

EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY FACULTY MANUAL

PART VI

Teaching and Curriculum
Regulations, Procedures, and
Academic Program Development

PART VI - TEACHING AND CURRICULUM REGULATIONS, PROCEDURES
AND ACADEMIC PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

SECTION IV

Student Privacy, Conduct, and Complaints
(Text moved from former Part V)

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- I. Student Educational Records
 - A. Access to Student Educational Records

The university administers student educational records in accordance with the provisions of the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#), also known as the Buckley Amendment or FERPA. This regulation provides that the student has a right of access to student educational records maintained by the university or any department or unit within the university, subject to certain exceptions which are outlined in this regulation maintained. This regulation also protects the confidentiality of personally identifiable information in student records. Except to the extent allowed by applicable law, personally identifiable information contained in a student educational record will not be disclosed. A copy of this regulation is maintained by the University Registrar. All members of the campus community should be thoroughly familiar with this regulation and comply with its provisions. (FS Resolution #12-12, January 2012)
 - B. Privacy of Student Educational Records

The university administers student educational records in accordance with the provisions of the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#), also known as the Buckley Amendment or FERPA. This regulation provides that the student has a right of access to student educational records maintained by the university or any department or unit within the university, subject to certain exceptions which are outlined in this regulation maintained. This regulation also protects the confidentiality of personally identifiable information in student records. Except to the extent allowed by applicable law, personally identifiable information contained in a student educational record will not be disclosed. A copy of this regulation is maintained by the University Registrar. All members of the campus community should be thoroughly familiar with this regulation and comply with its provisions. (FS Resolution #12-13, January 2012)
- II. Student Conduct
 - A. Disruptive Academic Behavior

East Carolina University is committed to providing each student with a rich, distinctive educational experience. Disruptive academic behavior impedes the learning environment and

hinders other students' learning. The course instructor has original purview over their class and may deny a student who is unduly disruptive the right to attend the class. Students who repeatedly violate reasonable standards of behavior in the classroom or other academic setting may be removed from the course by the instructor following appropriate notice. Students removed from a course under this policy will receive a "drop" according to university policy and are eligible for tuition refund as specified in the current tuition refund policy.

This policy does not restrict the instructor's prerogative to ask a disruptive student to leave an individual class session where appropriate or to refer the student to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities for violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

Disruptive Academic Behavior

Disruptive academic behavior is any behavior likely to substantially or repeatedly interfere with the normal conduct of instructional activities, including meetings with instructors outside of class. Examples of such behavior include, but are not limited to, making loud or distracting noises; using cell phones and other electronic devices without prior approval; repeatedly speaking without being recognized; frequently arriving late or leaving early from class; and making threats or personal insults. A verbal expression of a disagreement with the instructor or other students on an academic subject matter discussed within the course, during times when the instructor permits discussion, is not in itself disruptive academic behavior.

Procedure for Instructors

A student who does not follow reasonable standards of academic decorum should first receive a private verbal warning from the faculty member. The instructor should describe the behavior of concern to the student, explain that it is inappropriate, and ask the student to stop the behavior. If the behavior continues, the instructor should give the student a written warning indicating that the student will be removed from the course if the behavior does not cease. If the behavior persists, the instructor should discuss the situation with their department chair. If it is decided to remove the student from the course then the instructor should schedule a meeting with their department chair and the student to inform the student that they are being removed from the course. This decision must be communicated in writing to the student with a copy promptly forwarded to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities. The department chair must promptly communicate the decision in writing to the Office of the Registrar so that the student's schedule will be adjusted accordingly. Instructors should keep written documentation of all actions taken during this process.

If the behavior is threatening in nature or is likely to result in immediate harm, the faculty member should contact the East Carolina University Police Department for immediate assistance.

Student Appeals

The student may appeal the decision of the instructor and the department chair to remove them from the course to the academic dean of the college in which the course is located. The appeal must be received by the dean, in writing, within three working days of the date of the receipt of the decision by the student. The dean or dean's designee will review the appeal and the documentation, will discuss the appeal with the faculty member and, after discussion with the student and instructor, can affirm, reverse or modify the decision made by the instructor and department chair. The student, instructor and department chair will be notified of the appeal decision no later than three working days after receiving the appeal. The dean

will provide written notification of the appeal decision to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities, and also, if the original decision is overturned, to the Registrar's Office. If the decision is made that the student is to return to the course then the student will be allowed to immediately return to the classroom without academic penalty and the chair will work with the student and instructor to facilitate the completion of any missed work. The dean's decision is final.

*Footnote**

ECU provides reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. When communicating a warning to a student, faculty should ensure the discussion is private and refer any student who discloses a disability to Disability Support Services.

(FS Resolution #11-52, April 2011)

B. The Student Code of Conduct

The Student Code of Conduct and the procedures for its administration and enforcement exist to promote standards of behavior that create a positive environment in which students can learn and live. Instructors should be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct and refer students whose behavior violates community standards and/or disrupts any normal curricular or extracurricular functions of the university to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities or the Dean of Students. The Student Code of Conduct applies to on- and off-campus behavior of both individual students and student groups/organizations, and to both undergraduate and graduate students. The Student Conduct Process, which applies to all ECU students is available at: <http://www.ecu.edu/PRR/11/30/01>. When appropriate, instructors should follow the steps for addressing Disruptive Academic Behavior in the classroom or other academic settings as outlined in Part VI, Section IV of the *ECU Faculty Manual*. If student behavior appears threatening or likely to result in immediate physical harm, the faculty member should contact the ECU Police Department.

The Academic Integrity Policy governs student conduct directly related to academic activities involving ECU students. All alleged violations of the policy must be resolved in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Academic Integrity Policy as found in Part VI, Section II of the *ECU Faculty Manual*. The Academic Integrity Policy is available to students at:

<https://osrr.ecu.edu/>

(FS Resolution #10-92, December 2010)

III. Student Complaints

East Carolina University (ECU) is committed to maximizing student success and providing the highest quality educational experience. In general, the investments that faculty and students make in assuring this excellence are part of ECU's academic culture and are carried out in a very positive learning environment. Occasionally and for varied reasons, the experience can be negative. While this is a relatively rare event, ECU will provide a respectful and responsive avenue for students to lodge complaints concerning the performance of an instructor. In addition, ECU must consider due process in notifying instructors of such complaints and in permitting appropriate responses.

Complaints from students whose identity is known by a chair, dean or other administrative officer of the University will be properly investigated. Confidential student educational records, including student complaints containing personally identifiable information, shall remain confidential to the extent required by applicable law, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

This may require disclosure of some or all of an otherwise confidential student education record when rights protected by Due Process are at stake, as in situations where the results of a disciplinary proceeding could adversely impact an instructor's property interests, such as potential loss of tenure or termination of an instructor on a fixed term contract prior to expiration of the term. Complaints containing personally identifiable information from students whose identities are known by a chair, dean or other administrative officer of the University shall not be considered part of a "secret file," or "obtained from an anonymous source." Evaluations of an instructor's performance may include supervisor opinions based on observations and investigations prompted by such student complaints, so long as the content of the complaint is disclosed to the subject instructor at the initiation of the complaint, to the extent allowed by applicable law.

These provisions apply to those complaints by students about instructors received by unit (or other) administrators that are not covered by specific institutional policies, rules and regulations, such as those relating to academic integrity violations, grade disputes, sexual harassment, or any type of alleged discrimination. In general, the types of complaints covered by these provisions relate to violations of the reasonable expectation of students for a respectful, organized, and productive learning experience.

These provisions apply when a chair/unit (or other) administrator receives a verbal or written complaint from a student whose identity is known to the chair/unit (or other) administrator. The complaint may come directly from a student, a group of students, or from the Office of the Dean of Students, which maintains a student grievances and inquiries policy. If the complaint is against a Chair/unit Administrator, then the next higher-level administrator assumes the role of Chair/unit administrator in this process. Each step should be executed in a timely fashion (generally no more than five working days).

If the complaining student is willing to be identified to the instructor, a FERPA/Buckley waiver should be administered. A copy of any signed FERPA/Buckley waiver should be forwarded to the Registrar for inclusion in the student's permanent file.

If the student is unwilling to be identified to the instructor, but is known to the unit administrator, protection of personally identifiable information about the student will be maintained to the extent required by law.

Upon receipt of a complaint the Chair/unit administrator will investigate the complaint and engage in fact finding. The Chair/unit administrator will first meet with the complaining party and then with the instructor in question, but personally identifiable information regarding the student will not be revealed to the instructor at this stage unless the student has signed a FERPA/Buckley waiver.

If warranted, the Chair/ unit administrator will initiate other actions to investigate the complaint, e.g., visiting class, inspecting the syllabus, and examining grading records. The investigation may continue even if the student withdraws the complaint.

If the complaint is substantiated, then a form/letter documenting, to the extent allowed by law, the investigation and its resolution will be included in instructor's personnel file. Typically, a copy of the student complaint or an administrator's record of a verbal complaint, redacted to remove all personally identifiable information about the student, will be one of the items placed in the file. The instructor will receive timely notification of the addition to his or her personnel file and will be advised of his or her right to include a response in the personnel file, and of potential avenues for appeal as outlined

in Part XII, Section I of the Faculty Manual. Disclosure of some or all of an otherwise confidential student education record may occur when rights protected by Due Process are at stake, such as those instances where the results of a disciplinary proceeding could adversely impact an instructor's property interests.

If the complaint is not substantiated, this resolution is communicated to the instructor and the complaining party without inclusion of any record in the personnel file. At the option of the instructor, documentation, to the extent allowed by law, of this resolution may be placed in the personnel file. The student may contact the next higher administrator (usually the dean) with concerns or questions. (FS Resolution #16-42, May 2016)