The Most Frequently Asked Questions by STUDENTS about Student Conduct

1. **If I want to file a complaint against another student, what do I do?**
   
   Any member of the University community (faculty, staff, student, or community stakeholder) may file a complaint against any student for misconduct reasons. Complaints should be prepared in writing and directed to the Office of Student Conduct, which is responsible for the administration of the University student conduct system. All complaints should be submitted as soon as possible after the incident takes place, preferably within forty-eight (48) business hours.

   Complaints may be submitted online at [http://www.uco.edu/conduct](http://www.uco.edu/conduct), hand-delivered, or faxed to (405) 974-3817. In addition, the Director of Student Conduct may be reached in the Lillard Administration Building 211, (405) 974-2361 or amartinez9@uco.edu or studentconduct@uco.edu.

2. **If I have been contacted by the Office of Student Conduct, what should I do? What is going to happen?**
   
   Students may receive a phone call, email, text, face-to-face request and/or a letter from the Office of Student Conduct or another University Official (i.e. instructor, Department of Housing staff member, etc.) requesting them to make an appointment to meet with the Director of Student Conduct or designee by a certain deadline. If in an email or letter, the communication will describe any complaints that may have been filed against the student(s). This notification should be taken very seriously. Students should make an appointment at their earliest convenience. Ignoring this notification and/or failing to make an appointment may result in a hold being placed on their University account or other more severe disciplinary actions.

   The Office of Student Conduct shall provide due process for students by providing notice and seeking to hear the various perspectives from each complaint. There are four (4) possible outcomes to an Informal Conduct Meeting, which are listed below:
   
   a. The complaint is dismissed after an investigation and accused student is found to be “not responsible.”
   
   b. Responsibility is accepted by accused and sanctions may or may not be applied without formal hearing.
   
   c. A formal Student Conduct Hearing is arranged where accused may be found responsible or not responsible for alleged behavior.
   
   d. The case is deemed to be inconclusive and the complaint is placed in the accused person’s file, as an established paper trail. The accused is advised that the case may be re-opened if further adverse information about the incident is received and/or acquired. (The accused may choose to appeal the contents of their file at a later date.)

3. **What if I don’t show up for my meeting with a representative from the Office of Student Conduct?**
   
   Ignoring the attempts of the Office of Student Conduct to make contact with you will not make the situation any easier. In addition, failing to appear for an Informal Conduct Meeting and/or Student Conduct Hearing will not help your situation either. If you fail to appear for an Informal Conduct Meeting or Student Conduct Hearing, then a hold may be placed on your University account or a decision may be made about your situation without the benefit of your input and perspective being heard.

   Note the following University violations from the UCO Code of Student Conduct, Section III. H:


4. **What is the difference between an Informal Conduct Meeting and a Student Conduct Hearing?**

An Informal Conduct Meeting is an initial meeting between a representative from the Office of Student Conduct and a person allegedly involved in a case of misconduct. During this meeting, the mission and purpose of the Office of Student Conduct and the rights of the students are explained. Furthermore, this meeting is an informal questioning part of the investigation. An Informal Conduct Meeting may or may not be audio-taped.

The Office of Student Conduct conducts investigations to determine if complaint(s) have merit and/or if they can be addressed informally by mutual consent of the parties involved on a basis acceptable to the Director of Student Conduct. If the complaint(s) cannot be handled informally, the Director of Student Conduct or assigned designee may later serve in the same matter as the student conduct body in a formal hearing. A determination of responsibility may or may not occur during or directly after the Informal Conduct Meetings.

A Student Conduct Hearing is formal and is always voice recorded. The Student Conduct Hearing is typically the conclusion of a case investigation. The findings from the preceding investigation, if an investigation occurred, shall be revealed. The Director of Student Conduct or designated student conduct body, typically the Committee on Student Conduct, will determine whether or not the accused is responsible for the alleged behavior after the hearing and assign sanctions, if appropriate.

Please refer to section III. of the UCO Code of Student Conduct for further details about hearings.

5. **How do I prepare for a Student Conduct Hearing?**

In preparation for a formal hearing, the following steps should prove helpful for students:

- Tell the truth.
- Read the current Code of Student Conduct.
- Request a copy of the Student Conduct Hearing outline, if you do not already have one, and review it.
- Inquire about the ground rules of the Student Conduct Hearing in advance.
- Prepare a 2-3 minute opening statement that will outline your stance during the hearing.
- Prepare a 2-3 minute concluding statement that will summarize your stance and highlight your desired outcome for the case.
- Gather your thoughts and write down your version of the incident in a chronological narrative and/or bulleted format.
- Be prepared to read or tell your version of the incident to the Director of Student Conduct or a student conduct body consisting of faculty, students, and possibly staff community members.
- Request to review the redacted copy of documentation (the findings of the University investigation) that may be presented during the student conduct hearing.
- Write down any relevant open-ended and/or closed-ended questions for your accuser or the alleged victim, which may help to prove your version of the incident.
- When you address the designated student conduct body, make eye contact with them. Their task is to determine what more than likely occurred. You can make their task a little bit easier if they can get a feel for you verbally and non-verbally.
- Be prepared to answer potentially and seemingly adverse or uncomfortable questions truthfully.
- Be respectful to the panel members of the student conduct body and avoid being argumentative, rude, and overly defensive when answering their questions.
- If any, ask an eye-witnesses, circumstantial witnesses, or character witnesses to be present, who may be able to provide an objective, yet favorable account of the incident for you.
- If necessary, ask a character witness to be present on your behalf.
- If necessary, ask for an advisor to be present at the hearing and inform the Director of Student Conduct, no later than two (2) University business days in advance.
- Inform the advisor that they cannot represent the student. Students must represent themselves at Student Conduct Hearings.
Tell the truth.

6. **Will I be allowed to bring my parents and/or my attorney to the Student Conduct Hearing?**
   According to the UCO Code of Student Conduct (section III.), the complainant and the accused have the right to be assisted by any advisor they choose, at their own expense. The advisor may be an attorney. The complainant and/or the accused are responsible for presenting his or her own case; therefore, advisors are not permitted to speak or to participate directly in any hearing before a student conduct body.

7. **What if I was not aware of the University policy that I was accused of violating?**
   Each student who voluntarily enrolls at the University of Central Oklahoma also voluntarily assumes an obligation to obey all rules and regulations made by properly constituted authorities, to preserve faithfully all property provided by the State for his or her education, and to discharge such duties as a student with diligence, fidelity and honor. Any student found to be responsible for misconduct is subject to the disciplinary sanctions outlined in the UCO Code of Student Conduct, section III. P.

   Therefore, each student is encouraged to read the Code of Student Conduct prior to and/or during their time of enrollment. Each student is also encouraged to consult with the Director of Student Conduct or another University Official if they are unsure about the policies.

   The University of Central Oklahoma distributes and makes available an updated version of the Code of Student Conduct at the beginning of each fall semester via distribution through:
   a. The first edition of the Vista newspaper (Campus newspaper),
   b. All University Residential Halls,
   c. The Housing and Dining Office,
   d. All Academic Colleges (i.e. the College of Liberal Arts, College of Business, etc.),
   e. The UCO Student Conduct website— [http://www.uco.edu/conduct](http://www.uco.edu/conduct),
   f. The Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs,
   g. The Department of Athletics,
   h. The Office of Academic Affairs,
   i. Legal Services,
   j. The UCO Police Services Office Station,
   k. The Office of Student Conduct,
   l. and various other University venues and offices

8. **What if the incident happened off campus?**
   Generally, University jurisdiction and discipline shall be limited to conduct which occurs on or near University premises or which adversely affects the University Community and/or the pursuit of its objectives. Thus, even if it happens off campus, it may still be a violation of the Code of Student Conduct, which will be handled by the Office of Student Conduct.

9. **If I am being charged in court, why do I also have to go through the University process as well?**
   Contrary to popular belief, this is not double jeopardy, which only applies to the criminal court system. Students are held responsible by the University of Central Oklahoma for their behavior under the UCO Code of Student Conduct.

   University conduct proceedings may be instituted against a student with violation of a law which is also a violation of the UCO Code of Student Conduct; such as, when both violations result from the same incident. Proceedings under the UCO Code of Student Conduct may be carried out prior to, simultaneously with, or following civil or criminal proceedings off-campus.

10. **What if I lie about my involvement in the incident?**
    Lying is not encouraged. Lying during student conduct proceedings is a violation of University policy. According to the Code of Student Conduct, section III. G., “abuse of the student conduct system includes but is not limited to . . . falsification, distortion, or misrepresentation of information before a student conduct body.” Thus, lying may be cause to apply additional disciplinary sanctions, if discovered.
11. What if I do not complete an assigned sanction?
According to the Code of Student Conduct, section III. G., “abuse of the student conduct system includes but is not limited to . . . failure to comply with the sanction(s) imposed under the Code of Student Conduct.” All students are encouraged to comply with the policies enforced by the Office of Student Conduct and other University Officials. If sanctions are not completed by a student, then a hold may be placed on their University account and/or more severe disciplinary actions may be taken, including suspension.

12. What does “probation” mean?
As defined by the UCO Code of Student Conduct, section III. P., probation is a written reprimand for violation of specific [University] regulations. Probation is for a designated period of time and includes the probability of more severe sanctions if the student is found to be in violation of any institutional regulation(s) during the probationary period. A student may be placed on probation in Housing or on a University level.

13. Will disciplinary sanctions appear on my academic transcript?
Usually, disciplinary sanctions will not appear on a student’s transcript, unless the student was found responsible for academic misconduct and results in suspension or expulsion. However, there may be exceptions, depending upon the severity of the violation(s) and resulting sanction(s). For instance, long suspensions and/or expulsions may be noted on academic transcripts.

14. What violations of the Code of Student Conduct are most likely to result in suspensions or expulsions?
Typically, when responsibility is determined in the following types of cases, suspensions or expulsions may be applied as the appropriate sanctions:

- Arson
- Burglary
- Drug possession, Drug use, and/or drug distribution
- Extreme and/or intentional misuse of computer facilities
- Hazing
- Kidnapping
- Plagiarism (extremely blatant and/or repeat cases)
- Sexual harassment
- Sexual misconduct (i.e. rape)
- Several repeated violations
- Stalking
- Thefts (including identity theft incidents)
- Threats of violent behavior
- Violent behavior
- Weapons violations (possession and/or usage)

The above list is representative, but not exhaustive.

15. Will potential employers have access to my conduct records?
No. However, if a student completes an Educational Records Release Authorization form or an official release form from the potential employer, then the Office of Student Conduct may release the requested information regarding your student conduct file.

Potential employers may require background checks before making official hires. The University of Central Oklahoma cannot disclose information about your student conduct records, unless we have received written permission from you. These restrictions are based upon the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, which protects the privacy of student education records.

16. What is FERPA?
The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.
FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance.

For further information about the details of FERPA, please go to section VI. A. of the UCO Code of Student Conduct or to http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html.

17. **Will my parents be notified if I am found “RESPONSIBLE” for violating a University Policy?**

In efforts to help reduce the increasingly dangerous alcohol consumption incidents, parents are sometimes notified when a student is found to be responsible for a University violation. Yet, University of Central Oklahoma encourages students to speak with their parents on their own.

FERPA allows for Universities to contact the parents of students who are under 21 and found responsible for violating any local, state, and/or federal laws. Therefore, parents may be contacted if the aforementioned criterion is met. Additionally, parents may be contacted, without consent of the student, if their student’s health, safety, and/or welfare are in clear and present danger.

18. **What if I am found responsible for violating a University policy and assigned a sanction with which I do not agree?**

In general, there are two (2) types of student conduct appeals. First, appeals that do not involve temporary suspension, suspension, expulsion, credit recession, and/or degree revocation are handled by the Vice President for Student Affairs. Secondly, appeals that do involve temporary suspension, suspension, expulsion, credit recession, and/or degree revocation are handled by the Committee on Student Conduct. The Committee on Student Conduct is a committee consisting of faculty, students, and sometimes staff members.

**Appeals handled by the Vice President for Student Affairs:** A decision reached by the student conduct body or a sanction imposed by the Director of Student Conduct may be appealed by accused students or complainants to Vice President for Student Affairs. To initiate an appeal, the student must make the request. The Office of Student Conduct Appeal Form should be completed and submitted with the submitted date and your signature within three (3) University days, after the disciplinary decision is rendered and received. Please refer to your current copy of the University of Central Oklahoma Code of Student Conduct concerning the appeal process and your rights as a UCO student. Written appeals can be submitted to Dr. Myron Pope at the Lillard Administration building, Rm. 213 (box 158 by mail) or by fax at (405) 974-3817. The decision of the Vice President for Student Affairs shall be final.

**Appeals handled by the Committee on Student Conduct:** To initiate an appeal, a student must make the request. The Office of Student Conduct Appeal Form should be completed and submitted with the submitted date and your signature within three (3) University days, after the disciplinary decision is rendered and received. Please refer to your current copy of the University of Central Oklahoma Code of Student Conduct concerning the appeal process and your rights as a UCO student. If the student appeals a decision of suspension, expulsion, degree revocation, or rescission of credit, the decision will stand until after a hearing before the Committee on Student Conduct. Any act by a properly constituted committee, at which a quorum of the committee is present, shall be binding.

A decision to temporarily suspend becomes effective immediately, but may be overturned after a hearing before the Committee on Student Conduct. Hearings will be held as soon as practical after the student makes the request.

The Director of Student Conduct shall serve as the University’s representative in appeals before the Committee on Student Conduct. The University Legal Counsel shall serve as the advisor to the Committee on Student Conduct on matters of procedure.
19. What is considered hazing?

"Hazing" means an activity which recklessly or intentionally endangers the following:

1) mental health;
2) physical health; or
3) safety

of an individual for the purpose of initiation or admission into or affiliation with any organization operating subject to the sanction of the public or private school or of any institution of higher education in this state.

b) "Endanger the mental health" shall include but not be limited to any activity, except those activities authorized by law, which would subject the individual to extreme mental stress, such as prolonged sleep deprivation, forced prolonged exclusion from social contact, forced conduct which could result in extreme embarrassment, or any other forced activity which could adversely affect the mental health or dignity of the individual.

c) "Endanger the physical health" shall include but not be limited to any brutality of a physical nature, such as whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the elements, forced consumption of any food, alcoholic beverage or intoxicating liquor as defined in Section 506 of Title 37 of the Oklahoma Statutes, non-intoxicating beverage as defined in Section 163.2 of Title 37 of the Oklahoma Statutes, drug, controlled dangerous substance, or any other forced physical activity which could adversely affect the physical health or safety of the individual.

d) “Endanger the safety” shall include, but not be limited to freedom from the occurrence or risk of injury, danger, or loss of property, finances, or basic rights which could adversely affect the living conditions of the individual.

Reporting Hazing Activity

The entire University community shares the challenge and responsibility of reporting hazing activity. Indeed, hazing may occur in academic, Greek, student athletic, band, military, cultural, and / or other interest organizations. Apathy and / or consent in the presence of hazing are not neutral acts; they shall be considered violations of this policy. If you are aware of or have reluctantly participated in any form of hazing, then please contact one (1) of the following offices to report the matter(s):

- Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life, Nigh University Center, 422, (405) 974-2580,
- Office of Student Conduct, Lillard Administration Building, 213 (405) 974-2361, or
- The UCO Police Department, Public Safety Building, (405) 974-2345

20. What is the difference between Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault?

Sexual Harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature found in the context list in the UCO Code of Student Conduct, section VI.

Sexual Assault is defined as having non-consensual sexual contact or sexual intercourse with another person without the consent of that person. Consent is defined as positive cooperation due to an exercise of free will. Please see the UCO Code of Student Conduct, section VI. for more details on this subject.

21. What do I do if I have a problem with an Instructor that I do not feel is treating me fairly?

First, attempt to speak with the Instructor about your grievance in an informal setting before or after class or during a pre-arranged meeting during the instructor’s office hours. If these efforts are not satisfactory to you, then follow the procedures in the UCO Code of Student Conduct, section IV.

A large portion of the questions and answers were influenced by and adapted from the Judicial Affairs websites of the University of Colorado at Boulder, Oklahoma State University, and the University of Maryland.