

TEXAS STATE TECHNICAL COLLEGE
STATEWIDE OPERATING STANDARD

No. ES 3.24	Page 1 of 6	Effective Date: 9/07/2018
DIVISION:	Educational Services	
SUBJECT:	Student Grievances and Complaints	
AUTHORITY:	Minute Order #24-15	
PROPOSED BY:	Sarah S. Patterson	
TITLE:	Vice President of Student Development	Date: 9/07/2018
RECOMMENDED BY:	Rick Herrera	
TITLE:	Vice Chancellor & Chief Student Services Officer	Date: 9/07/2018
APPROVED BY:	Mike Reeser	
TITLE:	Chancellor	Date: 9/07/2018

STATUS: Approved by Executive Management Council 9/07/2018

HISTORICAL STATUS: Approved by LT 6/07/2018
 Approved by BOR 6/25/2015
 Approved by EMC 06/09/15
 Proposed 04/2015

I. STATEWIDE STANDARD

POLICY: It is the policy of Texas State Technical College (TSTC) that the College seek fair, efficient, and equitable solutions for issues that arise out of the student/College relationship and allow any student to be heard when he/she feels that his/her rights have been violated or that an action taken by an employee of the College is unfair. These issues include claims of discrimination based upon race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, genetic information, disability, veteran status, or on any other basis that would be in violation of any applicable federal, state, or local law.

II. PERTINENT INFORMATION

This statewide standard supports accreditation standards in the [*Principles of Accreditation, Foundations for Quality Enhancement, Section 12, Academic and Support Services, Requirement 12.4.*](#)

Requirement 12.4: The institution (a) publishes appropriate and clear procedures for addressing written student complaints, (b) demonstrates that it follows the procedures when resolving them, and (c) maintains a record of student complaints that can be accessed upon request by SACSCOC.
(*Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges*)

III. GENERAL GUIDELINES

- A. The procedures outlined in this statewide standard are intended to create a process by which students are able to present grievances/complaints concerning a disagreement or dissatisfaction arising out of the student/College relationship. The process shall be available to all students.
- B. The filing of a student grievance shall not be interpreted as a way to change existing policies or rules of the College. Policies, rules, or regulations of the College are of themselves not subject to a grievance process, only the implementation of them is. The student grievance procedure is simply a way for the student to indicate the belief that either:
 - 1. An action taken by a College official or employee is inappropriate, improper, or too harsh; or
 - 2. He/she is being treated differently from other students.
- C. Student disciplinary decisions that involve severe disciplinary penalties are not subject to this policy on student grievance, but shall be processed according to the policy and procedure regarding student disciplinary appeals found in the Code of Student Conduct contained in the College's Statewide Operating Standard (SOS), ES 3.23.
- D. Harassment of a student shall be handled according to policies and procedures in the TSTC Catalog and Student Handbook which can be found on-line at the TSTC website.

IV. DEFINITIONS

Grievance: A matter of disagreement or dissatisfaction arising out of the student/College relationship wherein the student believes and alleges that there has been an infraction, breach, misinterpretation, or inappropriate and/or improper action that is in violation of the College's rules, regulations, and policies.

Complaint: An expression of dissatisfaction with the quality of customer service provided to a student by an employee of the College.

Student: A person enrolled at the College or a person accepted for admission or readmission to TSTC.

Immediate Supervisor: The person who oversees daily functions of a TSTC employee.

Grievance Resolution Committee: A standing committee with membership that includes faculty and staff.

Compact with Texans Representative (Representative): The designated person to receive grievances and customer service complaints.

V. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

The Chancellor, or his/her designee, has the authority to appoint the Representative at each campus who represents the College by guiding the aggrieved student through the grievance or Compact with Texans complaint process to ensure proper procedures are being followed, proper timelines are kept, and reporting outcomes are documented. All supervisors have the authority to take action to resolve complaints and grievances that are consistent with TSTC policies and applicable local, state, and federal laws.

VI. PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

1. After a grievance/complaint has been resolved, a formal summary of the grievance/complaint and of the manner in which it was resolved is forwarded to the appropriate Administrative Division Lead or his/her designee.
2. The Representative is notified of the result once the grievance/complaint is finalized for tracking purposes on the TSTC Formal Complaint Log.

APPENDIX

VII. RELATED STATEWIDE STANDARDS, LEGAL CITATIONS, OR SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

[Principles of Accreditation, Foundations for Quality Enhancement, Section 12, Academic and Support Services, Requirement 12.4](#)
[SOS ES 3.23 Student Rights and Responsibilities](#)
[TSTC Catalog and Student Handbook](#)

VIII. OPERATING REQUIREMENTS

Non-Academic Grievance Procedures

- A. Initial Contact – The student must first contact the parties responsible for the action or decision that is the basis of the grievance. Students are encouraged to resolve the matter through discussions with the relevant College personnel most directly associated with the matter. College personnel with whom a concern is raised by a student shall address the matter in an open and professional manner and take reasonable and prompt action to resolve it informally. The initial contact should occur within ten (10) working days from the date of the action or decision that is the basis of the grievance.
- B. Representative – If unsuccessful in resolving the problem, the student must contact the Representative at his/her local campus. The Representative's name is available online in the TSTC Catalog and Student Handbook. The Representative shall assist the student by:
 1. Reviewing the grievance policy with the student. The Representative shall also provide the student with a copy of or a link to this SOS, ES 3.24 Student Grievance/Complaint.
 2. Providing the student with the Effective Customer Service form, so that a formal written grievance may be submitted. The form is also available online in the TSTC Catalog and Student Handbook. The student shall include a summary of the nature of the grievance on the form or in an attached writing.
 3. Acknowledging receipt of the grievance in writing within five (5) working days. The notice is intended to inform the student that the matter is receiving attention and to provide the student with an estimate of the length of time needed to resolve the issue.
- C. The grievance shall be submitted to the immediate supervisor of the party whose actions are being grieved. The immediate supervisor shall propose a resolution consistent with TSTC policies and with applicable local, state, and federal laws. The immediate supervisor shall notify the student and Representative of the resolution within fifteen (15) working days from receipt of the grievance. The immediate supervisor shall also provide the student with a written copy of the

proposed resolution.

- D. If dissatisfied with the proposed resolution, the student may request that the Grievance Resolution Committee review the grievance. This request must be made in writing to the Representative within three (3) working days of receipt of the letter outlining the proposed resolution and must specify what in the resolution is unsatisfactory. The committee shall meet within ten (10) working days of receiving the student's request to review all available documentation. The Grievance Resolution Committee shall provide its written decision to both the student and the employee within five (5) working days from the date of the review. In the event that extenuating circumstances prevent the Grievance Resolution Committee from completing its investigation and/or report within five (5) working days, the student shall be notified of a new time frame. The Grievance Resolution Committee's decision shall be final.

Academic Grievance Procedures

- A. Initial Contact – The student must first contact the parties responsible for the action or decision that is the basis of the grievance. Students are encouraged to resolve the matter through discussions with the relevant College personnel most directly associated with the matter. College personnel with whom a concern is raised by a student shall address the matter in an open and professional manner and take reasonable and prompt action to resolve it informally. The initial contact should occur within (10) ten working days from the date of the action or decision that is the basis of the grievance.
- B. Representative – If unsuccessful in resolving the problem, the student must contact the Representative at his/her local campus. The Representative's name is available online in the TSTC Catalog and Student Handbook. The Representative shall assist the student by:
1. Reviewing the grievance policy with the student. The Representative shall also provide the student with a copy of or a link to this SOS, ES 3.24 Student Grievance/Complaint.
 2. Providing the student with the Effective Customer Service form, so that a formal written grievance may be submitted. The form is also available online in the TSTC Catalog and Student Handbook. The student shall include a summary of the nature of the grievance on the form or in an attached writing.
 3. Acknowledging receipt of the grievance in writing within five (5) working days. The notice is intended to inform the student that the matter is receiving attention and to provide the student with an estimate of the length of time needed to resolve the issue.
- C. The grievance shall be submitted to the Provost or designee of the party whose actions are being grieved. The Provost or designee shall propose a resolution consistent with TSTC policies and with applicable local, state, and federal laws.

The Provost or designee shall notify the student and Representative of the resolution within fifteen (15) working days from receipt of the grievance. The Provost or designee shall also provide the student with a written copy of the proposed resolution.

- D. If dissatisfied with the proposed resolution, the student may request that the Grievance Resolution Committee review the grievance. This request must be made in writing to the Representative within three (3) working days of receipt of the letter outlining the proposed resolution and must specify what in the resolution is unsatisfactory. The committee shall meet within ten (10) working days of receiving the student's request to review all available documentation. The Grievance Resolution Committee shall provide its written decision to both the student and the employee within five (5) working days from the date of the review. In the event that extenuating circumstances prevent the Grievance Resolution Committee from completing its investigation and/or report within five (5) working days, the student shall be notified of a new time frame. The Grievance Resolution Committee's decision shall be final.

Compact with Texans Complaint Handling Procedures

- A. The Effective Customer Service Form must be completed and submitted to the local Representative. The form and the Representative's name are available online in the TSTC Catalog and Student Handbook.
- B. The Representative shall acknowledge receipt of the grievance in writing within five (5) working days. The notice is intended to let the student know the matter is receiving attention and to provide the student with an estimate of the length of time needed to resolve the issue.
- C. The Representative shall contact the immediate supervisor about the complaint. The supervisor shall review the complaint and interview the employee and/or any witnesses, if applicable.
- D. The immediate supervisor shall provide a letter within fifteen (15) working days to the complainant that addresses the complaint and what actions, if any, were taken by TSTC. This letter shall also acknowledge that the complaint has been addressed and resolved in a reasonable time period and in a manner consistent with TSTC policies and with applicable local, state, and federal laws.