

CEHD Policy and Practices for Student Concerns, Complaints, and Grievances

In the course of their professional training, graduate students may experience conflicts with other students, staff, faculty, or site-supervisors. Some may be misunderstandings that can be resolved through discussion. On occasion an unresolved conflict may constitute a grievance or complaint. The TAMU Student Rules Part III delineate student grievance procedures (<https://student-rules.tamu.edu/studentgrievanceprocedures/>) and specific instances in which a grievance can be filed. Consistent with university procedures, the School of Education and Human Development follows a process applicable to student-staff, student-faculty, and student-site supervisor conflicts.

Guiding Terms

Bullying Behaviors include (but are not limited to):

- Intimidating, degrading, humiliating others, and threatening university and school climate and diversity objectives.
- Outcomes of bullying: At the post-secondary level, bullying results in the loss of trained and talented employees, reduces morality and productivity, and can have negative physical impacts.
- Reinforcers of bullying:
 - Limiting opportunities for open and honest dialogue
 - Lack of reporting mechanisms for inappropriate behaviors

Civility is claiming and caring for one's identity, needs and beliefs without degrading someone else's in the process. (Spath, T., & Dahnke, C., The Institute for Civility in Government).

Conflict is a struggle or difference between opposing ideas, needs, beliefs, values or goals (The Center for Change and Conflict Resolution).

Grievances are defined as a problem, concern or complaint about work, a person with whom you have contact at work, or the work environment.

Departmental Ombuds Representatives for Graduate Students

Educational Administration and Human Resource Development – [Krista Bailey](#)

Educational Psychology – [Charles Ridley](#)

Kinesiology and Sports Management – [Christopher Woodman](#)

Teaching, Learning, and Culture – ombuds@tamu.edu

Stages in the Grievance and Conflict Resolution Process

Refer to the graphics on the proceeding pages for visual aides to supplement these stages.

Stage	Procedure
Stage 1 First step in grievances and/or interpersonal conflict	<p>As an initial step in the resolution process, students should meet with the individual staff member, faculty member, or site supervisor of concern within their program/department. If efforts to communicate directly with the individual(s) do not resolve the issue, or the student is uncomfortable approaching the individual(s), students also have access to other intermediate options.</p> <p>The grievance or conflict should be resolved as soon as possible. Individuals are encouraged to use conflict management resources found on the MySEHD Page. You may also contact your departmental Ombuds to assist.</p>
Stage 2 Unresolved Stage 1 grievance or conflict which may require assistance in resolution	<p>When conflict/situations remain unresolved, students may seek guidance from their advisor/chair, or the faculty member who coordinates the academic program. Depending on the situation and context, students may opt to approach their advisor/chair or the coordinator of their academic program. Student(s) may share their concerns with any of these intermediate resources to seek guidance for resolving a conflict and clearing up any misunderstandings. If after accessing intermediate options the situation remains unresolved, the student's next option for resource is to meet with the department head.</p> <p>Parties may also consider voluntary mediation. Mediation is a voluntary process that begins when the parties involved in the conflict agree to meet together with a neutral person identified by SEHD as a mediator. The objective of mediation is to work out a mutual, written agreement between the parties regarding how to move forward in the future.</p> <p>A university resource for student-involved mediation is available.</p> <p>Conflicts involving a Supervisor: In the event the grievance or conflict involves an individual's direct supervisor or the individual does not feel comfortable raising the conflict directly to their supervisor, the student shall inform the person to whom their director supervisor reports.</p>
Stage 3 Department head-level involvement	<p>A student can request to meet with the respective department head to discuss previous attempts to resolve conflict and to seek guidance or resolution. The student may also contact their department Ombuds. Each department has an appointed Graduate Ombudsperson. At this point, the student will decide whether to present the conflict/issue as a formal complaint/grievance to the School's Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. If a complaint or issue involves an individual outside of the department or university, the student will work with the department head to determine an appropriate course of action and consult with the School and outside entities as appropriate.</p>

<p>Stage 4 School-level involvement</p>	<p>Once the department head renders or advises the student on a course of action, if the student is unsatisfied, the student may elect to advance the grievance to the School level for further consideration. In most cases, the School's Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will communicate with the student and recommend any further action.</p> <p>It is important to note that whenever there is a discussion regarding a particular faculty-student, supervisor-student, or staff-student concern, maintaining anonymity of the student may not be possible; however, confidentiality of information will always be maintained to the extent possible as allowed by law. Similarly, all activities will be consistent with the requirements and limits set under FERPA with regard to student records.</p> <p>At the School-level, there is a Professional Concerns Ad-hoc Committee made of Graduate Instruction Council (GIC) members which may be called by the School's Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs to review the grievance or graduate student concern and offer a recommendation.</p> <p>Students may also contact the Ombuds for the Graduate and Professional School (ombuds@tamu.edu) or 979-845-3631. https://grad.tamu.edu/academics/academic-success-resources/conflict-resolution/ombuds-services</p> <p>Formal Grievance Submission Processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title IX: Sexual Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault and Violence • Graduate and Professional School Grievances and Appeals • Texas A&M Student Grievance Procedures
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Grievance Procedures

Stage 1: Grievance, issue, or conflict arises (student-faculty, student-staff, student-supervisor) and is handled informally.

Stage 2: Unresolved Stage 1 grievance or conflict will involve advisor/chair, division chair or academic program coordinator.

Stage 3: Unresolved Stage 2 grievance or conflict will involve the department head, departmental or school level Ombuds.

Stage 4: Unresolved Stage 3 grievance or conflict will involve Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and CEHD Graduate Instruction Council (GIC). Student may always seek assistance from the Graduate and Professional School (GPS) Ombuds.

Graduate Student Grievance and Conflict Process

