

Federal Requirement 4.5 (Student complaints): The institution has adequate procedures for addressing written student complaints and is responsible for demonstrating that it follows those procedures when resolving student complaints.

“Although the institution provided specific appeal procedures for issues such as parking fines, loss of the Tennessee Lottery Scholarship, release from a housing contract, and a specific grade appeal, the institution did not provide a procedure for addressing general student complaints. The institution should demonstrate that it has adequate procedures for addressing written student complaints of a more general nature.” (Wheelan, Notification Letter, July 11, 2012).

Narrative:

To improve the University’s procedure for addressing student complaints that may not be covered by policies and procedures for certain recurring student concerns, the Dean of Students, in consultation with the Vice President for Student Affairs, developed a broader student complaint policy and a form that may be filled out and submitted online.

The intent of this new policy/procedure is to guide students toward procedures that may address their specific needs. The new policy and procedures were presented for review to TTU’s Administrative Council, which assists the President of the University on matters related to the administration of the University, and to the University’s legal counsel. After some modifications suggested by Administrative Council members and by legal counsel, the new student complaint policy/procedure was amended and is now online at <http://www.tntech.edu/deanofstudents/stucomplaint/>.

On this site, students will find links to information and forms for various concerns and issues, as well as an online form (Appendix A) that may be used to submit a complaint of any kind. This new online policy and procedure should offer students a more effective way for their concerns to be heard and addressed.

The Dean of Students has already received several completed forms through this new reporting method; three examples are included with this report to demonstrate its implementation (Appendix B). The Dean of Students personally met with each student and began the process of helping the students with their complaints relative to (1) poor teaching by a classroom professor, (2) a parking ticket, and (3) sexual harassment.

Policy

The TTU Student Complaint Policy is based on the principle of respect for all members of the University community and the goal of a successful educational experience for all students. It is intended to make sure that the concerns and complaints of undergraduate or graduate students are addressed fairly and resolved promptly. Complaints covered under this policy may stem from behavior or conditions that the student feels are unjust or inequitable or create hardship and may not be governed by specific TTU complaint, grievance, or appeal procedures. To make a complaint not specifically covered by a procedure already in place, please complete and submit [this online form](#).

Please note that if you file a complaint that is covered by another process, your complaint will be governed by that process and will be referred to the appropriate school official for disposition. If a matter has been referred to another process for resolution, you may not present the same complaint through this process.

Other appeal procedures or processes for resolving concerns or making complaints include, but are not limited to

[Apply for Fresh Start](#)

[Appeal a course grade](#)

[Appeal campus traffic ticket](#)

[Appeal a finding of student misconduct \(Student Disciplinary Process\)](#)

[File a complaint related to discrimination or harassment based on a protected category*](#)

[File a grievance related to the Americans with Disabilities Act](#)

[Report a criminal incident](#)

[Request refund of course fees and tuition](#)

[Request refund of General Access Fees](#)

[Request reinstatement of the Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship \(after interruption\)](#)

[Request reinstatement of the Tennessee Lottery Scholarship \(for GPA\)](#)

[Request release from or cancellation of campus housing agreement](#)

You may also find many of these policies in the Student Handbook, the Undergraduate Catalog, or the Graduate Catalog. The Dean of Students office (www.tntech.edu/deanofstudents) can offer guidance on which procedure may apply to a particular complaint.

* A protected category includes: race, color, religion, creed, ethnic or national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity / expression, disability, age (as applicable), status as a covered veteran, genetic information, and any other category protected by federal or state civil rights law related to the institution.

Procedure

Whenever possible, students are encouraged to seek an informal resolution of the matter directly with the faculty or other individual(s) involved. However, if an informal approach is neither successful nor advisable, the student may file a formal written complaint.

1. A student complaint form should be submitted [online](#) to the Dean of Students office. It should contain (at a minimum) the student's name and official TTU email address, the date of the alleged conflict or action, a summary of the complaint, a list of other persons who may provide information, and any appropriate documentation. The student must also include the resolution or outcome he or she is seeking. The complaint must be submitted within ten (10) business days of the event giving rise to the complaint.
2. Within five (5) business days of receiving the complaint, absent good cause, a conference will take place with the student and a staff member from the Dean of Students office.
3. The student must submit all relevant documentation within ten (10) business days of the date the student files the complaint.
4. The staff member will notify appropriate persons and request any information or further documentation needed to resolve the complaint.
5. The staff member may attempt to resolve the complaint by encouraging discussion between the student(s) and other students or third party members of the University community or by taking the appropriate action to resolve the complaint.
6. A review of the complaint with the supervisor(s) or others in the line of supervision of third parties, if applicable, may be used when deemed appropriate and beneficial to the process.
7. Absent good cause, the staff member assigned to the complaint will file a final written resolution or a finding of "unresolved" in the Dean of Students office within fifteen (15) business days of the date the student submits the relevant documentation. If there are circumstances requiring an extension of this deadline, the staff member assigned to the complaint will notify the parties involved.
8. If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint, the student may appeal the outcome within five (5) business days of receiving the final written

resolution or finding of “unresolved.” The student must file with the Dean of Students a [written request](#) for an appeal committee review.

9. The appeal committee will consist of five representatives who will serve a one-year term. These representatives will consist of two student members appointed by the SGA president, one member appointed by the Vice President for Academic Affairs, one member appointed by the Vice President for Student Affairs, and one member appointed by the Vice President for Planning and Finance. The committee’s decision will be final.

Documentation

A record of all complaints and their resolution will be documented and the records will be kept in the Dean of Students office, Roaden University Center, Room 339.

Complaints Related to Accreditation, State Law, Fraud, Waste, and Abuse

Students or prospective students who wish to file a complaint related to accreditation or regarding violations of state law not resolved at the institution may submit a Student Complaint Form to the Tennessee Board of Regents at 1415 Murfreesboro Road, Suite 340, Nashville Tennessee 37217 or by going online and filing the form electronically at <http://www.tbr.edu/contact/default.aspx?id=2936>. Under Tennessee’s open records law, all or parts of complaints will generally be available for review upon request from a member of the public.

Complaints regarding accreditation can also be made by contacting the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097, telephone: 404-679-4500 (www.sacscoc.org).

Complaints of fraud, waste, or abuse may be made by email at reportfraud@tbr.edu or by calling the Tennessee Comptroller’s Hotline for Fraud, Waste, and Abuse at 1-800-232-5454.

Appendix A – TTU Student Complaint Form

PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS CURRENT STUDENTS FACULTY & STAFF PARENTS ALUMNI WORKING AT TTU

TTU HOME DEAN OF STUDENTS TTU STUDENT COMPLAINT FORM

in depth

Home
Supported Organizations
Greek Life
Staff
Discipline
Harassment
Student Affairs
Student Orientation
Student Handbook
e-CHUG
Student Complaint Policy
* Student Complaint Form
* Student Complaint Appeal Form
Contact Us

TTU STUDENT COMPLAINT FORM

STUDENT'S DESCRIPTION OF PROBLEM

To be used for issues not covered by other policies.
Must be submitted within 10 business days of the event giving rise to the complaint.
Instructions: Please fill out all of the required fields in the form and press the Send button. A confirmation e-mail will be sent to the e-mail specified.
* Required

Your Name (Last, First, Middle) (*)

Tech ID#

Address: (Street/City/State/Zip)

TTU Student Email (*)

Home Phone: (xxx)xxx-xxxx

Cell Phone: (xxx)xxx-xxxx

Date of Alleged Conflict or Action (*)

Name of Department or office in which problem occurred:

List other person(s) who may provide information: (*)

Summary of your complaint: (250 char max) (*)

Describe efforts you have made to resolve this matter: (250 char max)

What do you think would be a fair resolution to this issue? (250 char max)

Please retain a copy of this complaint for your records.
Please be prepared to provide additional documentation, if applicable.

PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS CURRENT STUDENTS FACULTY & STAFF PARENTS ALUMNI WORKING AT TTU

TTU HOME FORMS STUDENT COMPLAINT APPEAL FORM

in depth

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Student Complaint Policy
* Student Complaint Form
* Student Complaint Appeal Form
Contact Us

STUDENT COMPLAINT APPEAL

Instructions: You must submit this appeal form within **five business days** from the date of the decision of your complaint.

* Required

Your Name (Last, First Middle) (*)

TTU Student Email (*)

Home Phone: (xxx)xxx-xxxx

Cell Phone: (xxx)xxx-xxxx

Please describe your appeal in detail and restate the desired outcome: (250 char max) (*)

Appendix B – Examples of Student Complaints**Ed Boucher**

From: Tennessee Tech University <edboucher@tntech.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, February 05, 2013 12:00 PM
To: Ed Boucher
Subject: New submission from "Student Complaint Form"

You have a new submission.

Name: [REDACTED]

Tech ID: [REDACTED]

Address: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Home: [REDACTED]

Work: [REDACTED]

Submission Date: 1-5-12

Date of Occurance: 1-5-12

Name of Dept.: [REDACTED]

Complaint: Last night I parked in the S.Crawford U-turn, it was late and there were not parking spots in the nursing or crawford parking lot. I proceeded to park where it seemed appropriate, not in a fire lane. I looked out this morning before my 8 A.M. class to move it to the nursing parking lot and I had received a ticket for parking in a no parking zone. After I was done with classes I went to the UPD and told the woman at the desk about what happened. She had a condescending attitude towards me before I was able to explain the full conversation. I told her there were not at "NO PARKING" signs. With a spiteful attitude she said to me, "Well if you have any COMMON SENSE at all you should know to park in between two white lines". I am formally aware of what exactly parallel parking is. I assume after she saw the look of my downcast face she asked me if I wanted to repeal. I was so incredible embarrassed, I just walked out. I have a learning disability so I proceeded to call Vocation Rehabilitation Services from my high school because I am suppose to aware them first of any problems I have. They told me to take a picture of where I was parked and go talk to the Disability Services Office here at tech, they referred me to Student Affairs whom referred me to this Student Complaint Form.

Efforts: I have filled out a Student Complaint Form.

Resolution: I highly suggest that the UPD put a, "NO PARKING" sign where it be needed in the Crawford U-turn. Students especially park there during the day when they do not feel like parking in the stadium parking lot when they have a class in South Hall or the Nursing Building. I have never heard of another student to receive the same ticket I did. And to the worker whom works at the UPD, she should have a better attitude and be careful to not offend students. I would like a hand written apology from this worker. I am not the type of student

whom deliberately goes out of her way to break the rules. I am offended that I am proven guilty without a chance to speak for myself. I understand parking in a fire lane is wrong. I understand parking in faculty parking is wrong. I understand parking at the book store on the corner is wrong, my car was towed the following day in which I paid \$200 in order to get my car back. I do not understand that parking in a place where there are NO SIGNS saying that I cannot park there.

Ed Boucher

From: Tennessee Tech University <edboucher@tntech.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, February 20, 2013 8:11 PM
To: Ed Boucher
Subject: New submission from "Student Complaint Form"

You have a new submission.

Name: [REDACTED]

Tech ID: [REDACTED]

Address: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Home: [REDACTED]

Work: [REDACTED]

Submission Date: 02.20.2013

Date of Occurrence: 02.14.2013

Name of Dept.: [REDACTED]

Complaint: I am a student in [REDACTED]'s SPAN 3020 class. I am working toward a minor in [REDACTED] to accompany my [REDACTED] degree. Upon requesting to study abroad this upcoming summer, I was advised to take another [REDACTED] course this spring semester, although it is not required for my minor. I had taken [REDACTED] in the fall semester, and did not have a good experience, so I was hesitant to enroll in another one of [REDACTED] courses. After some contemplation, I decided it was worth a try. On February 5, I was sick and did not go to class. I have been present for every other class period this semester. [REDACTED] was not present the following two class periods, and upon returning to class February 14, I was expected to present a project with another student who had been absent on February 5 as well. That day we had also missed a quiz, a writing assignment, and the guidelines and such for the presentation. We had not previously had any quizzes or in-class graded assignments, and haven't since that day. I don't feel that it is fair that I have 3 0s for my grades because I missed one day due to an illness.

Efforts: Upon missing class, I emailed a fellow student to find out what I had missed. I was told that we had a presentation coming up, but she and other students did not really understand the assignment. She also informed me that I had missed a quiz and in-class writing assignment.

Resolution: I would like to withdraw from this class. I feel that I should not have to pay for a class that I have learned nothing from. There should be opportunities to take this course from another professor. Most importantly, however, I would like the issue to be known. I know that I am not the only student struggling in her class, and last semester this situation was brought up with [REDACTED] Dept. of Foreign Language.

Ed Boucher

From: Tennessee Tech University <edboucher@tntech.edu>
Sent: Friday, February 22, 2013 3:02 PM
To: Ed Boucher
Subject: New submission from "Student Complaint Form"

You have a new submission.

Name: [REDACTED]

Tech ID: [REDACTED]

Address: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Home: [REDACTED]

Work:

Submission Date: 02.22.2013

Date of Occurance: 02.15.2013

Name of Dept.: [REDACTED]

Complaint: A week ago I was sitting in Swoops and overheard a conversation between two people sitting at the table next to me. I recognized the guy that was talking and he said some disturbing things. In this time, he spoke of his past and told the girl that, in the past, if he saw her walking down the street he would think she is a very attractive young lady and would want to rape her. He went into details on how he would including saying "your teeth would break from biting down so hard during the pain and every scream you make would be truly orgasmic for me". He continued to get louder when talking about it and got really into it.

Efforts: I talked to the counseling office and the Dean of Students about the situation.

Resolution: He is a nice guy but he isn't mentally stable. I think the resolution would be to have him tested and just see if he is safe to be on campus.