



OFFICE OF
Student Conduct
UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA

STUDENT INFORMATION PACKET

Office of Student Conduct
University of Central Oklahoma
uco.edu/conduct

Purpose:

The purpose of the Office of Student Conduct is to ensure that students are made aware of UCO's policies and standards of behavior, their rights, their options of resources, and their responsibilities to uphold those policies and standards.

Mission:

The mission of the Office of Student Conduct is to determine responsibility in reported matters of misconduct and concern through timely and equitable investigations and educationally appropriate resolutions.

Core Principles:

Character, Rights and Responsibilities

Burden of Proof:

Preponderance of the Evidence (More Likely Than Not, aka 50% plus a feather)

Student Conduct Process Outline

1. COMPLAINT/REPORT

The Office of Student Conduct (OSC) receives a complaint or report alleging violations of the Code of Student Conduct or concerning behaviors by a student. The OSC determines whether or not the matter warrants further investigation. If not, the OSC process ends and advisement is given and/or a referral is made for the most appropriate entity or department to assist with the concern.

2. INVESTIGATION

In most instances, the OSC will begin investigating the matter by interviewing the complainant(s), respondent(s), witnesses, and gathering relevant documentation.

3. HEARINGS

The process includes either an informal or formal hearing. An informal hearing is an opportunity for the involved student(s) to be heard by an OSC investigator or delegated investigator – This process usually consists of 1 or more meetings with an investigator. In some cases, the matter will be resolved through the formal hearing process in which a non-biased panel will make a determination, after an initial investigation has been completed by a single investigator or authorized investigative body. In both the informal and formal processes, the involved student(s) have the right to present allegations and/or respond to allegations, have an advisor present, and present witnesses.

4. OUTCOME

In both processes, the outcome will be based on a preponderance of evidence (what most likely happened) standard. The student(s) will either be found responsible (the Code of Student Conduct was violated) or not responsible (the Code of Student Conduct was not violated). Involved parties are then notified in person and/or in writing for what directly applies or impacts them. If the student(s) is found not responsible, the process will end and the case will be closed.

5. SANCTIONS

Students found responsible for violating the Code of Student Conduct will be assigned 1 or more sanctions. Sanctions are not intended to be punitive, but intended and designed to be an educational opportunity to change previous behaviors.

6. APPEAL REQUEST

If either a complainant or a respondent believe the outcome is incorrect, they have the option of filing an appeal request in which they must articulate the basis for their belief that the decision should be changed. All appeal requests are considered by the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs. The AVPSA will consider the request and either grant or deny an appeal. If the request is denied, the OSC Process ends and there are no further appeal options available to involved parties. The appeal request **must substantially articulate** one of the following:

- a) Disproportionate Sanction(s): To consider whether the sanctions outcomes assigned are significantly disproportionate to the severity of the violation. (*Simple dissatisfaction with a sanction is not grounds for overturning a sanction assignment under this provision.*)
- b) New Information: To consider new documentation, unavailable during the original hearing or investigation, that could substantially impact the original finding or sanction assignment(s). *A summary of this new documentation and its potential impact must be included.*
- c) Procedural Error: To determine that a procedural or substantive error occurred during the investigation or hearing that significantly impacted the outcome of the hearing (e.g. unjustified and significant deviation from published procedures, etc.).

7. APPEAL REVIEWS

If the student(s) appeal request is granted, the AVP will notify the requesting party that the appeal request is granted and notify each party (complainant and respondent) that an appeal hearing or review will be forthcoming.

- i. Appeal requests that **DO NOT** involve university suspension, expulsion, temporary suspension, rescission of credits, or degree revocation are reviewed by the Vice President for Student Affairs.
- ii. Appeal requests that **DO** involve university suspensions, temporary suspension, expulsion, degree revocation, or rescission of credit are reviewed by a panel.

The appeal hearing outcome marks the end of the Student Conduct process and there are no further options available to involved parties.

For a more comprehensive explanation of the conduct process, please refer to the UCO Code of Student Conduct, sections III. A.-W.

UCO Advisor Role and Participation Guidelines

Name of Student: _____ Role: _____

Name of Advisor: _____ UCO Procedural Advisor? YES or NO

1. The ultimate role of an advisor is to help students (complainants and respondents) understand and navigate the student conduct process and procedures.
2. The Office of Student Conduct requests that an education record release form be completed, signed, and submitted prior to any personally identifiable information sharing in the meeting or hearing.
3. Students may be accompanied by an advisor of their choice, whether UCO Procedural Advisors or not, during informal conduct meetings or formal hearings, at their own expense;
4. The advisor may be an attorney, at the expense of the student;
5. The student may be assisted by no more than one (1) advisor each;
6. Advisors may attend meetings and hearings with their student and communicate with the student, both verbally and in writing;
7. Advisors are not permitted to speak or to participate directly in formal hearings or appeal hearings, per the explanation of the Ground Rules and Explanation of Advisors' Role, as read by the chair of the student conduct body;
8. If an advisor's presence and/or actions disrupt the operations of an informal meeting or hearing, the advisor may be dismissed from the meeting or hearing. The facilitator of the meeting or hearing shall have the latitude of reminding advisors of these participation guidelines and other hearing-specific guidelines verbalized during formal hearings, with 1-2 warnings and dismiss an advisor should the disruptive behavior continue. If an advisor is dismissed from an informal meeting, formal hearing or appeal hearing, the meeting or hearing will continue once the disruptive advisor has vacated the meeting location. The student complainant or respondent will have the option to continue their participation after the dismissal of their advisor;
9. Advisors should not assist or encourage the student to engage in any retaliatory actions, per the current UCO Code of Student Conduct, section III. K.;
10. Advisors may not serve as witnesses during the same hearing; and
11. For a complete review of the University of Central Oklahoma Student Conduct process, please refer to section III. of the current UCO Code of Student Conduct at www.uco.edu/conduct.

**The University of Central Oklahoma
Education Records Release Authorization**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) federal law prohibits the disclosure of personally identifiable information of the education record of a student with some general exceptions including, but not limited to:

- The release of information for students who have given written consent;
- The release of emergency-related information to parents for students involved in a health or safety emergency;
- The release of information to parents, if their student has been found "RESPONSIBLE" for violating any University alcohol or controlled substance policy or any local, state, or federal law and are under the age of 21; or
- The release of information which has been designated by the University as Directory Information (except for those students who have requested, in writing, to have this information withheld);
- The release of information to a parent, if that parent has claimed that student as a dependent for tax purposes, as defined in section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

If a student wishes to waive this right, then the student must complete this form.

PERSON/AGENCY TO WHOM I AUTHORIZE THE RELEASE OF PRIVATE INFORMATION

The person/agency to which you authorize the release of PRIVATE information is normally prohibited from disclosing the information to other parties. Please note that release of this record or disclosure of its contents to any third party not listed below without the written consent of the student is prohibited.

NAME/AGENCY

RELATIONSHIP

PHONE NUMBER

(Additional names of persons authorized to receive PRIVATE academic information should be noted on separate Educational Records Release Authorization forms. The telephone number may be used to verify identity.)

Information which can be released to this person should be listed below. Be specific, e.g., term grades, progress to degree, academic transcript, conduct records, etc. Information not listed will not be released.

Please state the reason(s) for the release of such information, i.e. "conduct investigation" or "background check".

Please circle the medium in which the information should be released: Verbally and/or Written Material

PERIOD OF TIME DURING WHICH THIS WAIVER WILL BE IN EFFECT

This waiver is valid from the time it is signed until the beginning of the following academic year, at which time it must be renewed. If you wish to cancel or amend this waiver, then you must provide a written request to this department. If this waiver is a one-time only condition, then please indicate below that the one-time only condition is valid.

One-Time only: _____

I, (Print Name) _____, have provided the preceding information freely, without coercion or threat.

STUDENT SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

"FOR UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENTAL USE ONLY"

Authorized by (PRINT): _____

Department: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Formal Hearing Outline

- I. Opening of Record
- II. Introductions
 - a. Name and affiliations of persons involved with University and/or case, in general.
- III. Advisor Orientation
 - a. The role of the Advisors is explained
 - b. The purpose of the Office of Student Conduct is explained
- IV. Reminders and Ground Rules
 - a. Important parameters of behavior are expressed for the participants.
 - b. The protocol for witness participation is described.
 - c. *Witnesses are asked to exit hearing room until called upon.*
- V. Nature of Hearing
 - a. Hearing Body Chair reads a brief statement to describe the basic nature of the Hearing. *The Hearing Body Chair will not proceed until the nature of hearing statement has been confirmed by both parties.*
 - b. Hearing Body Chair explains the criteria for making the final decision.
- VI. Information Presentations/Questioning/Witnesses
 1. Complainant
 2. Respondent
 - b. Summary of Investigation and Recommendation: University Investigator
 - c. Opportunity for Questioning of Investigator
 1. (Hearing Body, Complainant and Respondent)
 - d. Opportunity for Questioning of Complainant
 1. (Hearing Body, Respondent)
 - e. Opportunity for Questioning of Respondent
 1. (Hearing Body, Complainant)
 - f. Witnesses and Questioning
 1. Complainant Witnesses
 2. Respondent Witnesses
 - g. Opportunity for Concluding Remarks
 1. Complainant
 2. Respondent

Opportunity for Opening Statements by
- VII. Timeline for Outcome of Hearing
 - a. Each party will be informed that a decision will be made and sent to them within five (5) University business days.
 - b. Parties are dismissed
 - c. Hearing Body Deliberation and Decision
- VIII. Expression of Decision/Assignment of Sanction
 - a. A written letter shall be delivered within five (5) University business days.

Formal Hearing Preparation Tips

1. Read section III of the current Code of Student Conduct.
2. Ask for a copy of the Student Conduct Hearing outline, if you do not already have one, and review it.
3. Inquire about the ground rules of formal hearings, in advance.
4. Prepare a 3 minute opening statement that will outline your stance during the hearing.
5. Prepare a 3 minute concluding statement that will summarize your stance and highlight your desired outcome for the case.
6. Prepare to answer potentially and seemingly adverse or uncomfortable questions about your situation, which may not have been addressed by the investigator's summary by gathering your thoughts and writing down or accessing and bringing your written version of the incident in a chronological narrative and/or bulleted format.
7. Prior to the hearing, request to review the case packet of documentation (the findings of the University investigation) that will be presented during the hearing.
8. Write down any relevant open-ended and/or closed-ended questions for you to pose towards the other party, which may help to prove your version of the incident. Remember, questions will be posed through the hearing body chair.
9. When you address the designated hearing body, make eye contact with them. Their task is to determine if university policies were "more than likely" violated. You can assist them if they can get a feel for you verbally and non-verbally.
10. Be respectful to the hearing body and avoid being argumentative, rude, and overly defensive when answering their questions.
11. If necessary, ask a witness, who is able to honestly and positively corroborate your version, to be present.
12. Ask for an advisor to be present at the hearing and try to inform the Office of Student Conduct prior to the hearing for logistical planning.
13. Consult with the Center for Counseling and Well-Being or Project SPEAK for options of support and advocacy. Don't forget: Your advisor could be a support person or advocate. *(Call 405-974-2215 for more information about these services.)*
14. Inform your advisor that they cannot represent (i.e. speak on your behalf, present documents, etc.) the student. Students must represent themselves at formal hearings.
15. Tell the truth.

University of Central Oklahoma Center for Counseling & Well-Being

The Center for Counseling & Well-Being offers FREE individual, couples, and group counseling for UCO students.

Counseling can help with:

- Academic problems
- Addictions
- Anger
- Anxiety
- Body Image problems
- Communication skills
- Depression
- Eating or weight concern
- Educational/career decisions
- Family concerns
- Grief
- Trauma
- Homesickness
- Loneliness
- Low motivation/procrastination
- Relationship problems
- Roommate problems
- Self-esteem issues
- Sexual assault or abuse
- Sexual identity issues
- Stress management
- Substance abuse
- Time management

To schedule an appointment, call the Center for Counseling & Well-Being at 974-2215 or stop by our office at the Nigh University Center, Room 402. Visit our WEBSITE for more information: www.uco.edu/scc

University of Central Oklahoma - Disability Support Services

The Office of Disability Support Services (DSS) provides and coordinates mandated support services, auxiliary aids and accommodations for students with disabilities, which allow them to gain equal access to an education.

This office also serves as a resource to the University community and promotes awareness so that these students can participate in all facets of University life.

The University of Central Oklahoma complies with Sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the American with Disabilities Act of 1990. Students with disabilities who need special accommodations must make their requests by contacting Disability Support Services at (405) 974-2516. Students are encouraged to notify the instructor of any DSS approved accommodations by the end of the first week of class.

To request disability-related accommodations, please contact DSS. Remember, some accommodations require an extensive amount of time to fulfill (i.e. sign language interpreting, Braille, electronic text and audio textbooks). Early notification is requested in order to ensure equal access to class materials in a timely manner.

Project SPEAK

What is Project SPEAK?

(Support, Promote, Educate, Advocate for Knowledge)

- We support students, staff and faculty and assess their needs for FREE and in a private manner.
- We promote awareness through campus wide events and in class presentations about domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and bullying.
- We educate the campus community on the importance of being a proactive bystander. We want everyone to step up and speak out when they witness violence being committed.
- We provide advocacy and strive to assist everyone at UCO with a non-judgmental and compassionate demeanor at all times. We help those that have lost their voice to find their voice again. We empower them to SPEAK and break the silence.
- Our ultimate goal through Project SPEAK is to spread knowledge and develop a campus culture that fosters healthy relationships. Through knowledge, UCO community members will not condone violence or victim blaming, but will provide an environment that is conducive to every student's success.

What we will do for you?

Project SPEAK will inform those that have experienced sexual assault or some form of violence of all the services that are available to them and assist them in exploring the possible options to pursue. The staff will advocate for the individual as much, or as little, as he/she chooses. Project SPEAK collaborates with agencies and partners to provide referrals to: Obtain a VPO (Victims Protective Order), Obtain counseling & additional support services, file a no contact order, file a police report on or off campus, assist in relocation within the dorms, assist with student conduct process, address academic concerns & work to get schedule changes if needed.

Call: (405) 974-2224 to schedule an appointment. If your campus advocate is not available, you can ask to leave a voicemail and your campus advocate will get back to you as soon as possible.

Are you in immediate danger?

Call 911 or UCO Police (405) 974-2345

Can I just do a walk-in?

Walk-ins are welcomed if the advocate is available. Hours are Monday-Friday 9 a.m.-5 p.m. If there is no one in the office and you need help or just need someone to talk to, please go to the UCO Center for Counseling and Well Being Room #402. We are here to support and advocate for you.

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