

# Policy on Classroom Behavior

## I. Introduction

The goal of Auburn University at Montgomery and its faculty and students is to foster a dynamic environment of higher learning where all students develop analytical skills, learn to think critically and communicate effectively, promote inquiry, pursue knowledge and prepare for productive careers. Behavior in the classroom that impedes teaching and learning and creates obstacles to this goal is considered disruptive and therefore, subject to sanctions. The purpose of this policy is to create and protect an optimum learning experience; it should not be considered punitive by students or by instructors.

At the classroom level, clear guidelines for behavior and early intervention are the foundation for an intellectually stimulating experience for students and instructors alike. Instructors are encouraged to include in their syllabi guidelines for classroom behavior. Instructors who state these guidelines early and enforce them at the first appearance of disruptive behavior prevent minor episodes of classroom misconduct from escalating into serious confrontations and help transgressors to avoid the more serious consequences of such actions.

Disagreement expressed in a civil fashion, eccentricity, idiosyncrasy, and unconventional behavior are not, per se, disruptive to the classroom experience. Faculty members have a professional responsibility to set reasonable limits on the expression of opinions while treating students with dignity, respect and understanding and guiding classroom activities.

Examples of inappropriate behavior in the classroom (including the virtual classroom of e-mail, chat rooms, telephony, and web activities associated with courses) may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Arriving after a class has begun;
- Use of tobacco products;
- Monopolizing discussion;
- Persistent speaking out of turn;
- Distractive talking, including cell phone usage;
- Engaging in activities during class time that are unrelated to the class (i.e., text messaging, reading newspapers, completing puzzles, etc.)
- Audio or video recording of classroom activities or the use of electronic devices without the permission of the instructor;
- Refusal to comply with reasonable instructor directions;
- Employing insulting language or gestures; and
- Verbal, psychological or physical threats, harassment, and physical violence.

## I. Resolution of Student Complaints

- A. A student who has a valid, documentable complaint against any department or employee of the university or about any program or service offered by the university may file a written complaint along with documentation, either a) with the supervisor of the office, services or program which provided grounds for the complaint, or b) with that individual's supervisor. The complaint will be documented by the supervisor, noting the name of the complainant, the grounds for the complaint and the date of filing. The student is encouraged to file the complaint as soon as possible after the incident occurred. A copy should be sent to the Office of the Dean of Students.
- B. The supervisor, student and person giving grounds for the complaint will meet within five school days of the filing of the complaint to attempt to resolve the matter. The student must be prepared to present a resolution acceptable to him or her. It is expected that most complaints will be resolved at this point. The supervisor will record the outcome of the discussion.
- C. If the discussion has ended without resolution and if further investigation is necessary to resolve the complaint, the supervisor will coordinate with his or her supervisor and conduct the investigation within 10 working days following the discussion, keeping notes and results of his or her investigations, along with a recommendation for resolution, during a second meeting with the parties involved. The parties will again attempt to negotiate a resolution acceptable to all. The results of this meeting will be transcribed.
- D. If the student does not agree to the resolution as proposed, developed or modified during the second discussion, he or she may file an appeal to the Chancellor or his or her designee, within five school days of the second discussion. In the appeal letter, the student must state with specificity his or her desired resolutions.
- E. The appeal will be decided within 20 working days, based on the student's letter of appeal, as well as, all notes and documentation produced during the discussions. The Chancellor or his or her designee may speak with all of the parties involved, or with none, if he or she sees fit; however, the appeal officer will not speak with only one of the parties without also speaking with the other(s). The decision of the Chancellor or his or her designee will be communicated, in writing, to the student.
- F. Subsequent appeals will follow the procedures in D and E above, through the Chancellor, who will make the final determination.
- G. At whatever stage the complaint is resolved, its resolution must be documented and recorded and a signed and dated copy of the record forwarded to the Office of the Dean of Students and the appropriate vice Chancellor over the department. The original will then be returned to the department where the complaint initiated.

All written and otherwise recorded materials related to the filing and resolution of student complaints are to be considered education records, and, as such, are protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("The Buckley Amendment").