.

   b. South Texas College is not responsible for loss, theft or damage to skateboards,skates, scooters (non-motorized), bikes, EPAMDs, and other wheeled devises.

   c. To report loss, theft or damage to please contact the South Texas College Department of Public Safety.
D. Definitions

a. **Scooter**: any non-motorized device consisting of two or more wheels affixed to 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).

b. **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 devise 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**

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**

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

Phone: (956) 872-2589  
Web: [http://police.southtexascollege.edu/](http://police.southtexascollege.edu/)
Smoke/Tobacco/E-Cigarette Free Environment

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 go to the following link:

http://police.southtexascollege.edu/campus-maps/

VOLUNTARY STUDENT ACCIDENT INSURANCE

South Texas College makes available to all enrolling students accident insurance coverage. Such coverage is voluntary and must be purchased by the student each 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 in regard to insurance purchase:

a) Have their own insurance (BCBS, Aetna, Medicaid, Medicare, VA, etc.)
b) Purchase the South Texas College policies (insurance must be purchased on line at www.sas-mn.com)
c) Accept full financial responsibility for expenses from an accident and/or sickness

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

WITHDRAWAL (DROPPING) FROM DEVELOPMENTAL COURSES

Students not meeting Placement Standards to enroll in freshman-level coursework and not qualifying for an exemption as listed under 2.2 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

Withdrawal from a course results in a grade of “W.” A student who decides to withdraw from a specific course(s) should initiate withdrawal procedures by securing a drop form from the Office of Admissions and Records or any Student Information Center. The form must be turned in to the office of Admissions and Records prior to the published deadline for withdrawals.

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

Students who begin attendance but do not officially withdraw and fail to earn at least one passing grade in the period, are considered students who have unofficially withdrawn, for Title IV purposes and therefore, may also be required to repay some or all of the financial aid back. Failing grades for financial aid purposes are “F”, “I” and “NP”. More information on this can be found at: [http://studentservices.southtexascollege.edu/finaid/withdrawals.html](http://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**

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.

**WITHDRAWAL AFTER CENSUS FEE**

Students who withdraw from all of their courses after census date will be assessed a $50 fee.

**COURSE REPEAT FEE**

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 (>27 credit hours) $125.00

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

The S.P.I.R.I.T. Office assists students in resolving financial issues with South Texas College. Staff are available to research and analyze student accounts and work with students to reach a solution.
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.

Student Financial Obligations & Expectations

Students Responsibility for Information

- South Texas College students are responsible to take the time to become familiar, review, understand, and abide by the College's policies, regulations, procedures, requirements, deadlines, and tuition and fees 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.
- South Texas College reserves the right to make changes to policies, regulations, procedures, requirements, deadlines, and tuition and fees at any time and as necessary; once these changes have been made they shall be posted online, whereby they shall take effect. Students are encouraged to check online at SouthTexasCollege.edu for the updated versions of all South Texas College Board of Trustees approved policies, procedures, regulations, requirements, deadlines, and tuition and fees.
- South Texas College students are also responsible for ensuring that the College has their personal contact information such as current mailing address and phone number up-to-date. Students may update it online using their JagNet account.
- South Texas College uses e-mail as the primary means for communication and it is the students responsibility to not only activate the student college email but to review the content emailed regularly. Students may choose to have the official college emails redirected to another address and are not relieved of the responsibilities of the communication that is sent by the College.
- 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 schools
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 non-payment. Students must meet all financial obligations to the College by established deadlines. To read and accept the Student Financial Obligation Agreement, log into JagNet > Additional Student Services > Student Financial Obligation Agreement.
- Questions regarding the Student Financial Obligation terms may be directed to the Business Office- Cashier Department.

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 pre-recorded 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 Business Office- Cashier Department.
- To read and accept the Contact Consent, log into JagNet > Additional Student Services > Consent To Do Business Electronically (Contact Consent Opt-In/1098T opt-in/Title IV Authorization) > Contact Consent (Opt-In)

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 Business Office- Cashier Department.
- To read and accept the 1098-T opt-in, log into JagNet > Additional Student Services > Consent To Do Business Electronically (1098T Opt-In/Title IV Authorization) > Consent To Do Business Electronically (1098T Opt-In)

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 2016-2017, Volume 4 Processing Aid and Managing FSA Funds, Chapter 2- Disbursing FSA Funds, Institutional Charges. 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 an adverse 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 read and accept the Authorization To Use Title IV To Pay For Other Educationally Related Charges, log into JagNet > Additional Student Services > Consent To Do Business Electronically (1098T Opt-In/Title IV Authorization) > Title IV Authorization (Opt-In/Opt-Out).

Admittance to Class

- A student who is indebted to South Texas College will not be allowed to register until he/she 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.

Payments

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

- 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 an adverse 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.

- 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 have to 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.
Refunds

Refund Options

- 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, BBVA Compass 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: SouthTexasCollege.edu/go/cashiers click: Refund Options.

Refund Guidelines

The “effective date” of a class drop or add is the date the course schedule form is received at the office of Admissions and Records from the student. The refund policy also applies to drop 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.
- 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 Mini-mesters)

Refund percentage may be greater than stated below.

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 III 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 Mini-mesters)

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
- 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 cash, cashier's check, money order 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 a Schedule Change Form is submitted to and processed at the Enrollment Center.
- 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. The student is responsible for the drop/add fee as per the tuition and fees schedule.
- 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.
- Students who officially withdraw from all classes at South Texas College will be assessed a one-time withdrawal fee as per the tuition and fees schedule.
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 an adverse 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 Semesters** - Available during the processing period: up until the fourth 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 > Installment Plans & Emergency Loans > Installment Plans

- To apply, complete the Installment Plan Agreement which is available:
  - Online at: JagNet.SouthTexasCollege.edu or
    - For step-by-step instructions follow: SouthTexasCollege.edu/go/cashiers > Installment Plans & Emergency Loans > Installment Plans > Instructions: How to Enroll in a Payment Plan
  - In-person at the Cashiers Office

- 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 necessaries.”
  - Complete the installment plan agreement available online or at the Cashiers’ Office.

- 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 > 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 in payments
- 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 In-person at the Cashiers Office:
  - Complete the Emergency Loan Application & Promissory Note

- 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 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 necessaries.”

- Emergency Loan Payment Due Dates, as per the Emergency Loan Application and Promissory Note 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)

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)**

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 setting limits and conditions on the uses and disclosures that may be made of such information without student’s authorization. The rule also gives students rights over their health information, including rights to examine and obtain a copy of their health records, and to request corrections.

**Where FERPA and HIPAA May Intersect**

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: [http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/hipaa/](http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/hipaa/).
Information on the other HIPAA:

http://dhs.texas.gov/hipaa/default.shtm

CAREER & EMPLOYER SERVICES

The Office of Career & Employer Services at South Texas College assists alumni and a diverse student body in achieving 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 Base 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.

Campus Wide - Declare A Major Fair
This is a campus wide event which is held at South Texas College. The purpose of the event is to offer South Texas College students as well as dual students the opportunity to explore career and other academic programming offered at South Texas College in a friendly, convenient environment. The goal of the Declare A Major Fair is that students will choose a career that best suits their interest and declare a major. At the event a cyber café is set up and staff are readily available to assist students with an online interest inventory or skills assessment tool that will provide results that may be useful in guiding students into a career pathway.

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.

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.

Women in Technology

The Women in Technology event initiative is geared toward building the education and motivation of women to explore opportunities for careers in the various technology fields offered at STC’s Technology Campus. This event is a showcase of all technology programs as well as a runway showcase of women who are enrolled in Career and Technical Education programs.

Workshops & Information Sessions:

- Career Coach – My Career Pathway
- The Formula of a Perfect Resume
- Interviewing Prep 101
- Are You LinkedIn or Left Out?
- Career Mind Map
- Career Advice No One Tells You!
- Social Media Ruined My Career
- Job Search: Tactics & Frustrations
- Labor Market Salary Statistics Information
- Backpack to Briefcase Workshop (The transition from College to Work)
- Career Readiness Orientations
- Budgeting Made Easy
- Professionalism in the Workplace
- Etiquette in the Workplace
- Creating an Early College Resume
- Developing an Early College Resume
- Utilizing Online Resources & Job Searching
- Suit Up! For Success
- Salary Negotiation
- Developing a Career Vision Statement
• Resume Development & Strategies for Professionals
• Online Portfolio Development & Social Media

Visit us:

https://www.southtexascollege.edu/go/hire-jaguars

https://www.southtexascollege.edu/go/jaguarsgethired

VETERAN AFFAIRS

The Office of Veteran Affairs promotes education opportunities to community members who are eligible for Veterans education benefits and provides support, guidance and a variety of services and programs to students who are using educational benefits under the Department of Veteran Affairs Educational Assistance Programs.

http://www.southtexascollege.edu/veterans/

CENTERS FOR LEARNING EXCELLENCE

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.

http://academicaffairs.southtexascollege.edu/cle/

STUDENT ACTIVITIES & WELLNESS

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 Activities

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/
Campus Activities Board

The Campus Activities Board engages South Texas College students in the planning, implementation and evaluation of programs and activities designed to meet a wide variety of student needs and interests that facilitate learning outside the classroom and enhance the sense of community at South Texas College.

http://life.southtexascollege.edu/student-activities-leadership-development/campus-activities-board/

Student Organizations

Over 70 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.

http://life.southtexascollege.edu/activities/student-organizations/

First Year Experience

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.

http://life.southtexascollege.edu/activities/fyc/

Student Government Association

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.


Student Leadership Academy

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
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.

http://life.southtexascollege.edu/intramural-sports/
STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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 please go to Part II of this handbook or click on the following link:

http://life.southtexascollege.edu/student-conduct/
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.

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th># of Meetings</th>
<th>10% of Class Meetings</th>
<th>Student Dropped after X Days</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16 week-1 day a week</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 week-2 days a week</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 week-3 days a week</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 week MTF (Summer I &amp; II)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 week MTFR (Summer I &amp; II)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 week MTW (Summer III)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 week MTWR (Summer III)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>3.8</td>
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### TITLE IX AND PREGNANCY RELATED ABSENCES

South Texas College does not discriminate against any student on the basis of pregnancy, parenting or related conditions. Pregnant or parenting students seeking additional information should contact the Department of Student Rights and Responsibilities immediately at 956-872-2180 or crc@southtexascollege.edu.

Under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and its implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. Part 106 (Title IX), schools must excuse absences for students who are pregnant, who give birth, who are parenting, or who experience a related condition for as long as that student’s doctor determines is necessary. At the conclusion of that period, the student must be given a reasonable amount of time to make up the work they missed.

**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

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.


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.

http://admin.southtexascollege.edu/president/policies/pdf/3000/3310.pdf

Grade Changes Refer to Board Policy 3312

If a student requests a grade change in writing, justifying the change, and the instructor agrees to change the grade, the instructor should fill out a Change of Grade Form obtained from the Office of Admissions and Records and attach it to 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 must be made within 30 days to affect scholastic probation status.

If an instructor initiates a grade change, the instructor must fill out a Change of Grade Form within obtained from the Enrollment Center. (Refer to Appendix N for Change of Grade Form)


On-Line Grade Submission

Instructors submit grades on-line 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 a 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 on-line at any College computer lab or kiosk after grades have been posted to the system, and each student will receive a grade mailer if they do not have a hold. Do not tell students to 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 on file for questions concerning grades.

Dual Enrollment Faculty Responsibilities when Teaching a STC Dual Enrollment Course Curriculum, Course Competencies, and Teaching Requirements

- Dual enrollment 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;
• Dual enrollment faculty will complete all STC departmental requirements such as diagnostic tests and Student Learning Outcomes/Exemplary Educational Objectives (for appropriate courses);
• Dual enrollment faculty will teach the course. Because of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, if a dual enrollment faculty is unable to teach the course, arrangements must be made by contacting the Department Chair prior to absence;
• Dual enrollment faculty will advise students concerning their academic progress prior to the last day to drop/withdraw from STC;
• Dual enrollment 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 enrollment 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 enrollment faculty will provide the Chair of the Department at STC, 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 enrollment faculty will participate in aligning the high school and college course competencies with the assigned STC Program Chair;
• Dual enrollment faculty will attend STC planning meetings and staff development activities, including dual enrollment training workshops; and
• Dual enrollment faculty will assist in the identification of potential dual enrollment students.

SOUTH TEXAS COLLEGE HONOR CODE

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

OFFICE OF OMBUDS SERVICES

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 an 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: crc@southtexascollege.edu
Web: http://life.southtexascollege.edu/ombuds-services/

COUNSELING CENTER

At South Texas College Counseling Center, counselors provide many services designed to help students attain an education, review career and personal goals. These services are offered in a confidential atmosphere where the students may discuss concerns that are important to their educational and personal success.

- Academic Counseling
- Professional Counseling
- Student with Disability Services
- Transfer Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pecan Campus</th>
<th>Mid-Valley Campus</th>
<th>Starr County Campus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3201 W. Pecan Blvd.</td>
<td>400 N. Border</td>
<td>142 FM 3167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McAllen, Texas 78502-9701</td>
<td>Weslaco, Texas 78596</td>
<td>Rio Grande, Texas 78582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone: (956) 872-2173</td>
<td>Phone: (956) 447-1229</td>
<td>Phone: (956) 488-5853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax: (956) 872-3430</td>
<td>Fax: (956) 447-6606</td>
<td>Fax: (956) 488-5843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building K 2.900</td>
<td>Building F 110</td>
<td>Building G 1.304C</td>
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<tr>
<th>Technology Campus</th>
<th>Dr. Ramiro R. Casso</th>
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<tr>
<td>3700 W. Military Hwy.</td>
<td>Nursing &amp; Allied Health Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McAllen, Texas 78503</td>
<td>1101 E. Vermont</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone: (956) 872-6125</td>
<td>McAllen, Texas 78502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax: (956) 872-6169</td>
<td>Phone: (956) 872-3077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building B 175</td>
<td>Fax: (956) 872-3055</td>
</tr>
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</tbody>
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South Texas College - Student Handbook & Student Code of Conduct - 2016-2017
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STUDENT APPEAL OF COURSE GRADES

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 Number 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 determinative.

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.

http://academicaffairs.southtexascollege.edu/grade_appeals/pdf/Grade_Appeal_Form.pdf

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.

http://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 after the end of the semester in which the grade was issued. No later than 30 calendar days

**STEP**

- Student obtains and completes the Formal Appeal of a Course Grade Form
- Student meets with Faculty member to discuss grade
- Faculty member will submit APPROVED or DENIED Formal Appeal of a Course Grade form to the Office Of Admissions & Records (Form must be signed by Faculty)
- Faculty member submit Change of Grade Form to Chair/Dean within 15 calendar days
- Chair/Dean must forward signed Change of Grade Form to the Office of Admissions & Records within 15 calendar days

**Denied**

- STEP 2 must be initiated within 15 calendar days by contacting the Office of Admissions & Records

**Approved**

- Process ENDS

**STEP 2: Division**

- Student submits to the Office of Admissions & Records:
  - Signed Formal Appeal of a Course Grade Form
  - Student Written Appeal
  - Documentation/Evidence
- The Office of Admissions & Records will forward the written appeal to the appropriate Chair/Dean for review.
- Division Dean will consult with Chair and Faculty member to attempt to resolve the dispute.
- Once a decision is reached:
  - Division Dean will notify the Office of Admissions & Records
  - The Office of Admissions & Records will advise the student of the outcome

**Dissatisfied**

- Student DISSATISFIED with decision:
  - STEP 3 must be initiated within 15 calendar days
  - Process ENDS

**Satisfied**

- Student SATISFIED with decision:
  - Process ENDS

**STEP 3: Vice President**

- The Office of Admissions & Records will forward to the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs:
  - Signed Formal Appeal of a Course Grade Form
  - Student Written Appeal
  - Documentation/Evidence
- Vice President will:
  - Request written responses from the Faculty member/Chair/Dean
  - Convene the Grade Appeal Committee
- Grade Appeal Committee will:
  - Review Student Written Appeal and Documentation/Evidence
  - Call any witness, if appropriate
  - Inform the Vice President of their recommendation

- The Vice President will communicate the final decision in writing to: Student, Faculty member, Chair, Division Dean, and the Office of Admissions & Records.

- Process ENDS
STUDENT COMPLAINTS

Students at South Texas College have the right to submit a complaint when they believe that they were unjustly or improperly treated by the College, College employees, or other students.

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

No complaints will be accepted with the desired resolution being a change of grade 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 procedures detailed in the Nursing and Allied Health Division Handbook.

All complaints, whether student to student, student to employee, employee to employee will follow the procedures outline in Policy 4216 Discrimination, Harassment, Retaliation and Sexual Misconduct located at the following link:  

Students may also see Policy 3313 Student Grievance and Complaint:  

The process for investigating and resolving student complaint against another student mirror a the civil rights process outlined in Policy 4216 Discrimination, Harassment, Retaliation and Sexual Misconduct.

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

1. Complete the Student Conduct Incident Report Form - SCIRF
   a. Located at: https://life.southtexascollege.edu/student-rights-and-responsibilities/ombuds-services/

2. Report received by the Office of Student Conduct
   a. Case is reviewed and assigned to a case manager
   b. Case manager may contact you for further information
   c. Initiate an investigation
   d. Refer for conflict resolution

3. Complete a formal impartial and through investigation
   a. Close case
   b. Refer case for administrative hearing
4. Administrative Hearing
   a. Advise parties of their rights
   b. Advise parties of the date, time and location of the hearing
   c. Render a decision/ outcome of the hearing
   d. Notify the parties of the decision/ outcome of the hearing
   e. Notify parties of their right to appeal the decision/ outcome of the hearing

For a more detailed look at the Administrative Student Conduct Process review Chapter 2 of this document titled Student Code of Conduct.

How to Report Alleged Violations of the Student Code of Conduct

To report alleged misconduct to the Office of Student Conduct please go the Ombuds Services webpage: https://life.southtexascollege.edu/student-rights-and-responsibilities/ombuds-services/ and click on the button that says: Submit A Complaint Against A Student.

Parties submitting a report may submit an anonymous report using the Student Conduct Incident Report Form - SCIRF. However, due to the nature of many of the reports, federal regulations under Title IX, the Clery Act, Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), and the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE) parties are encouraged to provide their contact information to ensure an appropriate response to their concerns and to ensure that all necessary steps can be taken to insure the health and safety of all members of the South Texas College community. This allows the College to provide you with information about the outcome of your report and to provide victims assistance information when appropriate.

Step 1:

1. Complete the Background Information Section.
   a. Type your first and last name.
   b. Your position or title with the college.
   c. A phone number where you may be reached.
   d. The email address you check most frequently (may want to check the box to the right to have a copy of the report forwarded to you).
   e. List your mailing address.
   f. You will need to select the nature of your report
      i. General Incident Report
      ii. Academic Integrity Matter
      iii. Incident Report to Police
      iv. Concerning or Threatening Behavior
      v. Title IX Assistance with Pregnancy or Parenting Issue
      vi. For Your Information (FYI)
   g. Determine if the issues is Urgent
   h. Select the date the incident occurred
i. Select the time the incident occurred
j. Select the location where the incident occurred

2. Items that have a * next to them are required to be complete.

**Step 2:**

1. Reason for making the Report: Select the category or categories that represent the alleged violation of the Student Code of Conduct you wish to report.
   a. Academic Integrity Violations
   b. College Conduct Violations
   c. Community Based Violations
      i. You may select as many as you believe apply.

**Step 3:**

1. Involved Parties:
   a. You can list up to 150 parties in your report. Simply click on the Add Another Party button.
      i. Please list each party separately and include their Student ID or A00000000 number (excluding yourself).
   b. Be sure to complete as many of the listed fields as you can.
   c. For non-students, list a Social Security Number or Driver’s License number in the block labeled ID Number if available, if you have that information.

**Step 4:**

1. Description of the Incident:
   a. Please provide a detailed description of the incident or concern using specific concise, objective language. You are able to write an unlimited number of words in the section so it is very important that you provide a detailed report about what has happened.
      Include the following:
      i. Who did it
      ii. What did they do
      iii. Where did they do it
      iv. Who did they do it to
      v. When did they do it
      vi. How did they do it
      vii. Who are the witnesses and how to we contact them
   b. Please do not attempt to diagnose an individual’s condition.
   c. Please state information word for word.
      . If a threat was made or foul (vulgar, abusive, lewd, or profane) language was used please quote the language using the exact wording, placing it in quotation marks.
   d. After you have written you statement you can click on the wording, Check Spelling & Preview, to spell check what you have written.
Step 5:

1. Additional Questions:
   a. Did police respond, select Yes or No.
   b. Select any of the following:
      i. Bias Incident; a bias incident refers to any form of discrimination or harassment.
      ii. Was medical transportation provided.
      iii. Please list any other department, agency or assistance that was called or provided.
   iv. Select how you wish to be contacted:
      1. Phone
      2. Email
      3. Do Not Contact Me
   c. It is recommended that you allow the College to contact you. Due to the nature of many of the reports, federal regulations under Title IX, the Clery Act, Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), and the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE) parties are encouraged to provide their contact information to ensure an appropriate response to their concerns and to ensure that all necessary steps can be taken to insure the health and safety of all members of the South Texas College community. This allows the College to provide you with information about the outcome of your report and to provide victims assistance information when appropriate.

2. Items that have a * next to them are required to be complete.

Step 6:

1. Supporting Documentation: You may attach photos, video, email, and other supporting documents. There is a maximum 12 megabytes per file. Attachments require time to upload, so please be patient after you click to submit this report.

Step 7:

1. One Last Step: In an effort to prevent spam reports you must enter the security word to submit your report. Please type the letters and numbers as you see them in the block to the right. Capitalization does not matter but cookies must be enabled in your browser for this to work.
2. Click Submit Report
3. If you have successfully enter the security word and completed all required sections in the report you will see the following notification:
   a. Thank you for submitting a report. This matter has been routed to the appropriate staff and will be followed up on shortly. If you have any questions, please contact our office.
   b. You will also receive a confirmation Tracking Number:
      i. Confirmation #00000000
4. If you have missed a required section anywhere on the report you will received the following language:
In an emergency your first call should be to 911 or the STC Security Department at 956-872-2589

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

South Texas College assumes an affirmative posture to prevent and eliminate sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment in any division, department, or any unit by any individual. It is the policy of South Texas College to provide an educational and working environment for its students, faculty, staff, guests and visitors that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment. It is the policy of the College that any practice or behavior that constitutes sexual harassment will not be tolerated. This policy has been developed to reaffirm this principle and to provide recourse for those individuals whose rights have been violated.

Sexual Harassment is unwelcome verbal or physical conduct that is,
• sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it, unreasonably interferes with, denies or limits someone’s ability to participate in or benefit from the College’s educational program and/or activities, and is
• based on power differentials (quid pro quo), the creation of a hostile environment, or retaliation.

Sexual harassment in the workplace and schools is an illegal practice under Section 703 of Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, as amended, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended.

Sexual Misconduct
South Texas College prohibits any form of sexual misconduct. Sexual misconduct includes, but is not limited to, behaviors often described as sexual harassment, sex or gender discrimination, sexual violence, rape, stalking, and relationship violence (including domestic violence and dating violence). It is a violation of policy and the law, including Title IX, to commit these acts or attempt to commit them. Sexual misconduct can occur in any sex or gender configuration regardless of sex and gender identity whether it be an employee or student.

Any employee or student who is found to have engaged in sexual misconduct shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal or expulsion and may be prosecuted under State law. This policy shall be applied without regard to the gender of the person involved.

http://admin.southtexascollege.edu/president/policies/pdf/4000/4216.pdf

Guidelines for the Acceptable Use of Information Resources

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.

http://isp.southtexascollege.edu/files/acceptable_use.pdf
Chapter II
South Texas College
Student Code of Conduct
Accreditation Statement:

South Texas College is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award the Baccalaureate and Associate degrees. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of South Texas College.
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.
Equal Education And Equal Employment Opportunity

South Texas College is an equal education and equal employment opportunity/affirmative action employer. As an equal opportunity employer, the College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, pregnancy, disability, genetic information, or veteran status. Discrimination is prohibited and the College will comply with all applicable College policies, and state and federal legislation. This policy extends to individuals seeking employment with and admission to the College.

Rights Of Individuals With Disabilities

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 are otherwise qualified to meet the institution's academic and employment requirements will be provided with services and resources accordingly. Students and employees must submit the appropriate documentation of the disability by a qualified professional whose license or credentials are appropriate to diagnose. 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 the documentation of the disability by a qualified professional whose license or credentials are appropriate to diagnose the disability. South Texas College supports efforts in making the campus more accessible and encourages individuals with disabilities to participate in all activities. Students seeking assistance should contact the Office of Student Disability Services. Employees should contact the Human Resources Department.

Statement On Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco, And Other Substances

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 and the use of tobacco products in all college buildings. 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. Violators will be penalized. For a copy of the Biennial Drug Free Schools and Communities Act Report for South Texas College, please contact the South Texas College Department of Public Safety.

Discrimination, Harassment, Retaliation, And Sexual Misconduct

Sexual harassment in the workplace and schools is an illegal practice under Section 703 of Title
VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act as amended, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. South Texas College complies with Section 703 of Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, as amended, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Sexual harassment of employees or students at South Texas College is strictly forbidden and will not be tolerated in any division, department, or any work unit by any employee or student. Retaliation against anyone raising concerns about sexual harassment or anyone participating in an investigation of sexual harassment is prohibited. For further details please refer to Manual of Policy 4216 - Discrimination, Harassment, Retaliation, and Sexual Misconduct. http://admin.southtexascollege.edu/president/policies/pdf/4000/4216.pdf

Any employee or student who is found to have engaged in such conduct will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, expulsion, or suspension. This policy will be applied without regard to the sex or gender of the employee involved.

Clery Act

The Department of Public Safety prepares a crime statistics report to comply with the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Crime Statistics Act. Each year, notification is made to all enrolled students providing the web site (https://www.southtexascollege.edu/stcdps/cleryact.html) to access this report. Faculty and staff receive similar notification. Hard copies of the report may also be obtained at the South Texas College Department of Public Safety, located at 2509 W. Pecan Blvd., McAllen, Texas.

Title IX

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 protects people from sex discrimination in educational programs and activities at institutions that receive federal financial assistance. The College is committed to providing an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sex or gender. Title IX is often perceived as a law that applies only to athletic programs; however, Title IX is much broader and protects all students, employees, and visitors to campus from sex- and gender-based discrimination and retaliation.

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. 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 http://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 deemed amended as of the time of the decision, ruling, legislative enactment or guidance.

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 Updated May 4, 2016 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
Preface

**South Texas College Core Values:**

*Student Success:* We promote student success and completion through the implementation of diverse strategies and initiatives.

*Opportunity:* We value providing access and opportunities to students to meet the needs of our communities.

*Excellence:* We value excellence in teaching, learning, and all support services.

*Innovation:* We encourage creativity and champion innovative approaches to teaching, learning, and services.

*Community:* We value engaging the community in students’ learning experiences and in the positive transformation of our region.

*Professionalism:* We demonstrate professionalism through collegiality, respect, and recognition for each other.

*Collaboration:* We value collaboration and communication among STC employees and STC constituents.

*Integrity:* We value integrity through honest and transparent communication and courageous dialogue.

**Office of Student Conduct Core Values of Student Conduct:**

*Integrity:* College students exemplify honesty, honor and a respect for the truth in all of their dealings.

*Community:* College students build and enhance their community.

*Social Justice:* College students are just and equitable in their treatment of all members of the community and act to discourage and/or intervene to prevent unjust and inequitable behaviors.

*Respect:* College students show positive regard for each other, for property and for the community.

*Responsibility:* College students are given and accept a high level of responsibility to self, to others and to the community.
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Definition of Terms

*Administrative Decision* - Outcome of an investigation by the Office of 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.

*Age of Consent* - the age of consent in the State of Texas is 17 years old. The age of consent is gender neutral and applies regardless of sexual orientation. Texas law imposes penalties for individuals who have sex with someone under age 17, but penalties may be relaxed when that person is not more than 3 years older than the minor.

*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.

*Coercion* – Coercion is unreasonable pressure for sexual activity. Coercive behavior differs from seductive behavior based on the type of pressure someone uses to get consent from another. When someone makes clear to you that they do not want sex, that they want to stop, or that they do not want to go past a certain point of sexual interaction, continued pressure beyond that point can be coercive.

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

*Consent* - Consent for sexual activity is clear, knowing and voluntary. Consent is active, not passive. Silence, in and of itself, cannot be interpreted as consent. Consent can be given by words or actions, as long as those words or actions create mutually understandable clear permission regarding willingness to engage in (and the conditions of) sexual activity.

- Consent to any one form of sexual activity cannot automatically imply consent to any other forms of sexual activity.
- Previous relationships or prior consent cannot imply consent to future sexual acts.
- In order to give effective consent, one must be of legal age.

**NOTE:** There is no requirement that a party resist the sexual advance or request of another, but resistance is a clear demonstration of non-consent. The absence of resistance does not demonstrate the absence of force or the presence of permission. Forced sexual activity is considered non-consensual unless force is explicitly consented to. Not all non-consensual sexual activity is by definition "forced," based on the definition below.
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.

Expulsion - The permanent removal of an individual from the college community, including access to staff, functions, events and services of the college, with no ability to return.

Expunging Conduct Records - Expunging is a process in which a determination has been made by the Dean Student of Student Support Services, 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.

- Example one: “Have sex with me or I'll make you.” Response: “Okay”.
- Example two: "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.
**Hostile Environment** – Conduct, on the basis of protected class status, that is so severe or pervasive (or persistent), and objectively offensive that it deprives a member of the College community of educational or employee access, benefits, or opportunities.

**Incapacitation** - Incapacitation is a state where a person cannot make rational, reasonable decisions because they lack the capacity to give knowing consent (e.g., to understand the "who, what, when, where, why or how" of their sexual interaction). Consumption of alcohol or drugs alone is insufficient to establish incapacitation. The question of incapacitation is determined on a case-by-case basis by assessing the decision-making capacity of the reporting party during the interaction. It will include an analysis of whether the responding party knew, or should have known, that the reporting party was incapacitated, or whether the responding party played a role in creating the circumstance of incapacity.

- Sexual activity with someone whom one knows to be or based on the circumstances should reasonably have known to be mentally or physically incapacitated by alcohol or other drug use constitutes a violation of this policy. Whether someone should have known is assessed by the reasonable person standard.
- This policy also covers a person whose incapacity results from mental disability, sleep, involuntary physical restraint, or from the taking of rape drugs if the responding party knew, or should have known, of the incapacitating condition or was the cause thereof.
- Possession, use and/or distribution of any of these substances, including but not limited to Rohypnol, Ketamine, GHB, Burundanga, etc., is prohibited, and administering one of these drugs to another student is a violation of this policy.

**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.

**Intimate Partner Violence (also called domestic and/or dating violence)** – Violence and/or emotional abuse between those who are in, or who have been in, an intimate relationship with each other.

**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.

**Conduct Hold** - Restricted ability to register for course at the college, without the permission of the Office of Student Conduct.

**Non-Consensual Sexual Contact** - is any intentional sexual touching, however slight, with any object, by one person upon another, that is without consent and/or by force.

    Sexual Touching- includes:
o Intentional contact with the breasts, groin, or genitals, mouth or touching another with any of these body parts, or making another touch you or themselves with or on any of these body parts; or

o Any other bodily contact in a sexual manner.

*Non-Consensual Sexual Intercourse* - is any sexual intercourse however slight, with any object, by one person upon another, that is without consent and/or by force.

Sexual Intercourse- includes:

  o Vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, tongue, finger or object, or oral copulation (mouth to genital contact) no matter how slight the penetration or contact.

*Office of Student Conduct* - The Office of 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 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 conduct process. The standard is met if the proposition is more likely to be true than not true, if there is greater than 50 percent chance that the proposition is true or "more likely than not."

*Probation* - The supervised monitoring of an individual, by the Office of 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.

Service Animals (As defined by the U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division) - Service animals are animals that are individually trained to perform tasks for people with disabilities such as guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling wheelchairs, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, or performing other special tasks. Service animals are working animals, not pets. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), businesses and organizations that serve the public must allow people with disabilities to bring their service animals into all areas of the facility where customers are normally allowed to go. This federal law applies to all businesses open to the public, including restaurants, hotels, taxis and shuttles, grocery and department stores, hospitals and medical offices, theaters, health clubs, parks, and zoos.

Sexual Exploitation - occurs when a student takes non-consensual or abusive sexual advantage of another for his/her own advantage or benefit, or to benefit or advantage anyone other than the one being exploited, and that behavior does not otherwise constitute one of other sexual misconduct offenses. Examples of sexual exploitation include, but are not limited to:

- invasion of sexual privacy;
- prostituting another student;
- non-consensual video or audio-recording of sexual activity;
- going beyond the boundaries of consent (such as letting your friends hide in the closet to watch you having consensual sex);
- engaging in voyeurism;
- knowingly transmitting an STI or HIV to another student;
- exposing one's genitals in non-consensual circumstances;
- inducing another to expose their genitals;
- sexually-based stalking and/or bullying may also be forms of sexual exploitation.

Sexual Harassment - is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, or that is sex- or gender-based.

Sexual Misconduct - Encompasses a range of behaviors that includes, but is not limited to, sexual harassment, intimate partner violence, stalking, non-consensual sex intercourse, non-consensual sexual contact, and sexual exploitation.

Student - 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.
Stalking – Menacing and/or harmful conduct, often repeated, that is directed at a specific person and would cause a reasonable person to fear for her, his, or others' safety, or to suffer substantial emotional distress.

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 of an individual from the 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.

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

Voyeurism - the practice of obtaining sexual gratification by looking at sexual objects or acts, especially secretly.

Weapon and Explosive – Any device or item, whether possessed legally or illegally, including but not limited to tasers, stunguns, slingshots, martial arts devices, switchblade knives and clubs, fireworks or explosive, other weapons, or dangerous chemicals. 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 Conduct Departmental Contact Information

Office Location

Pecan Campus
Student Service Building, Room 2.1106
Voice: 956-872-2180
Fax: 956-872-2500
Web: studentservices.southtexascollege.edu/studentlife/judicial

Dean

Mr. Pablo Hernandez Jr., LPC.S
Dean of Student Affairs, Deputy Title IX Coordinator

Director

Mr. Karey R Barnes, MSPA
Director of Student Rights and Responsibilities, Title IX Investigator

Coordinator

Mrs. Maria Alonso, MBA
Coordinator of Student Rights and Responsibilities, Title IX Investigator

Case Manager

Mr. Josue De La Cruz
Student Conduct Specialist

Ombuds Services and Assistance to the Parties

Mrs. Erica Hansen, MSHRD
Ombudsperson

Ms. Olga Moran, MBA
Ombudsperson
Section 1: Mission and Vision Statement

South Texas College Vision Statement:

South Texas College is a world-class institution advancing regional prosperity through education for a better quality of life in our community.

Office of Student Conduct Vision Statement:

The Office of 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 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

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 accord with the rules and regulations of the South Texas College community the College holds them accountable for their actions.

The purpose of the student conduct system is not to punish students for transgressions, but to use progressive discipline to help them understand and accept their obligations as citizens of an academic community. 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: http://admin.southtexascollege.edu/president/policies/pdf/3000/3650.pdf
Section 3: Jurisdiction

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 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 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 non-students, campers and high school bridge/extension/partner/dual-credit and continuing education programs by contractual agreements. Visitors to and guests of College may seek resolution of violations of the Code of Student Conduct involving members of 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 Conduct and/or to Campus Police and 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 Services; 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 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. 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 Student Judicial Process is the responsibility of the Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management and the Dean of Student Affairs. The Dean of Student Services and the Director of Student Conduct or designee of the Office of Student Conduct is responsible for the day-to-day operation and administration of the Student Judicial Process. The Director or designee will develop policies and procedures for the administration of the Student Judicial 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 student disciplinary records.

**Parental Notification**

South Texas College and the Office of 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 Conduct may also notify parents/guardians of non-dependent students who are under age 21 of alcohol and/or drug policy violations.

Where a student is not dependent, South Texas College and the Office of Student Conduct will contact parents/guardians to inform them of situations in which there is a significant and articulable health and/or safety risk or with the consent of the student. South Texas College and the Office of 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 a 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” or forcible or non-forcible sex offense, 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 only include the responding party’s name, any violation committed, and the sanctions assigned, when applicable. In cases of sexual misconduct and other offenses covered by Title IX, only, 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, any changes that may be made before it becomes final, and an appeal rights that are available.

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” or non-forcible sex offense, the College may also release the above information publicly and/or to any third party.

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, as members of the College community, are expected to complete and/or comply with conduct sanctions within the timeframe specified by the Office of 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. This determination will be made by either the Dean of Student Affairs or the Office of Student Conduct.

Student Conduct Records

The Office of 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.
Inspection, Review and Retention of Student Conduct Records

The Office of Student Conduct will maintain student conduct files, which contain all necessary and appropriate student conduct correspondence, hearing officer and student conduct board decisions, and other documentation pertinent to any proceedings involving a student. Student conduct files 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, expulsion, sexual misconduct and Title IX will be maintained indefinitely.
3. The College reserves the right to retain all disciplinary files for longer periods as may be deemed necessary.
4. 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, an academic college dean or adviser or other 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, South Texas 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 to review or receive copies of conduct records a applicable student 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 Conduct will also provide an explanation and interpretation of education records within a reasonable period of time, but not more than 45 calendar days after receipt of a request in writing.

South Texas College will hold an administrative hearing within a reasonable time after it has received a request from the parent or eligible student challenging 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.
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 at South Texas College. 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.

Allegations of sexual harassment or sexual misconduct may result in the development of a file in the reporting party’s name. This file will be retained for no less than seven years from the reporting party’s date of graduation or their date of last attendance at South Texas College. These files may be retained for as long as administratively valuable. Students who wish to have their file expunged should contact the Office of Student Conduct for assistance.

Student conduct records may be expunged for good cause upon receipt of a written request by the student. Sexual Misconduct, expulsions, and suspensions WILL NOT be eligible to expunge.

While student conduct records are destroyed 7 years after the final decision is delivered to a student, except as required by law, student conduct records may be expunged earlier by the Office of Student Conduct upon written request from the student by completing the Request to Expunge Student Conduct Records form.

Expunging of records is strictly a courtesy provided by the Office of Student Conduct and the Dean of Student Affairs and is not a requirement of law. Request to Expunge Student Conduct Records will only be considered for students who did not receive suspension or expulsion and whose violations were determined to have not threatened or endangered the health or safety of any person, and who have not been alleged to have committed an act of sexual misconduct.

Some factors that may be considered once a Request to Expunge Records is received 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 damage, injury, or harm resulting from it will also be considered.
4. The input of the reporting party.
5. All sanctions must have been completed on time.
6. At the time of consideration, the student must be in good standing with the College.
7. The student MUST have graduated from South Texas College, have transferred, or have not been in attendance for 1 academic year (2 long semesters).

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 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 the last semester they attended South Texas College, or immediately after they have been found **Not In Violation** of the Code of Student Conduct, except in cases governed by Title IX or in matters related to sexual misconduct.

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 Conduct. Requests should be submitted to the Office of 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 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 for 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 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 student has been denied, the Student Conduct Records shall be maintained by the Office of Student Conduct for 7 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

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 College 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 pages 91 and 93. Interim suspensions are imposed until a hearing on the matter can be held, typically within two weeks. Students objecting to interim restrictions 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 in the sole discretion of the Dean of Student Affairs or designee. The interim suspension may also be extended if a danger to the community is posed 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 responding party must comply with all campus investigative efforts that will not prejudice their defense in the criminal trial; and

- The responding party must comply with all interim actions and/or restrictions imposed during the leave of absence; and

- The responding party must agree that, in order to be reinstated as an active student, they must first be subject to, and fully cooperate with, the College’s Administrative Student Conduct Process and must comply with all sanctions that are imposed.
Section 5: Conduct Violations

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 and/or a reduced or failing grade. Students with an extensive conduct history may also face suspension or expulsion as the result of progressive discipline.

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 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. Forcible and Non-Forcible Sex Offenses. Intentionally or knowingly causing the penetration of the anus, sexual organ, or mouth of another person by the sexual organ of the actor by any means, without that person's consent.

**Sexual Misconduct.** Includes, but is not limited to, sexual harassment, non-consensual sexual contact, non-consensual sexual intercourse, and/or sexual exploitation (See Sexual Misconduct Policy for further information);

8. 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.

9. Sexual Misconduct. Sexual Misconduct encompasses a range of behavior including sexual harassment, non-consensual sexual contact, non-consensual sexual intercourse, intimate partner violence, stalking, and/or sexual exploitation. Sexual misconduct may be found in a single episode, as well as in persistent behavior.

10. Damage, Destruction, Destroying or Defacing Property. Intentional or reckless and unauthorized damage to or destruction of College property or the personal property of another.

11. 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.
12. Falsification of Documents and/or Records. Knowingly furnishing or possessing false, falsified or forged materials, documents, accounts, records, identification or financial instruments.

13. Election Tampering. Tampering with the election of any College-recognized student organization or club, including Student Government Elections (SGA).

14. Unauthorized Trademark Use. Unauthorized and/or misuse of College or organizational logos, names and/or images.

15. 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.

16. 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.

17. Use of Another’s Account or Password. Use of another’s College issued account (i.e. JagNet, Blackboard, BANNER, or ARGOS) or password.

18. 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.

19. 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.

20. 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.

21. 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.
22. 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.

23. 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.

24. 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.

25. 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.

26. 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.

27. 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.

28. 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, arrows, axes, machetes, nun chucks, throwing stars, or knives with a blade of longer than 5-1/2 inches or box cutters, 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. 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.

29. 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.

30. 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.

31. Stalking. Menacing and/or harmful conduct, often repeated, that is directed at a specific person and would cause a reasonable person to fear for her, his, or others’ safety, or to suffer substantial emotional distress.

32. Harassment. Any unwelcome conduct based on actual or perceived status including: 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. All harassment should be reported, and will be remedied. Harassment will be subject to discipline when it creates a hostile environment as defined above.

33. Discrimination. Any deprivation of access to, unreasonable limitation of, or denial of participation in the educational or employment programs of the College that is based upon an individual or group’s actual or perceived status, including sex, gender
identity, gender expression, race, color, age, creed, national or ethnic origin, physical or mental disability, veteran status, pregnancy status, religion, predisposing genetic characteristic.

34. Retaliation, Retaliatory Discrimination or Harassment. Any intentional, materially adverse action, absent legitimate nondiscriminatory purposes, taken because of a person’s participation in a civil rights grievance proceeding or any other protected activity under the South Texas College Code of Student Conduct or other College Policy.

35. 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.

36. Bystanding. 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.

37. Bullying and Cyberbullying. Bullying and cyberbullying are 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.

38. 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.

39. 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.

40. 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

41. 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.

42. 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.

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.

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.

43. 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

Only the Dean of Students or the Office of Student Conduct may charge and/or find a student in violation of the Code of Student Conduct. In all instances where a student is believed to have violated any of the items listed within this code under Section 5: Conduct Violations, the student MUST be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. The only exception to this are items listed under Conduct Violation 42 - Academic Dishonesty. In these cases faculty maintain (initial, original) jurisdiction over these matters and may administer discipline in accordance with class syllabi and program/department standards. Faculty are required to notify the student of their 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 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. Within that action, there are several roles. 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 regarding the allegations.

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 a Office of Student Conduct, to oversee and manage the student conduct process. The Dean of Student Affairs and Office of 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 Conduct, will assume responsibility for the investigation of an allegation of misconduct to determine if the allegation has merit.

Interim Suspension and Interim Action

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

a. a student represents a threat of serious harm to others,
b. is facing allegations of serious criminal activity,
c. to preserve the integrity of an investigation,
d. 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 institution or restrictions on participation in the community 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 Students or designee 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 Student Conduct Hearing.

During an Interim Suspension, a student may be denied access to the College campus, facilities, and sponsored events. As determined appropriate by the Office of Student Conduct, 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 Office of Student Conduct 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 activates, 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 not later than 48 hours after the Office of Student Conduct 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 Student Conduct Hearing has concluded. The Office of Student Conduct or its designee 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 Conduct to discuss the disciplinary process.

The student may request an appointment with the Office of Student 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 Hearing has concluded, where appropriate.
- Administrative 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 Student Conduct Hearing, where appropriate.

**Interim Suspension Steps**

1. The Office of Student Conduct 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 Office of Student Conduct impose Interim Suspension or Interim Action.

**Notice of Alleged Violation**

Any member of the South Texas College community, visitor or guest may allege a policy violation(s) by any student for misconduct under the Code of Student Conduct by following the steps listed on this web page: [http://life.southtexascollege.edu/student-conduct/](http://life.southtexascollege.edu/student-conduct/).

Notice may also be given to the Office of Student Conduct (or designee) and/or to the Title IX Coordinator (or designee), when appropriate. Additionally, administrators may act 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 offending event occurs. 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.

The Office of Student Conduct (or designee) will assume responsibility for the investigation of the alleged violation as described in the sub-section below.

**Accommodations in the Student Conduct Process**

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

The standard of proof for all hearings is a preponderance of evidence, as defined above. Formal “Rules of Evidence” do not apply to Administrative Student Conduct Process. A hearing officer or panel will weigh all information, or "the Totality of the Evidence" presented when making a determination 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. 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 review all 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 polygraphic 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 of Student Conduct.

Preliminary Inquiry and/or Educational Conference

The College conducts a preliminary inquiry into the nature of the incident, allegation or notice, the evidence available, and the parties involved. The preliminary inquiry 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 on pg. 98).
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

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.

Informal/Administrative Resolution

If a decision on the allegation is made and the finding is that the responding party is not responsible for violating the Code of Student Conduct, the Administrative Student Conduct Process will end. The reporting party may request that the Dean of Students, Office of Student Conduct and/or the Title IX Coordinator reopen the investigation and/or grant a hearing. This decision will be in the discretion of the Dean of Students, Office of Student Conduct and/or the Title IX Coordinator and will only be granted for extraordinary cause. If the College’s finding is that the responding party is in violation, and the responding party accepts this finding within three days, the College considers this an “uncontested allegation.” The administrator conducting the initial educational conference will then determine the sanction(s) for the misconduct, which the responding party may accept or reject. If accepted, the process ends.

If student accepts the findings, but rejects the sanction, the College will conduct a sanction-only hearing, conducted by the Administrative Student Conduct Sanctions Review Panel which will recommend a set of sanctions to the Office of Student Conduct. The sanctions will then be reviewed and finalized by the Office of Student Conduct and is subject to appeal (see Appeal/Sanctions Review Process on pg. 111 and 112) by any party to the misconduct. Once the appeal is decided, the process ends.

If the administrator conducting the educational conference determines that it is more likely than not that the alleged student is in violation, and the alleged student rejects that finding in whole or in part, then it is considered a contested allegation and the process moves to the next phase of the Administrative Student Conduct Process.

Conflict Resolution Options

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

**Advisors**

All parties are entitled to an advisor of their choosing to guide and accompany them throughout the College’s Student Conduct Process. 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 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. However, the College maintains a listing of local attorneys who may offer their services pro bono. Additionally, responding parties may wish to contact organizations such as:

- FACE ([http://www.facecampusequality.org](http://www.facecampusequality.org))
- SAVE ([http://www.saveservices.org](http://www.saveservices.org))

Reporting parties may wish to contact organizations such as:

- The Victim Rights Law Center ([http://www.victimrights.org](http://www.victimrights.org)), or the
- SurvJustice ([www.survjustice.org](http://www.survjustice.org))

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 or a sidebar 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 will typically be given an opportunity to meet in advance of any interview or hearing with the administrative officials conducting that interview or meeting. This pre-meeting 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. 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.
The College expects that the parties will wish to share documentation related to the allegations with their advisors. The College provides a consent form that authorizes such sharing. The parties must complete this form before the College is able to share records with an advisor. Advisors are expected to maintain the privacy of the records shared with them. These records may not be shared with 3rd parties, disclosed publicly, or used for purposes not explicitly authorized by the College. The College may seek to restrict the role of any advisor who does not respect the sensitive nature of the process or who fails to abide by the College’s privacy expectations.

The College expects an advisor to adjust their schedule to allow them to attend College meetings when scheduled. The College does not typically change scheduled meetings to accommodate an advisor's inability to attend. The College will, however make provisions to allow an advisor who cannot attend in person to attend a meeting by telephone, video and/or virtual meeting technologies as may be convenient and available.

A party may elect to change advisors during the process, and is not locked into using the same advisor throughout.

**Notice of Hearing**

a. Once a determination is made that reasonable cause exists for the Office of Student Conduct (or designee) 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:

1. in person by the Office of Student Conduct (or designee);
2. mailed to the local or permanent address of the student as indicated in official College records;
3. or emailed to the student’s South Texas College-issued email account. Once mailed, emailed and/or received in -person, such notice will be presumptively delivered.

b. The letter of notice will:

1. Include the alleged violation and notification of where to locate the Code of Student Conduct and procedures for resolution; and
2. Direct the parties to contact the Office of Student Conduct (or designee) 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.
3. Summarize all potential sanctions that could result from a finding of violation.

c. A meeting with the Office of Student Conduct (or designee) 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 Conduct (or designee), whether they admit to or deny the allegations of the complaint.

**Administrative Student Conduct Process Time Frames**

**Judicial 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 Conduct will make a preliminary determination typically within 7 calendar days of whether there is enough information to notify the parties that a violation(s) of the Code of Student Conduct has potentially 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 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 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 Conduct, or the Sanction Review Panel, unless that period is waived by the party.

**Investigations**

The Office of Student Conduct, may conduct an investigation to determine if the allegations have merit and what the next steps of the Office of 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, the parties will be notified of the delay in writing.

**Investigation Procedures**

The Office of 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 preliminary inquiry 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 preliminary inquiry and authorized by the Coordinator or Director or 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 an exigency 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. Draft a comprehensive report of the investigation;

13. Share the report with the parties, typically giving them 48 hours to respond in person or in writing to the information in the report; The investigator may include their own responses in the report, and/or exchange the responses between the parties and allow them to respond, incorporating all responses into the report.

14. Once finalized, present the investigation report and recommended findings 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;

15. If the recommended findings are accepted, they become final. If the findings are fully or partially rejected, the procedures for a hearing, below, will commence.

16. A reporting party may make a request that the Director of Student Conduct or Title IX Coordinator 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 determination of the investigation that there is no violation is final.

17. Share the recommended findings and update the reporting party on the status of the investigation and the outcome.

18. 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.

19. If the recommended sanctions are rejected fully or in part, a sanction hearing will be held in accordance with the procedures outlined, below.
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 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 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 on page 94 of 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 Conduct.
Section 7: Administrative Resolution

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 Conduct or the Title IX Coordinator:

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 Conduct will schedule a meeting with the student.
2. The Office of 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 Conduct. If the student admits the violation(s), the following procedures or conflict resolution will apply. If the student denies the alleged violation(s), the Office of Student Conduct will refer the matter for conflict resolution, investigation and/or a hearing.
   a. The responding party will meet at a time and location designated by the Office of 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 hear what witnesses have stated, if they have been interviewed already. 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 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 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 the 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 a Student Conduct Hearing. At the discretion of the Dean of Student Affairs and/or Office of 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 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 a 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 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.

At least 3 days before any scheduled formal hearing, where an investigation has not already been done, the following will occur:

a. The responding party will deliver to the Office of Student Conduct a written response to the allegations;

b. The parties will deliver to the Office of Student Conduct a written list of all witnesses for the College to call at the hearing;

c. The parties will deliver to the Office of Student Conduct physical evidence the parties intend to use or need to have present at the hearing and will indicate who has possession or custody of such evidence, if known, so that the Office of Student Conduct can arrange for its presence;

d. The parties will notify the Office of Student Conduct of the name of any advisor who may be accompanying the parties at the hearing.

The Office of Student Conduct will ensure that the hearing information and any other available written documentation, include any investigation report, 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 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.
Student Conduct Hearing Procedures

The Dean of Student Affairs or the Office of 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 Conduct no less than 3 days prior to the scheduled hearing to arrange for another date, time and location. Except in cases of grave 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 accusations 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 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 Conduct.

3. In hearings involving more than one responding party, the standard procedure will be to hear the allegations jointly; however, Dean of Student Affairs and/or the Office of Student Conduct may permit the hearing pertinent to each responding party to be conducted separately. In joint hearings, separate determinations of responsibility will be made for each responding party.

4. The parties have the right to an advisor of their own choosing, pursuant to the policy on advisors on page 95.

5. The parties, the panel, and the Dean of Student Affairs, the Office of 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 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 Conduct.

7. Formal rules of evidence are not observed. The panel Chair, Dean of Student Affairs, or the Office of Student Conduct may limit the number of character witnesses presented or may accept written affidavits of character instead.
8. All procedural questions are subject to the final decision of the Dean of Student Affairs, Office of Student Conduct, or panel Chair.

9. After the conclusion of the hearing, the Dean of Student Affairs, Office of 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 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 Conduct, or panel will determine an appropriate sanction(s). The Office of 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 Conduct, or panel Chairperson will prepare a written report and deliver it to the Office of 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 report should conclude with any recommended sanctions. This report should not normally exceed 2 pages in length and must be submitted to the Office of Student Conduct within 2 days of the end of deliberations.

10. The Dean of Student Affairs and/or Office of Student Conduct will consider the recommendations of the panel, may make appropriate modifications to the panel’s report, 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 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 sexual misconduct and other 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.

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 chosen from the available pool, and is usually comprised of one faculty member, and one staff member, one administrator and a non-voting chair. Availability may determine a different composition for the Panel, and in allegations involving discrimination, sexual misconduct, or other sensitive issues, the Dean of Student Affairs and the Office of Student Conduct will usually use three administrative/staff members 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 section(s) of the Code of Student Conduct allegedly violated and the date, time, and place of any conference, meeting, interview, or hearing on the alleged violation.

2. The right to challenge the objectivity or fairness, or to raise a conflict-of-interest regarding any of the persons involved in addressing the matter through the Student Conduct Process. The decision to uphold any challenge rests with the chair of the proceeding, the Title IX Coordinator, or the Director of Student Conduct.

3. The right to consult with and be accompanied by an advisor of choice through all phases of the Student Conduct Process. Rules regarding the conduct of advisors can be found below on page 95.

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 for good cause shown. In most cases, a postponement will only be granted due to an academically related commitment. The decision to postpone a hearing rests with the director or designee of Student Judicial Affairs.

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, a change in living assignment, academic arrangement, or other steps necessary to prevent unnecessary or unwanted contact.

17. The right to not have past behavioral history discussed 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:
   a. issues related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, and
   b. 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, living, 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

South Texas College and the Office of 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 Office of Student Conduct 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.

**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 Conduct that is related to ethics or topics related to the sanction.
- Submission of proof of completion of chemical dependency or other counseling services.

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• 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 Care 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 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 Conduct will have final authority to approve all those serving on the panel. The non-voting advisor to the panel is the Office of 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 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 Conduct implementation of sanctions may be delayed pending review.

**Appeals (Final Review)**

Any party may appeal the determination made by the Office of 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 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.

**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 Conduct 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 Conduct and/or Title IX Coordinator 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, Director of Student Conduct or Title IX Coordinator 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 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 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 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 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.

Special Hearing Provisions for Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination and Other Allegations of a Sensitive Nature

All hearings under this sub-section will be conducted by a three member administrative panel drawn from the panel pool. For sexual misconduct, discrimination and other allegations of a sensitive nature, alternative testimony options may be provided, such as placing a privacy screen in the hearing room or allowing the parties to testify from another room via audio or audio/video technology. While these options are intended to help make the parties more comfortable, they are not intended to work to the disadvantage to any party.

Past Sexual History or Character
The past sexual history or sexual 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 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 Conduct may supply previous information to the investigators, the hearing panel, or may consider it themselves if they are hearing the allegations, 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 Conduct.
Section 8: Student Discipline in the Classroom

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 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 may move to sanction the student, which may include temporarily or permanently removing that student from class according to procedures outlined in this 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. Examples of inappropriate behavior include speaking on a cellular telephone, using a camera during class, persistently speaking without being called upon, refusing to be seated, and disrupting the class by leaving and entering the room without authorization.

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 dean 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 Student Affairs/Office of Student Conduct by submitting an Eye-Witness-Report.

Students who are dismissed temporarily MUST leave the class while instruction is ongoing; the student MUST comply immediately. After the student has been removed, the student and the instructor are required to meet face to face if it is safe to do so. 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 Program Chair.

**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 and provide notice that future violation 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 grade of "W" or "F" after the first occurrence. All removals must be documented and reported to the appropriate Program Chair, Dean and an Eye-Witness-Report must be submitted to the Dean of Student Affairs/Office of 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. It is recommended that the faculty member notify Campus Police immediately.

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 Program Chair in writing.

In instances where a student is alleged to have committed a violation of academic dishonesty, the instructor of record will 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 the right to request mediation services from the Office of Ombuds Services to help facilitate the discussion. The Office of Ombuds Services will serve in the capacity of third party neutral and will 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 program chair. This appeal must be made in writing and received by the program chair within 5 days of the student receiving notice of the course instructor's decision. Upon receipt of the appeal, the program chair will review the appeal, hear witnesses if he/she so chooses, and render a decision. The program chair will notify both the student and the instructor of record in writing once a decision has been made. The decision of the program chair concludes the approved South Texas College appeal process for instances of student discipline in the classroom.

An appeal to the Program Chair may result in one of the following:

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

If the student fails to submit their appeal in writing to the program chair within 5 working days of the student being notified of the instructor's decision, the instructor may then sanction the student.
Chapter III
South Texas College
Student Related Policies
### STUDENT RELATED POLICIES
#### INSTRUCTION AND STUDENT SERVICES
(3000-3840)

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