

# TUSKEGEE UNIVERSITY

**University Policy: Student Complaint Policy and Procedures (Revised)**

**Policy Category: Student Affairs**

**Subject: Student Complaints and Procedures (Revised)**

**Office Responsible for Review of this Policy: Student Affairs**

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## **I. SCOPE**

This policy applies to all Tuskegee University students.

## **II. POLICY STATEMENT**

It is the policy that Tuskegee University develops and maintains processes for the good faith review and resolution of all student complaints that will:

- Encourage informal resolution of alleged violations at the lowest unit level;
- Allow for a formal resolution mechanism if not resolved informally; and
- Provide for appeal to a final decision maker.

The final decision following an appeal is not appealable further within the University.

## **III. PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Student Complaint Policy and Procedure is to ensure that the concerns and complaints of undergraduate and graduate students are addressed fairly and are resolved promptly.

## **IV. TO WHOM THIS POLICY APPLIES**


This policy applies to the students of Tuskegee University (undergraduate and graduate).

## **V. EFFECTIVE DATE**

This policy is effective immediately.

## **VI. SIGNATURE, DATE, AND APPROVAL**

Approved:



Brian L. Johnson, PhD  
President

## STUDENT COMPLAINT AND PROCEDURES POLICY

### I. INTRODUCTION

Tuskegee University has adequate procedures for addressing written complaints from students. Tuskegee University provides an open educational environment, rich in values and designed to protect the integrity of teaching and learning. In this spirit, the University encourages all students to first direct their complaints and concerns to the faculty, staff, or administrator specifically involved. The University believes many complaints can be resolved through an open, honest dialogue between the persons involved. In cases where that may not be possible, the student complaint procedures can assist in facilitating a resolution. The following information provides the specific procedures, depending on the nature of the complaint, which are used to assist in resolving student complaints.

### II. DEFINITIONS

- a. In order to address student complaints one must first consider Tuskegee University's definition of a student. Tuskegee University considers a person a student if they qualify in one of the following categories:

**FULL-TIME STUDENT:** Full-time student is one enrolled in an academic program of at least twelve semester hours or in an assignment which is not necessarily course work but which requires a full scholastic day's work to accomplish. Such an assignment would be an undergraduate student's Cooperative Education Field Project.

**PART-TIME STUDENT:** A part-time student is one enrolled in an academic program totaling less than twelve hours or in an assignment which is not necessarily course work but which requires a portion of a 3 scholastic day's work to accomplish.

**UNCLASSIFIED STUDENT:** An unclassified student is one who does not wish to become a candidate for a degree. The individual may select specialized programs or enroll in short term courses that will prepare him/her for a particular vocation or promotion and advancement in occupations or fill some general need or interest. Should an unclassified student subsequently desire to become a candidate for a degree, the amount of credit for work already completed will be determined by the department in which the student expects to major.

**TRANSFER STUDENT:** A transfer student is a person admitted/applying to Tuskegee University after attending another institution of higher learning. A student who attends summer school immediately after receiving a high school diploma and before enrolling at Tuskegee University will not be considered a transfer student. If the student expects to transfer college credit hours completed during the summer period prior to enrolling in Tuskegee University, a transcript must be submitted to the Registrar by August 15, and the student must also inform his/her advisor that transfer credit is being requested. A transfer student must indicate on the application for admission all previous colleges or universities attended. A student who has registered in other colleges and/or universities may not disregard his/her record in such institutions and make application for admission to Tuskegee University solely on the basis of the high school record. Any student who does so is subject to suspension from the University and transfer credit will be denied. A student who transfers to Tuskegee University from other colleges and universities is governed by the following specific requirements and procedures:

1. A transfer student must satisfy the general orientation requirement.

2. A transfer student who has not received transfer credit for either Mathematics or English, and who does not present satisfactory records on tests specified by the University must take Placement Examinations prescribed before enrolling in any courses.

3. A transfer student must satisfy Physical Education requirements.

4. A transfer student must be eligible to re-enter the institution last attended when application for admission to Tuskegee University is submitted.

5. A student desiring to transfer to Tuskegee University must be able to furnish the following:

a. A letter of good standing from the institution last attended.

b. A certificate of high school work covering the Tuskegee University requirements for admission.

c. An official transcript of the work done in all institutions prior to application for admission to Tuskegee. This transcript should reach the Admissions Office of Tuskegee University at least one month before the date the candidate expects to enroll. If possible, a marked catalog showing courses referred to in the transcript presented should be submitted.

d. A cumulative grade point average of 2.00 or above.

6. Credit for courses transferred to Tuskegee University is awarded under the normal conditions prevailing in institutions of higher education:

a. The courses accepted and the number of hours completed determine the classification of a transfer student.

b. Transfer credit is given only for courses approved by the Dean of the School in which the student applies for admission. Transfer credit will be awarded on a course-by-course basis. Courses in which students earned "D" and failing grades will not be considered for transfer credit.

c. Credit toward graduation is given only for courses that have been approved for transfer by the dean. The maximum transfer credit allowed to meet degree requirements will not exceed 80 hours.

d. Courses taken on a pass/fail basis will not be considered for transfer. e. Courses in which credit was not awarded for the degree will not be considered for transfer credit.

**INTERNATIONAL STUDENT:** Every effort is made to place the international student in classes commensurate with the student's level of achievement. The academic credentials of each international student are evaluated with awareness of foreign programs. The Admissions Officer consults with the Dean of the College in which an international student should be registered. As a result of this consultation, a decision is made about the amount of credit a transfer student receives based on the student's prior academic achievement. If after consultation, there is doubt as to how the transcript shall be evaluated; the student will be given an advanced placement test in the subject(s) in question, without penalty of failure. Permission for any student to take the Placement test(s) must be secured from the Dean of the College in which the student is registered. Such test(s) will be administered by the Testing Officer prior to the student's registration for classes in accordance with provisions prescribed under Examination for Credit of this handbook. The International student transferring to Tuskegee University from another international

institution also must satisfy requirements listed under the headings: "Documentation for Enrollment," and "Transfer Student".

**TRANSIENT STUDENT:** This term applies to the student enrolled in another college who wishes to take courses at Tuskegee University for one semester, then return to the other college for the degree. A transcript from the other college is not required. Tuskegee University reserves the right to request scholastic credentials or official evidence of enrollment from the other college. The student should present an official transcript or a letter of good standing from his/her institution. When a transient student is accepted, admission to Tuskegee University will be only for the term indicated on the transient form. Subsequent admission may be approved upon request. If the transient student wishes to transfer to Tuskegee University, application as a regular transfer student and official transcripts from all previously attended colleges must be submitted.

- b. **Definition of a complaint** – A complaint is a written statement by a student that the treatment they have received is not consistent with the University's policies as stated in an official document. Only students may submit a Student Complaint.

### **III. PROCEDURES**

These procedures illustrate how complaints are handled and resolved:

**Conditions in Residence Hall (no hot water, mold, mildew, etc.)** :Student complained there was no hot water in the residence hall, and this condition had persisted for several days. Student follows protocol established by the Residence Life and Development for reporting problems with hall conditions.

- **Step 1** Student completes Request for Service/Complaint Form to report problem(s) and submits to Residence Hall Director.
- **Step 2** Residence Hall Director completes and submits a Maintenance Request Work Order to Facilities Management.
- **Step 3** Facilities Management schedules work to be done within 72 hours, or earlier if classified as an emergency.
- **Step 4** Work is completed within 72 hours, or Hall Director is informed why work has not been completed and given an estimate of time when work will be completed.
- **Step 5** Hall Director informs student or status of request. If work has not been completed, inform when completion is anticipated.
- **Step 6** If work is not completed in a reasonable amount of time (when work was promised), Hall Director informs Director of Residence Life and Development, who may contact the Director of Facilities Management or the Dean of Students to register a formal complaint.

**Parking Tickets** : Student feels he/she was unfairly issued a parking or traffic ticket. The protocol for appealing a parking ticket may be found on the Tuskegee University website ([www.tuskegee.edu](http://www.tuskegee.edu)) by scrolling down on QUICK LINKS to TU Police Department. Once on the Department's home page, click on link, Appeal a Ticket.

- **Step 1** Complete, and submit the Traffic Appeal Form.
- **Step 2** Traffic Appeals Committee will review the case, render a decision, and inform the student.

- **Step 3** Students accepts decision; or if dissatisfied, may request a hearing in person before the Committee.

**Roommate Issues:** Student's roommate accuses him/her of stealing some of his/her personal possessions and/or money.

- **Step 1** Student completes Request for Service/Complaint Form and submits to Hall Director/Counselor.
- **Step 2** Director/Counselor interviews complainant and accused to determine further steps:
  - (1) counsel and mediate matter between roommates;
  - (2) refer to TU Police Department;
  - (3) refer matter to Residence Hall Judicial Board; or
  - (4) take other steps (i.e., move both roommates to diffuse a volatile and potentially violent situation).
- **Step 3** Director/Counselor determines matter has been successfully resolved or feels matter has not been resolved and further counseling or investigation is required.
- **Step 4** If matter cannot be resolved in-house, the student is referred to TU Police Department to make a formal complaint by completing an Incident Report Form.
- **Step 5** Police Department investigates matter and keeps Hall Director informed of progress.

**Sexual Misconduct:** Tuskegee University will make every reasonable effort to ensure that the investigation and resolution of a Complaint occurs in a timely and efficient manner as possible. The University's resolution of a Complaint (not including an appeal, if applicable) will generally be completed within sixty (60) calendar days of the receipt of the complaint, absent of any extenuating circumstances. Hearings, if any, will take place after the investigation has concluded. If a hearing takes place, both the Complainant and the Respondent will be notified simultaneously and in writing.

The notification will include: the outcome of the proceedings; appeal procedures; any change to the result before it becomes final; and when the result becomes final. Following a judicial hearing the letter of outcome of proceedings will generally be available within three (3) working days of the Sexual Misconduct Board's determination and recommendation to the Dean of Students. Should this process last longer than sixty (60) days, the Title IX Coordinator or Deputy Title IX Coordinator will communicate the reasons and expected timeline to all parties.

Below are the steps to resolve a sexual misconduct matter:

- **Step 1** Upon receipt of a report, the University, through the Title IX Coordinator will conduct an initial Title IX assessment. The first step of the assessment will usually be a preliminary meeting with the Complainant and the Title IX Coordinator or the Title IX Investigator. At this meeting, the Complainant will be provided information about resources, procedural options and interim remedies: The initial assessment will:
  - Assess the nature and circumstances of the allegation
  - Address immediate physical safety and emotional well-being needs
  - Notify the Complainant of his/her right to contact law enforcement and seek medical treatment, including the importance of preservation of evidence
  - Enter the report into the University's daily crime log

- Assess the reported conduct for the need for a timely warning under Clery
  - Provide the Complainant with information about:
    - On and off campus resources
    - The range of interim accommodations and remedies
  - An explanation of the procedural options, including Informal Resolution and Formal Resolution
  - Assess for pattern evidence or other similar conduct by Respondent
- **Step 1B** Upon the receipt of an anonymous complaint in that the Complainant request that their name or other identifiable information not be shared with the Respondent or that no formal action be taken; the Title IX Coordinator in conjunction with the Response Team balances the request with the following factors:
  - Nature and scope of the alleged conduct, including whether a weapon was used;
  - Ages of the Complainant and Respondent;
  - Risk of additional violence posed to any individual or to the campus community by not proceeding
  - Whether the report reveals a pattern of behavior that places the campus community at risk;
  - The Complainant's wish to pursue disciplinary action;
  - Whether the University has or will obtain other relevant evidence;
  - Considerations of fundamental fairness and due process in regards to the Respondent if disciplinary action is warranted; and
  - The University obligation to maintain a safe and non-discriminatory environment.
- **Step 2** When the assessment concludes that disciplinary action may be appropriate, the University will initiate a formal investigation. The matter is referred to the Judicial Affairs Officer.
- **Step 3** The Title IX investigator or designee then continues the investigation. The investigation will be thorough, impartial and fair, and all individuals will be treated with appropriate sensitivity and respect. The investigation typically includes interviews with the Complainant, the Respondent and any witnesses. The interviews will be supplemented by the gathering of any physical, documentary or other evidence. As part of the investigation, the University will provide an opportunity for the parties to present witnesses and other evidence. The investigation will be conducted in a manner that is respectful of individual privacy concerns. A preliminary report and/or police report is prepared and presented to the body who oversees conduct violations for the Respondent (Director for Human Resources, Judicial Officer, or Provost).
- **Step 4** The Title IX Investigator makes recommendations for further action to proper Judicial Body (Director for Human Resources, Judicial Officer, or Provost), with copies to Title IX Coordinator, Dean of Students and Vice President for Student Affairs. Formal charges will be brought against Respondent.
- **Step 5** The Respondent will be presented a Notice of Rights, support services, and information about interim measures.
- **Step 6** The Student Respondent can request a hearing in accordance to the Student Handbook. The Faculty Respondent may request a hearing in accordance with the Faculty Handbook. The Staff Respondent is subject to the disciplinary process as defined under the Student Handbook.
- **Step 7** The Complainant and Respondent will receive simultaneous notices of outcomes.

**Grades:** Student complains s/he received an unfair grade and has been unable to resolve the matter satisfactorily with professor. The policy/protocol for dealing with complaints about grades can be found in the TUSKEGEE UNIVERSITY CATALOG, which is posted online on the Tuskegee University website ([www.tuskegee.edu](http://www.tuskegee.edu)). To find the Catalog, click on Academics on the University's homepage, and scroll down to Course Catalog/Bulletin. When the Catalog appears, look for the Table of Contents for Academic Regulations. Within Academic Regulations, find the section, Appeal of Academic Decisions; and follow the procedure as outlined.

- **Step 1** Student submits written statement to the instructor's College Dean, setting forth his/her complaint, efforts to resolve it, and supporting evidence or justification for the complaint.
- **Step 2** College Dean may appoint a Committee of Faculty to review the written statement from the student, as well as any other evidence and information the instructor may have to support his/her decision.
- **Step 3** The Committee then makes a recommendation to the College Dean, submitting to him/her all supporting data; and the Dean then renders a decision which is immediately communicated in writing to the student, the person(s) concerned, and the Committee.
- **Step 4** If the student or the person(s) concerned is dissatisfied with the decision of the instructor's College Dean, he/she may appeal to the Provost.
- **Step 5** Provost will review all information and evidence; and if he/she wishes, refer the matter to a committee for further investigation and recommended actions.
- **Step 6** The Provost then renders a decision, which is to be communicated to the student, the person(s) concerned, and the College Dean.
- **Step 7** If the student or the person(s) concerned is dissatisfied with the decision of the Provost, he/she may appeal to the President of Tuskegee University.
- **Step 8** The President will make a final decision in the case and communicate it to the Provost and the student.

**Note:** *All appeals of academic decisions, including requests for review of instructors' grades, must be initiated no later than 30 calendar days after the decision was made. A student who is not in residence should mail the written statement to the College Dean.*

**Residence Hall Fines:** Student wishes to appeal a fine imposed by Hall Director/Counselor.

- **Step 1** Student make a complaint in writing to the Hall Director/Counselor giving supporting evidence of justification for the complaint/appeal. Copies of complaint are forwarded to the Dean of Students and Director of Residence Life and Development.
- **Step 2** Director/Counselor reviews written statement and supporting documentation, interviews complainant and any witnesses before making decision on student's appeal.
- **Step 3** Decision is given to student, with copies to Dean of Students and Director of Residence Life and Development. If student is dissatisfied with the decision, he/she may appeal to Director of Residence Life and Development.
- **Step 4** Student appeals to Director of Residence Life and Development, providing all supporting documentation.

- **Step 5** Director of Residence Life and Development may appoint a committee to review appeal, or present appeal to the Residence Hall Judicial Board for review and recommendation(s).
- **Step 6** Decision of Judicial Board is given in writing to the Director or Residence Life and Development.
- **Step 7** Director or Residence Life and Development informs student of decision, with copy to Dean of Students and Vice President for Student Affairs.
- **Step 8** If student is still not satisfied, a last appeal may be made to the Dean of Students. All supporting documentation is given to the Dean of Students, including decisions and recommendations previously made by the Director of Residence Life and Development and the Residence Hall Judicial Board.
- **Step 9** Dean of Students, after review of all pertinent documents, renders a decision and informs student of decision in writing, with copies to the Director of Residence Life and Development, Director/Counselor, and Vice President for Student Affairs.

**ADA Accommodations and Complaints of Non-Compliance:** Wheelchair-bound student complains of difficulty getting around campus due to insufficient access ramps and other accommodations.

- **Step 1** Student makes complaint in writing to Vice President for Student Affairs or Dean of Students.
- **Step 2** Vice President for Student Affairs forwards complaint to Dean of Students for handling.
- **Step 3** Dean of Students forwards complaint to Vice President for Capital Projects and Facilities Management.
- **Step 4** Vice President for Capital Projects and Facilities Management will investigate complaint and make recommendation(s) to resolve problem. Decision/plans will be communicated to student, with copies to Dean of Students and Vice President for Student Affairs, and University President.
- **Step 5** Vice President for Capital Projects and Facilities Management will identify funds to implement plans to meet ADA requirements.

**Theft of Property:** Student complains of items being stolen from his/her residence hall room.

- **Step 1** Student reports theft in writing in Incident Report to Residence hall Director/Counselor.
- **Step 2** Residence Hall Director refers student to TU Police Department to file a report.
- **Step 3** Police Department gives copy of report to student and refers him/her back to Hall Director/Counselor to obtain, complete, and file Renter's Insurance Claim Form.
- **Step 4** Claim is processed by insurance company and either honored, rejected, or sent back for additional information.
- **Step 5** Claim should be processed by insurance company within seven to ten (7-10) days.

**Student Wishes to Appeal Sanction of University Judicial Hearing Board:** Students can appeal the decision of any judicial hearing. An appeal may be filed, "if and only if a university policy or a university regulation has been violated, or the student's due process rights have been violated".

- **Step 1** If a student is found guilty of a violation of the *Codes of Conduct*, s/he may appeal by writing a letter of appeal to the Judicial Appeals Board and submitting it to the judicial officer.



- **Step 2** The Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management will appoint a Judicial Appeals Board to review the verbatim record and sanctions. The decision of the Judicial Appeals Board shall be final.
- **Step 3** The Judicial officer will submit the student's appeal letter to the University Judicial Hearing Board for processing.
- **Step 4** After the appeal has been adjudicated, the chair of the Judicial Appeals Board will inform the student of the outcome of the appeal.