



Approved April 9, 2012

Next Scheduled Review May 1, 2013

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## **Procedure Statement**

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

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## **Reason for Procedure**

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This procedure specifically addresses any general student complaints that do not fall into the categories specified below and that are not articulated elsewhere in Texas A&M University System Policies and Regulations, A&M-Texarkana Rules and Internal Procedures and the A&M-Texarkana catalog.

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

- Complaints regarding academic or disciplinary matters
- Complaints regarding discrimination
- Complaints regarding sexual harassment
- Complaints regarding grades or grading
- Complaints regarding Distance Education Student Grievance for Financial Aid

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## **Procedures and Responsibilities**

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A&M-Texarkana shall establish procedures for handling complaints and publicizing the procedures to the community. These procedures must contain:

- **Informal Process.** A process that provides for informal resolution of complaints/grievances through consultation with the faculty, staff person or administrator directly responsible for the initial action or decision at the college/office level before pursuing a more formal process.
- **Formal Process.** A formal process that designates a point of contact for filing a written complaint, provides for review of the complaint, and issues a written response to the complainant within a specified timeframe.
- **Appeal Process.** A process that includes an opportunity for an individual to appeal a decision in writing within a specified timeframe with designation of the individual(s) who make(s) the

final decision. Generally, general complaint appeals conclude with the Dean of the college or the Director of an office or department. Appeals of complaints at the University level will conclude with the Vice President responsible for the college or office/department involved, or the President if the office/department in question directly reports to the chief executive officer.

## **1. INFORMAL PROCESS**

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

- 1.1 Although individuals are encouraged to resolve a complaint informally first, he or she may file a written complaint without first seeking informal resolution.
- 1.2 Except for the timelines provided in Section III of this procedure, a chief executive officer (CEO) is authorized to modify this process when required by the organizational structure or geographical dispersion of employees or departments. Modified procedures must conform in principle with the procedures outlined in this document.

## **2. FORMAL PROCESS**

Complaints must be submitted in accordance with the following.

- 2.1 An individual “files” a complaint by submitting a written letter regarding the complaint to the department director where the complaint originated within seven (7) business days of the action that caused the complaint. General complaints that are not associated with an individual office or department may be delivered to the office of any Executive Officer.
  - 2.1.1 A complaint delivered later than seven (7) business days of the action that caused the complaint will be deemed untimely filed and will be dismissed.
  - 2.1.2 The Department Director or an Executive Officer (designated administrator) will be available to answer questions regarding the submission of the complaint and provide assistance as needed.
- 2.2 The Department Director or the Executive Officer will coordinate the investigation of the complaint. The investigating officer will retain the original complaint submission.
  - 2.2.1 An Executive Officer may designate one or more alternate administrators to review complaints if it is determined that a conflict of interest is represented after a review of the written submission.
- 2.3 The designated administrator will review the complaint and provide a written decision to the complainant and the Executive Officer overseeing the office or department named in the complaint within fifteen (15) business days of the administrator’s receipt of the complaint.
  - 2.3.1 If additional time is needed for investigation and consideration of the complaint, the administrator will notify the complainant and their

Executive Officer of the need for an extension and the date by which a decision will be made. Absent unusual circumstances, the extension should not be for more than fifteen (15) additional business days. The designated administrator will provide a written decision to the complainant and the Executive Officer overseeing the office or department named in the complaint within five (5) business days of receiving the decision.

### **3. APPEAL**

3.1 An individual may appeal the decision of the designated administrator within five (5) business days after receipt of the written decision. Appeals must be in writing and submitted to the office of the Executive Officer who oversees the department, office or College named in the complaint. The Executive Officer will review the original complaint and the written appeal, and may conduct an additional investigation. The Executive Officer will provide a written decision to the complainant within fifteen (15) business days of the officer's receipt of the appeal. The decision of the Executive Officer is final.

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

4.1 A&M-Texarkana shall post established complaint procedures on the Human Resources website and other WebPages as determined by the President. These procedures shall be reviewed annually.

### **5. DOCUMENTATION**

5.1 Each Executive Officer is responsible for collecting and recording written complaints at A&M-Texarkana that occur within their units, departments and colleges. Each officer shall create and maintain a complaint log that provides historical information concerning written complaints, pertinent dates and final resolution and establish a point of contact for information pertaining to complaints in a particular office.

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

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Supplements System Regulation 13.02

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## **Contact Offices**

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### EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

President

Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs

Vice President for Student Engagement & Success

Vice President for Administration and Finance