

Recommended Complaints Process

As of September 2023, all complaints against faculty are to be routed through the Office of Faculty Affairs. The purpose of this routing is to ensure that faculty are made aware of their rights and the process to expect, that faculty administrators are aware of their responsibilities and resources available, and that the complaint is routed to the appropriate investigatory office.

Level Rating Complaints

Once a complaint is received by the Office of Faculty Affairs, it will be reviewed and given a level rating.* A faculty administrator within the faculty affairs office and a staff administrator who has legal training must be involved in the assignment of a level to any complaint. Note that any complaint that involves an allegation related to civil rights, discrimination, or retaliation must be referred to CREI, regardless of level. Similarly, any complaint that involves an allegation related to fraud, waste, or abuse must be referred to OREC, regardless of level.

Level	Description	Example	Potential Action	Notification
1	Complaints that do not involve violation of rules, regulations, or laws, and do not indicate issues with performance or workplace disruption	-Disliking someone's color choice for clothing -Availability of parking spots -Protected activity, such as speaking in area of expertise or in role	Document	-Send notice to faculty; note that complaints are common, a complaint does not indicate wrongdoing, resources if they have concerns; no retaliation -Send notice to head, noting for informational purposes
2	Complaints that involve an isolated incident that had a minor impact on performance or workplace disruption	-Person to person outburst -Going too fast through slides that interferes with learning -Refusal to collaborate/cooperate -Covering topics unrelated to course	Refer to the department head to address, note that can be closed, reviewed, or addressed with faculty member	-Send notice to faculty; note complaints are common, being referred to head who could follow up if needed, resources, no retaliation -Send notice to head, provide information on process, request information on resolution, note to follow up if identify issue that warrants personnel action

3	<p>Isolated incident with a major impact on performance or workplace disruption</p> <p>[Note that complaints that involve repeated incidents with minor impact could be raised to this level by the supervisor if there is a history of similar issues]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Person to person outbursts -Dereliction of duties, such as frequent class cancellations -Professional uncivility, such as personal public criticism of colleague -Hostile interactions, such as badgering a guest presenter 	<p>Refer to department head to address, copy to dean</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Send notice to faculty, being referred to head for review, resources and process, no retaliation, no contact -Send notice to head, provide information on process, request information on resolution, note to follow up if personnel action is needed
4	<p>Complaints that involve conduct related to waste, abuse, bullying, and acute unprofessional behavior</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Funding misuse -Extreme outbursts or behavior -Inaccurate credentials -Inappropriate use of resources 	<p>Refer to the Office of Risk, Ethics, & Compliance for investigation OR Refer to VPR if research misconduct</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Send notice to faculty, being referred to OREC/VPR and process to expect, resources, no retaliation, no contact -Send notice to head, being referred to OREC and process to expect, resources
5	<p>Serious misconduct</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sexual harassment or assault -Fraud -Activity that could constitute a federal crime -Falsification of research 	<p>Refer to the Office of Risk, Ethics and Compliance for investigation Vice President of Research if research misconduct</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Send notice to faculty, being referred to OREC/VPR and process to expect, resources, no retaliation, no contact -Send notice to head, dean, being referred to OREC/VPR and process to expect, resources -Delay notice if legal issues pending/under investigation

[Note that Texas law includes mandatory reporting and the system and university also have mandatory reporting requirements. Failures to report in accordance with law could have legal implications and failures to report in accordance with system and university requirements could have employment implications.]

*Note that the Office of Faculty Affairs is not the investigative body in these processes, and this is only for the purpose of distributing the complaint to the appropriate party/parties.