

UT Southwestern Medical School - Mistreatment of Students in Medicine Policy

In accordance with the Standards for Accreditation of Medical Education Programs Leading to the M.D. Degree published by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education, the purpose of this policy is to set forth the expectations and standards of conduct within teacher-student relationships at UT Southwestern Medical School and pathways for reporting and resolving student mistreatment.

Expectations and Standards of Conduct within the Teacher-Student Relationship

Medical professionals are held to a high standard by society. Physicians are expected to be dedicated, have a superior intellect, and behave professionally. Elements of professional behavior include altruism, accountability, duty, integrity, and respect for others. Medical schools have the responsibility to foster these qualities in students upon whom they will confer the degree of Medical Doctor. Therefore, medical schools have an obligation to promote an educational environment that nurtures these elements and faculty have an obligation to model these elements for their students.

General Definition

The teacher-student relationship must be based on a foundation of mutual respect. Respect, in this context, is reflected in honesty, professionalism, and the prudent handling of the teacher’s power over the student. Moreover, the teacher-student relationship is defined and limited by the educational mission and learning objectives of the school. A “teacher” may be a faculty member, a resident, an intern, hospital staff, an administrator, other institutional employee, or a fellow student.

Certain Forms of Mistreatment Specifically Prohibited by Other Institutional Policies

Discrimination, retaliation, harassment (including sexual harassment or sexual misconduct), and threats, intimidation or violence are prohibited. Policies, resolution options, contacts and resources for students for these types of concerns are as follows:

Nature of Complaint	UT Southwestern Policy, Procedure, or Contact
Title IX Sexual Harassment.	Refer to ETH-153 Title IX Sexual Harassment: Formal Grievance Policy and contact the Title IX Coordinator.
Sexual harassment or other sexual misconduct that does not meet the definition of Title IX Sexual Harassment.	Contact the Office for Access & Title IX and refer to the UT Southwestern General Catalog Policies Against Discrimination.
Discrimination, harassment, or retaliation on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin, religion, age, genetic information, citizenship status, protected veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.	Contact the Office for Access & Title IX and refer to the UT Southwestern General Catalog Policies Against Discrimination: https://www.utsouthwestern.edu/education/utsw-catalog/general/student-info/academic-policies.html

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<p>Disability discrimination or retaliation.</p>	<p>Refer to EDU-103 Reasonable Accommodations for Qualified Applicants and Learners with Disabilities and contact Campus Accessibility Services.</p>
<p>Campus violence, threats of violence, or intimidation. Conduct that may threaten the safety or well-being of individuals affiliated with UT Southwestern or the safety and security of UT Southwestern premises</p>	<p>Refer to SEC-156 Campus Violence and contact UT Southwestern Police and the Office of Student Affairs.</p>

For more information, visit the General Catalog: [University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center - Policies Against Discrimination \(smartcatalogiq.com\)](#)

Other Examples of Student Mistreatment Prohibited by this Policy

- Abuse of power. Examples of prohibited abuses of power in the context of the teacher-student relationship include but are not limited to:
 - a. Requiring a student to perform personal services (e.g., shopping, babysitting, household duties, errands).
 - b. Requiring a student to perform professional services unrelated to the educational experience (e.g., administrative duties, teaching).
 - c. Belittling, embarrassing, or humiliating a student. (This does not include asking difficult questions in a public setting, such as rounds).
- Intimidation, causing or threatening to cause the student physical harm.
- Threatening to give the student a lower grade or denying opportunities for training or rewards for reasons other than scholastic and/or professional performance.
- Requiring the student to perform clinical duties which are unethical or beyond the student’s level of training.
- Any other behavior that is contrary to the spirit of learning, abuses the power dynamic, or violates the trust between teacher and student. Grade grievances and appeals do not fall within “mistreatment” under this policy and will be handled in accordance with EDU-402 Academic Decisions – UT Southwestern Medical School.

Complaints of Mistreatment and Available Methods for Resolution

Students who believe they have been subjected to mistreatment have access to reasonable, fairly administered, and well-publicized policies and procedures for bringing a complaint and reaching a resolution. As outlined in [EDU-102 Learner Complaints and Resolutions](#) and in the summary table above, UT Southwestern employs various complaint and resolution procedures, depending on the substance and nature of the complaint. Some complaints may be resolved informally, while others may require a more formal process.

Students who believe they have been mistreated should contact the Associate Deans for Student Affairs for guidance on policies and procedures, options for resolution, and available

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educational and support resources. Students, faculty, or residents who witness or are aware of incidents of mistreatment against others are also strongly encouraged to contact the Associate Deans for Student Affairs.

Student complaints about mistreatment in the teacher-student relationship that are not covered by another UT Southwestern policy or procedure will be handled as follows:

1. Informal Resolution

Students who believe they have been mistreated are encouraged to first try to informally resolve the situation, with guidance from the Associate Deans for Student Affairs. Strategies for informal resolution may include notification to the individual responsible for the alleged mistreatment that his or her conduct is unwelcome; action by an appropriate University official to address the conduct; or mediation. Certain mistreatment complaints are not appropriate for informal resolution (e.g., Title IX Sexual Harassment) and will be referred to another appropriate UT Southwestern office, policy, or process.

2. Formal Student Mistreatment Grievance

If an informal resolution cannot be reached, the student can submit a formal mistreatment grievance to an Associate Dean for Student Affairs no later than thirty (30) days after the incident of alleged mistreatment. The grievance must be in writing and set forth in detail the conduct the student believes constitutes mistreatment within the meaning of this policy. Any supporting documentation or other evidence should be submitted with the student's written grievance. The Associate Dean for Student Affairs will act as the Grievance Officer ("GO").

The GO will review the student's grievance to confirm it is complete and the allegations, if true, constitute mistreatment within the meaning of this policy. The GO will provide the Respondent notice of the grievance and an opportunity to respond within ten (10) calendar days. The response must be in writing and include any supporting documentation or other evidence the Respondent wants the GO to consider. The GO will conduct any additional investigation that the GO deems necessary, which may include meeting with the student and the Respondent to discuss the grievance, interviewing witnesses, or gathering additional evidence. The GO will communicate their determination regarding the grievance in writing to the student and the Respondent within thirty (30) days of receipt of the student's formal grievance.

3. Appeals

If not satisfied with the outcome, the student or the Respondent may appeal the determination by the GO to the Vice Provost & Senior Associate Dean for Education. Appeals must be in writing and submitted within ten (10) business days of the GO's decision. The Vice Provost & Senior Associate Dean for Education will review the appeal and all information relevant to the grievance considered by the GO. The Vice Provost & Senior Association Dean for Education will issue a written decision regarding the grievance within ten (10) business days. The decision of the Vice Provost & Senior Associate Dean is final under this policy.

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4. Retaliation Prohibited

Retaliation is strictly prohibited. Any person who retaliates against a student who sought an informal resolution, brought a formal grievance, or participated in the GO's review under this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal or non-renewal of appointment.

5. Confidentiality and Recordkeeping

The GO will attempt to balance a student's desire for privacy and confidentiality with the Medical School's responsibility to address student mistreatment pursuant to this policy. If the student requests that their name or other identifiable information not be revealed, the GO will evaluate that request in the context of other factors, including but not limited to: the seriousness of the alleged mistreatment; whether there have been other complaints about the same Respondent; and the Respondent's right to receive information about and respond to the student's grievance.

UT Southwestern shall document the informal resolution and formal grievance processes and their outcomes and retain copies of all materials in accord with federal and state law and UT Southwestern policy. The Associate Deans for Student Affairs shall retain such documentation separately from students' official UT Southwestern education files and will release such documentation only as permitted by law.