



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER™
EL PASO

Graduate School *of* Biomedical Sciences

2016-17
Student Handbook

Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences 2016-17 Student Handbook

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Preface

The purpose of this publication is to assemble a set of guidelines and requirements that all students are subject to at the time of admission into the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso (TTUHSC El Paso) Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (GSBS).

The TTUHSC El Paso GSBS reserves the right to make changes to this handbook as necessary, with or without notice. Every effort will be made to notify all faculty and students when changes are made. The TTUHSC El Paso GSBS reserves the right to institute, after due notice and during the course of a student's work toward a degree, any new ruling that may be necessary for the good of the university and therefore, ultimately, of recipients of its degrees. Normally, a student may graduate under the provisions of the catalog in effect at the time of enrollment in the TTUHSC El Paso GSBS. The TTUHSC El Paso GSBS also reserves the right to make changes to courses as needed. The right to make changes to tuition and fees is reserved as regulated by the Board of Regents.

All students are subject to the requirements listed in the TTUHSC Center El Paso Institutional Student Handbook Code of Professional and Academic Conduct, the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences catalog, and the guidelines and requirements for graduate students given below.

Students with disabilities who need assistance should contact the Office of Students Services located in room 1210 of the Medical Education Building.

elpaso.ttuhschool.edu/student-services

Statement of Accreditation

Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award baccalaureate, masters, doctoral, and professional degrees. Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso is a part of Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center and is currently seeking separate accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center.

Mission Statement

The mission of Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center at El Paso is to improve the lives of people in our State and our community by focusing on the unique health care needs of socially and culturally diverse border populations through excellence in integrated education, research, and patient care.

The Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (GSBS) supports the institutional mission by providing superior graduate education, as well as leadership in increasing knowledge and understanding through scholarship and research.

The **mission of the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences** is to educate the next generation of scientists and health-related professionals by providing a dynamic research environment oriented to satisfy the learning needs of a multicultural group of students by fostering creativity and discovery.

The faculty and staff of the GSBS are committed to following the institutional goals and measurable priorities enabling the fulfillment of this mission, including:

- Training competent health professionals and scientists
- Increasing externally funded, peer-reviewed research — especially National Institutes of Health (NIH)-funded research with an emphasis on cancer, infectious disease, neuropsychiatric disorders and diabetes
- Improving access to quality health care for TTUHSC El Paso's target populations
- Preparing students of the health professions for an increasingly diverse workforce and patient population
- Providing leadership in the development of partnerships and collaborations to improve community health

Guidelines and Requirements

Academic Probation

Purpose: To ensure understanding of the academic performance standards set forth by the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso (TTUHSC El Paso) Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (GSBS)

All students enrolled in the GSBS are required to maintain a high level of performance and comply fully with the policies of the institution. The GSBS reserves the right to place on probation or to dismiss any graduate student who does not maintain satisfactory academic standing or who fails to conform to the regulations of TTUHSC El Paso. Probation applies for a designated period of time and may lead to more severe disciplinary sanctions if the student is found to be in violation of any institutional regulation(s) during the probationary period.

1. If a student's graduate GPA for a particular semester falls below 3.0, the student is placed on academic probation. The student must make a 3.0 GPA or better in the next semester in which he/she is enrolled. Failure to maintain a 3.0 GPA or higher

in each succeeding semester may result in academic dismissal from the GSBS. Regulations governing scholastic probation are based on semester grade-point averages and apply regardless of overall grade-point average.

2. The minimum requirement for graduation is a cumulative GPA of 3.0 in all courses taken for graduate credit.
3. Students are also required to follow the code of professional and academic conduct. Failure to do so may be grounds for dismissal (see the TTUHSC El Paso Student Affairs Handbook for further information).

Any student who has been suspended must appeal to the GSBS for reinstatement, if desired.

Students who have been dismissed must appeal to the GSBS for reinstatement, if desired. Procedures to appeal academic dismissal are found in the Student Complaints section of this handbook.

Student Complaints

Purpose: To define the process for students to resolve and/or file a complaint regarding any academic issue, except those described in the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso (TTUHSC El Paso) Student Affairs Handbook, such as:

- Misconduct
- Sexual misconduct
- Student records
- Employment at TTUHSC El Paso
- Other types of mistreatment

It is the policy of the TTUHSC El Paso Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (GSBS) to affirm the right of its students to a prompt and fair resolution of any academic complaint or grievance. The Student Hearing Committee is responsible for administering the GSBS's policies regarding student grievances and ensuring that due process is afforded to all parties concerned.

All student disciplinary hearings are closed, and all related information is protected from public disclosure.

Grade Appeals

A student who wishes to appeal a grade must file a formal, written grade appeal within five business days of the beginning of the next semester. A grade can be formally appealed only when there is demonstrable evidence that prejudice, or arbitrary or capricious action on the part of the instructor has influenced the grade. **The burden of proof that such an unfair influence has affected a grade rests with the student who appeals the grade.**

Faculty members are vested with the authority to establish course requirements and standards of performance. It is the responsibility of faculty to articulate and communicate course requirements and standards of performance to students at the beginning of each course and apply all grading criteria uniformly and in a timely manner. Final grades posted online by faculty/staff of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (GSBS) are presumed to be accurate and final. Any student who has questions about a grade received in a course should ordinarily seek to resolve the issue by first consulting with the instructor. If the issue has not been resolved after consultation with the instructor, and the student believes there are grounds for appealing the grade, the student may invoke the procedure outlined below.

The complaint policy is not applicable when it is the instructor's judgment that the quality of the student's work is at issue. The assessment of the quality of the student's academic performance is one of the major responsibilities of GSBS faculty members and is solely and properly their responsibility.

During the academic complaint resolution process, the student may enroll in and attend didactic courses and is responsible for all tuition and fees.

Grading Policies

Introduction: The evaluation of students is the responsibility of the faculty of the GSBS. Faculty have an obligation to the students, to the school, and to society to award passing grades only to those students who have demonstrated mastery of the course material. In addition to evaluating student knowledge and skills, the faculty has the obligation to determine whether student behavior or conduct is suitable to represent the scientific community. It is inappropriate to allow a student to progress or graduate when unacceptable behavior or unprofessional conduct, such as cheating or plagiarism, has occurred. Refer to the GSBS student handbook for further information regarding unacceptable and unprofessional conduct.

Every attempt will be made to apply the principles of fairness and due process when considering the actions of the faculty or administration that might adversely affect the

students. Comments, questions, and concerns should be directed to the Office of Student Affairs.

Students Covered By This Policy: These grading policies apply to students enrolled in the courses necessary to complete the requirements for the Master of Science in Biomedical Sciences and the Post-Baccalaureate Certificate at the GSBS. These policies do not cover the course work done for the other degree programs in which the student may be enrolled.

Responsibilities for Monitoring of Student Progress: The associate dean for the Office of Student Affairs, in conjunction with the dean of the GSBS, are responsible for monitoring the progress of GSBS students during their course of study in order to provide or refer students to the appropriate academic or personal counseling services, if applicable.

The Office of Student Affairs will provide staff support to the GSBS as requested. The associate dean for student affairs serves as advocate for due process for students.

Responsibilities of the Dean: The dean, as the chief academic officer, has the power to make final decisions in actions taken concerning students. During a student hearing procedure, the decision of the dean regarding the hearing committee's findings and recommendations is final.

Review of Coursework: The GSBS uses a letter grade system from A to F. Graduate credit is only given for courses completed with a grade of A, B, or C in elective courses. Please consult the individual course syllabus for specific grading policies for each course.

Student progress will be reviewed by the dean and/or associate academic dean by at least the end of each semester in the context of all course work, student's professionalism, evidence of progressive improvement and personal circumstances.

A semester review will occur in January of each year. The dean and/or associate academic dean will consider all students after completion of the fall semester.

If a student is considered "at risk" they will be placed on academic probation. A proposed learning plan will be devised in order to strengthen identified deficiencies. It is the responsibility of the student to follow the learning plan and to follow up with the dean and/or associate academic dean regarding progress.

Definition of "At Risk": If a student has incomplete, or missing courses; if the course director or faculty identifies the student at risk based on poor performance on given assignments or low test scores; also, if there is professionalism concern in regards to the student's behavior.

Remediation for at risk students is recommended by the course director and agreed on by the dean. However, students may be dismissed without academic watch or warning being designated. The dean and/or associate academic dean may also choose to remove “Good Standing” as a disciplinary action. Remedial work will not be counted as elective time in satisfying the conditions for graduation.

Transcript Notation: When a student receives a final failing grade in a course and it is not required for the student to repeat the course, then a grade of “F” (Fail) will be entered on the transcript.

If a student decides to withdraw from a course after the last day to drop a class or withdraw completely from the university, the student needs to send an email to the GSBS office stating his/her intent to drop the course or withdraw. Once the GSBS office receives the student’s email, the GSBS office will notify the course director and ask for the current course grade.

Based on the current grade, the student will receive either a W (if withdrawing with a passing grade at the time of withdrawal) or a WF (if withdrawing and failing the class).

Students who receive a grade of C or below in core courses are required to repeat the course. Students who receive a grade of C or below in two or more core courses are subject to dismissal.

All grades are converted to points in computing grade point averages. Instructors may NOT choose to add a plus or minus to the grade.

Note: Students are responsible for checking and following the academic calendar.

Documentation of Student Academic Performance: All grades will be recorded in WebRaider and will be available in the student’s electronic portfolio. The TTUHSC El Paso Office of the Registrar maintains the official transcript of all students.

Graduation Policies: Normal progression through the GSBS curriculum requires that a student demonstrates a consistently satisfactory level of performance and professional behavior. Students will be expected to complete the curriculum within two years of the initial date of matriculation.

The curriculum may be extended due to a leave of absence or academic difficulty requiring repetition of an academic year as per this policy. However, inability to complete the curriculum in two years and/or the entire curriculum within five years will result in dismissal. For more information regarding graduation requirements, refer to the General Information section of this catalog.

General Issues: Progress is not bound by categorical or arithmetic assessment of student performance but rather reviewed based on each student in the context of their academic achievement and any other circumstances that may influence performance. If a student exhibits conduct or behavior inconsistent with professionalism, a grade of F may be given.

Such conduct or behavior that occurs beyond the boundaries of a class or rotation may also be considered. In that case, the student will be referred for disposition of the case under the Code of Professional and Academic Conduct in the TTUHSC El Paso Student Affairs Handbook.

Final grades will be reviewed at the end of each semester. Students who receive a grade of F may meet with the course director to discuss their academic performance and possible actions. Students who receive a grade of C or below in core courses are required to repeat the course. Students who are required to repeat a core course(s) may not take courses from the next academic year during the period of repetition.

Challenging Student Records or Grades: Students have the right to challenge records, grades, and information directly relating to them. A student who wishes to appeal a grade must file a formal, written grade appeal within five business days of the beginning of the next semester.

A grade can be formally appealed only when there is demonstrable evidence that prejudice, or arbitrary or capricious action on the part of the instructor has influenced the grade. The burden of proof that such an unfair influence has affected a grade rests with the student who appeals the grade.

Grade Point Chart

Grade	Point	Grade Interpretations
A	4	Excellent; meets degree requirements
B	3	Good; meets degree requirements
C	2	Below average; fails to meet requirements for core courses. Average; meets requirements for elective courses.
D	1	Below average; fails to meet program requirements.
F	0	Failing; does not meet degree requirements
I	0	Incomplete; given only when a student's work is satisfactory in quality but, due to reasons beyond their control, has not been completed. It is not given in lieu of an F. The instructor assigning the grade will stipulate in writing at the time the grade is given, the conditions under which the "I" was given and how it can be removed. It is the student's responsibility to obtain

		a grade change form from the appropriate program office and to obtain signatures from the appropriate faculty. In the event that the “I” remains on the student's record for a year without completion, it will automatically be replaced with an F. Withdrawal from the institution will not waive this policy, nor will it change the conditions under which the “I” may be removed.
W	0	Withdrawal; given for a course officially dropped before the deadline set in the academic calendar or if a class is dropped after the deadline but the student has a passing grade at the time of withdrawal.
WF	0	Withdrawal/Failing; given for a course dropped after the deadline set in the academic calendar, when the student's work is not passing at the time the course is dropped or when the student is required by the associate dean/dean to drop the course for failure to attend.

Grading Scale

The following scale applies to all courses at the GSBS.

1. 100-90 = A
2. 89-80 = B
3. 79-70 = C
4. 69-60 = D
5. 59 and below = F

Procedure for Grade and Non-Grade Complaints

Early Resolution

1. Prior to filing a request for a hearing, the student must attempt to resolve the issue with the individual(s) involved.
2. If not satisfied with the outcome of the effort described in item 1, the student must contact the dean. The dean will investigate the complaint, attempt to reconcile differences, and find an acceptable solution.

If the grievance is against the dean, the student should contact the associate academic dean.

3. If not satisfied with the outcome of efforts 1 and 2, the student must contact the assistant vice president of student services. The assistant vice president of student services may counsel the student to discuss the issue with the party involved. If the student does not feel comfortable talking to the person involved, the assistant vice president for student services will investigate the complaint, attempt to reconcile differences, and propose a solution. The assistant vice president of student services will provide a written statement of his/her recommendation to all parties within 10 business days following the initial receipt of the student's report of the complaint. All parties involved will then have 10 business days to respond. If the grievance is satisfactorily resolved by any of the above discussions, the terms of the resolution shall be reduced to writing and signed by the graduate student, respondent, and administrative superior involved in negotiations.

Every effort should be made to resolve the issue without going beyond this level.

Formal Complaint

1. If the student is not satisfied with the assistant vice president of student services' recommendation, he/she may pursue the matter further by contacting the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso (TTUHSC El Paso) president.
2. The grievance must be submitted to the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (GSBS)'s main office within three months of the time that the student knows of the matter prompting the grievance, or the student relinquishes any opportunity to pursue the grievance. The grievance must include a specific statement of the student's complaint, a clear and concise statement of the policy or procedures violated, an explanation of what remedy the student seeks, and a copy of the assistant vice president of student services' recommended resolution.
3. The TTUHSC El Paso president will attempt to resolve the appeal within 10 business days through conferencing with the respondent and student appellant. If not resolved within 10 business days, the TTUHSC El Paso president will appoint a Student Hearing Committee to consider the appeal.
4. If a Student Hearing Committee is appointed, the committee must convene within 15 business days.

5. The Student Hearing Committee will forward the request for a hearing to the appropriate faculty member who has been appointed by the dean to serve as the chair of the Student Hearing Committee.

Student Pre-Hearing Procedure

1. Grievances are heard by the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (GSBS) Student Hearing Committee, which is composed of the following:
 - One faculty member appointed by the GSBS dean to serve as the chair of the Student Hearing Committee
 - Two students
 - Two other faculty members

The GSBS dean will appoint an administrative staff person to take minutes of the meetings. This staff person will not be a voting member. Both parties will propose, in writing, a list of individuals they want to serve on the Student Hearing Committee. The GSBS dean will contact one person from each list in order of the submitting party's preference to determine the person's willingness to serve.

2. The GSBS dean will provide technical assistance and support to this committee.
3. As soon as the hearing is scheduled, the chair of the Student Hearing Committee will send a written notice to all parties involved, at least 15 business days prior to the student hearing. The notice will specify the time, place, and nature of the hearing, plus a brief description of the complaint. The notice will also confirm the right of all parties involved to present witnesses and evidence and to be accompanied by counsel for advisory purposes only.
4. Either party may challenge, in writing, the impartiality of any member of the Student Hearing Committee by submitting reasons for the challenge to the chair of the hearing committee. Challenges must be submitted within 3 business days after receiving the hearing notice. Any member of the Student Hearing Committee whose participation is challenged is required to establish that he/she can serve with fairness and objectivity to the satisfaction of the chair of the Student Hearing Committee. If the member cannot establish his/her fairness and objectivity to the satisfaction of the chair of the Student Hearing Committee, the member in question will be removed and a substitute will be appointed by the dean.

5. At least 7 business days prior to the student hearing, all parties will provide to the chair of the Student Hearing Committee:
 - a. A copy of all written supporting documentation that the party will present at the hearing.
 - b. A list of witnesses to be called by the party. Each party is responsible for ensuring that witnesses are at the hearing.
 - c. The name of any advocate who will accompany the party to the hearing and whether the advocate is an attorney.
6. The chair of the Student Hearing Committee will provide all such information to the hearing committee at least 5 business days before the hearing.
7. The student and the individuals(s) involved will have access to all information to be considered by the hearing committee, including the names of all persons giving evidence.
8. Student hearings are conducted in closed session. Any request for an exception must be submitted, in writing, to the chair of the Student Hearing Committee, who shall render a final written decision.

Hearing Procedure

1. Both parties must attend the hearing and both will be offered an opportunity to state their positions, and present testimony and other evidence relevant to the case. **The responsibility of establishing the validity of the grievance rests with the student.** Evidence is presented by the student and then by the respondent.
2. The student may have an advisor present at the hearing. The advisor must be a member of the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso (TTUHSC El Paso) community. However, if the student is also the subject of a pending criminal investigation, indictment or charge arising out of the same circumstances, he/she may be allowed to have an attorney serve as his/her advisor, at his/her own expense, to participate in the same manner as any other advisor. If an advisor for the student is an attorney, an attorney from the Office of General Counsel will also attend the student hearing on behalf of TTUHSC El Paso. TTUHSC El Paso will provide legal counsel for the student hearing if the Student Hearing Committee chair deems it necessary.

3. The student is responsible for presenting his/her own information, and therefore, advisors are not permitted to speak or to participate directly in any student hearing before the Student Hearing Committee. A student should select as an advisor a person whose schedule allows attendance at the scheduled date and time of the student hearing. Delays due to advisor scheduling conflicts are not allowed, except at the discretion of the Student Hearing Committee chair, upon written request seven business days in advance of the scheduled student hearing.
4. Members of the Student Hearing Committee may question all witnesses, followed by the parties. Questioning by both parties may be limited by the sole discretion of the chair of the Student Hearing Committee for such reasons as preserving the civility of the hearing, avoiding redundant and irrelevant questioning, and/or providing for the efficient administration of the hearing. Witnesses are permitted to attend the student hearing only during the time they are providing testimony, or are being questioned by either party or the committee, unless the Student Hearing Committee chair, by his/her sole discretion, determines otherwise.
5. Both parties may arrange for witnesses to present pertinent information to the Student Hearing Committee. Both parties are responsible for arranging the voluntary attendance of their respective witnesses.
6. By its sole discretion, the Student Hearing Committee may call other witnesses not identified by either party. If, prior to the hearing, the Student Hearing Committee anticipates calling additional witnesses, the committee must notify the Student Hearing Committee chair. The chair will then arrange for the voluntary attendance of the witnesses identified by the committee. The chair will notify both parties of the additional witnesses. If any witness called by the Student Hearing Committee intends to present written information to the committee, the chair is responsible for forwarding such information to both parties and the committee prior to the hearing.
7. Following the presentation of evidence, the committee will permit each party to present a brief closing statement.
8. The Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (GSBS) shall record, either digitally, through audiotape, or otherwise as deemed appropriate, the hearing committee's proceedings until such time that the student hearing committee begins discussion and deliberation and prepares its findings and recommendations. Deliberations are not recorded. The record is university property. Pursuant to the Family

Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, as amended, the student will be allowed to review, but not to copy, the hearing record, 34 C.F.R 99.10 (2003). Neither party nor any witnesses are permitted to make any independent record of the proceedings.

9. The student is expected to attend and participate in the Student Hearing Committee. If either party elects not to attend a hearing after appropriate written notice, the case will be reviewed as scheduled on the basis of the information available, and a recommendation will be made by the committee. Although no inference may be drawn against the student for failing to attend a hearing or remaining silent, the hearing will proceed and the conclusion will be based on the evidence presented. No decision will be based solely on the failure of the student to attend the hearing or answer the charges.

Hearing Committee Findings and Final Disposition

1. After completion of the hearing, the hearing committee shall adjourn and meet in closed session to discuss, deliberate and prepare its finding and recommendations.
2. The Student Hearing Committee will determine the recommendations by a simple majority (more than half of the votes cast) of members present at the hearing.
3. The committee's findings and recommendation report will be forwarded to the GSBS dean. A copy is also sent to both parties for review and determination of necessary action.
4. The GSBS dean will forward a letter to all parties involved, enclosing copies of the Student Hearing Committee report, and directing what action will be taken within 10 business days from the conclusion of the hearing. This letter will be sent via certified mail to the student's last known official mailing address, as provided by the student to the Registrar's Office and electronically to the student's ttuhsc.edu email account.
5. The decision of the GSBS dean regarding the hearing committee's findings and recommendations is final.

Appeals

Within 10 business days of receipt of the decision of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (GSBS) dean, if either party believes that the due process procedures have been violated, an appeal may be made, in writing, to the president of the university. The president will review the case and notify all parties of his/her decision within 10

business days. If a written appeal is not submitted within 10 business days following receipt of the GSBS dean's letter, the right to appeal is thereby waived and the dean's decision is final.

Only the following may be presented for consideration by the president:

- a. Whether a procedural deviation occurred that substantially affected the outcome of the case
- b. Whether there is new information sufficient to alter the findings or other relevant facts not available or mentioned in the original hearing, because such information and/or facts were not known to the person appealing at the time of the original Student Hearing Committee.

At his/her sole discretion, the president will review the findings and recommendations, and the record from the Student Hearing Committee and supporting documents, and transmit his/her decision in writing to both parties, the Student Hearing Committee chair, and the GSBS dean. The president's decision is final.

Confidentiality

Members of the Student Hearing Committee may not retain in their possession any personal files, materials received during the appeal procedure, or notes taken during the hearing. The administrative staff person will collect all materials and return them to the GSBS office to be retained in a confidential file.

No part, committee member, or other participant or observer in the hearing procedure may reveal any facts, documents, or testimony gained through participating in or observing the hearing to any other person, unless required by a court of law to do so or upon the advice of Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso's legal counsel.

Throughout this document, the phrase "business days" refers to days when the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences administrative offices are open, and excludes weekends and holidays.

Dismissal

Purpose: To outline conditions or circumstances that may provide sufficient cause for dismissal of a student from the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (GSBS)

The following conditions or circumstances may provide sufficient cause for dismissal of a student from the GSBS.

These include:

- Failure to make adequate academic progress, as defined by the program
- Failure to maintain an acceptable GPA, as defined by the Academic Probation Policy
- Engaging in academic or research misconduct
- Engaging in illegal, fraudulent, or unethical behavior, as defined in the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso (TTUHSC El Paso) Institutional Handbook Code of Professional and Academic Conduct
- Failure to complete the required core courses by the end of the second year

There may be other unusual situations in which a student may be dismissed. In each case, the dismissal should follow the procedures described below.

Failure to Make Adequate Academic Progress

- Failure to maintain an acceptable GPA will result in academic warning, probation, or dismissal, according to the GSBS Academic Probation Policy.
- Furthermore, students who have not been placed on probation, but who are not making adequate academic progress, will be warned in writing of the possibility of dismissal.
- Such students will be given a clear statement about what must be done to alleviate the problem, and a specific time period. These expectations must be reasonable and consistent with expectations held for all students.
- If the student does not meet the requirements within the specified time frame, he/she may be dismissed. Upon recommendation from the graduate advisor, the GSBS office will notify the student of his/her dismissal.
- Students may appeal this dismissal via the procedures outlined in the [Procedure for Grade and Non-Grade Complaints](#) section of this handbook (page 8).

Academic or Research Misconduct/Illegal, Fraudulent, or Unethical Behavior

The process for dismissing students as a result of academic or research misconduct, or as a result of illegal, fraudulent, or unethical behavior is outlined in the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso (TTUHSC El Paso) Institutional Handbook Code of Professional and Academic Conduct.

A. General Policy

1. An environment in which the privileges of citizenship are protected and the obligations of citizenship are understood fosters freedom of discussion, inquiry, and expression. Accordingly, the university community has developed standards of behavior pertaining to students and to student organizations.

2. Students and student organizations are subject to disciplinary action according to the provisions of the student code and/or any other applicable university rules or regulations.
3. All students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the various regulations of the university and meeting the various requirements outlined below. Written policies are described in university publications, such as this handbook, individual school catalogs, and student affairs handbooks. By accepting an admission offer, the student indicates a willingness to subscribe to and be governed by the rules and regulations of the university, including disciplinary action, such as dismissal or expulsion, as deemed appropriate by university officials, for failure to abide by such rules and regulations.
4. All students are responsible for their own integrity, and equally responsible for reporting possible violations of this student code by other students. Faculty and staff will take all reasonable steps to prevent violations, and faculty/staff are likewise responsible for reporting violations.

B. Disciplinary Jurisdiction

1. The student code applies to conduct that occurs on university premises, at university-sponsored activities, and to any off-campus conduct that adversely affects the university and/or pursuit of its objectives. On a case-by-case basis, the dean and his/her designee of each respective school, at his/her sole discretion, will determine whether the student code should be applied to conduct occurring off premises.
2. All students are expected to subscribe to an honor system, which is implicit in accepting admission to the university. Every student is responsible for his/her conduct from the time of the application for admission through the actual awarding of a degree, even though conduct may occur before classes begin or after classes end, as well as during the academic year and during periods between terms of actual enrollment. The student code applies to persons who withdraw after alleged violation of the code; those who are not officially enrolled for a particular term, but who have a continuing relationship with the university; and those who have been notified of their acceptance.

C. Violation of Law and TTUHSC El Paso Discipline

A disciplinary proceeding may be instituted against a student, regardless of whether his/her conduct allegedly violates both the criminal and/or civil law and/or this student code (that is, if both possible violations result from the same factual situation) and regardless of the pendency of civil or criminal litigation in court or criminal arrest or prosecution. Proceedings under this student code may be carried out prior to,

simultaneously with, or following civil and/or criminal proceedings, at the discretion of the dean of the relevant school. Determinations made or sanctions imposed for violations of the student code are not subject to change, even if criminal charges for those same violations are dismissed, reduced, or resolved in favor of or against the criminal and/or civil law defendant.

D. Misconduct

Any student or student organization found to have committed the following misconduct is subject to disciplinary sanctions, conditions, and/or restrictions. Misconduct or prohibited behavior includes, but is not limited to:

1. Alcoholic Beverages

- a. The use, possession, sale, delivery, or distribution of alcoholic beverages, except as expressly permitted by university policy and as allowed by law.
- b. Being under the influence of alcohol and/or intoxicated, except as allowed by law.

NOTE: State law will be strictly enforced at all times on all property controlled by the university and is inclusive of all regional sites and its components.

2. Narcotics or Drugs

- a. The use, possession, sale, delivery, or distribution of any narcotic, drug, or medicine prescribed to someone else; or chemical compound, controlled substance, or drug-related paraphernalia, except as expressly permitted by the laws of the state of Texas
- b. Being under the influence of narcotics or drugs, except as permitted by law
- c. Failing a drug test, whether required by the university or any health care facility to which a student is assigned or has any type of patient care, contact, or responsibility

3. Firearms, Weapons, and Explosives

Use or possession of firearms, ammunition, explosive weapons, illegal knives, or other deadly weapons is prohibited on university property, except as specifically authorized by federal, state, or local laws

4. Theft, Damage, or Unauthorized Use

- a. Attempted or actual theft of property of the university, students, or members of the university community or campus visitors
- b. Possession of property known to be stolen or belonging to another person without the owner's permission
- c. Attempted or actual damage to property of the university, university students, members of the university community, or campus visitors
- d. Attempted or actual unauthorized use of a credit card, debit card, automated teller machine card, telephone card, or personal check; alteration, forgery or misrepresentation of any form of identification, including, but not limited to, a social security number or driver's license number

5. Actions Against Members of the University Community

- a. Physical harm or threat of harm to any person
- b. Intentional or reckless conduct that endangers the health or safety of any person, campus visitor, or volunteer
- c. Behavior that disrupts the normal operation of the university, including that of its students, faculty, staff, or volunteers; or conduct that otherwise interferes with or creates a hostile or intimidating environment for a student's academic pursuits or a faculty or staff member's work environment

Note: Such conduct does not necessarily have to be in violation of the law to violate this section.

- d. Sexual conduct that involves:
 - i. Unwelcomed touching of a sexual nature
 - ii. Deliberate sexual invasion of another without consent
 - iii. Deliberate constraint or incapacitation of another, without that person's knowledge or consent, so as to put another at risk of sexual injury (see [TTUHSC El Paso Title IX](#))
- e. Unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that expressly or implicitly imposes conditions upon, threatens, interferes with, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or demeaning environment for an individual's:

- i. Academic pursuits
- ii. University employment
- iii. Participation in activities sponsored by the university or organizations or groups related to the university
- iv. Opportunities to benefit from other aspects of university life (see [TTUHSC El Paso Title IX](#))

- f. Excessive pressure, threats, or any form of conduct, coercive tactics, or mind control techniques used to recruit, initiate, retain, or otherwise intimidate a student for membership in an organization

6. Gambling, Wagering, or Bookmaking

Gambling, wagering, or bookmaking on university premises is prohibited.

7. Hazing

Hazing means any intentional or reckless act directed against a student, occurring on or off campus, by one or more individuals acting alone or collectively, that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of pledging or associating, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or seeking and/or maintaining membership in any organization whose members are, or include, students. Consent or acquiescence by a student or students subjected to hazing is not a defense in a disciplinary proceeding. Hazing includes, but is not limited to:

- a. Any type of physical or emotional brutality, or the threat of such activity, such as whipping, beating, striking, branding, electronic shocking, placing of a harmful substance on the body, or similar activity
- b. Any type of physical activity, such as sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, confinement in a small space, calisthenics, or other activity that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of a student
- c. Any activity involving consumption of a food, liquid, alcoholic beverage, liquor, drug, or other substance that subjects a student to an unreasonable risk or harm, or which adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of a student
- d. Any activity that intimidates or threatens a student with ostracism; subjects a student to extreme mental stress, shame, or humiliation; adversely affects the mental health or dignity of a student; discourages a student from entering or remaining registered at the university; or

that may reasonably be expected to cause a student to leave the organization or the university, rather than submit to acts described above

- e. Any activity that a person engages in to solicit, encourage, direct, aid, or attempt to aid another, whether directly or indirectly, in hazing; intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly permitting hazing to occur; or having firsthand knowledge of the planning of a specific hazing incident that has occurred and failing to report the incident in writing to the appropriate school's student affairs office
- f. Any activity in which hazing is either condoned or encouraged; or actions of any officer or combination of members, pledges, associates, or alumni of the organization that commit or assist in the committing of hazing
- g. Any act that is unlawful, as designated by the local, state, or federal government

NOTE: See Texas Education Code, Sections 37.151-37.157 and Section 51.936 for more information.

8. False Alarms or Terrorist Threats

Intentionally or recklessly sounding a false alarm of any kind or character; making a false emergency call or terrorist threat; issuing a false bomb threat; constructing mock explosive devices; or improperly possessing, tampering with, or destroying fire equipment, automatic external defibrillators (AED), or emergency signs on university premises

9. Financial Irresponsibility

Failure to meet financial obligations to the university, including, but not limited to, writing checks on accounts with insufficient funds (see 4d above)

10. Unauthorized Entry, Possession, and/or Use

- a. Unauthorized entry into or use of university facilities
- b. Unauthorized possession or duplication, processing, production, or manufacture of any key or unlocking device or access code for use in any university facility

- c. Unauthorized use of the university name, logotype, registered trademarks, or symbols
- d. Use of the university's name to advertise or promote events or activities in a manner which suggests sponsorship by the university without prior written permission

11. Traffic and Parking

- a. Violation of university traffic or parking regulations
- b. Obstruction of the free flow of vehicle, pedestrian, or other traffic on university premises

12. Student Recreation

Violation of any rules governing behavior in the student lounges or exercise areas

13. Failure to comply with the reasonable directions or requests by a university official acting in accordance with his/her duties

14. Failure to Present Student Identification

Failure to present student identification or identify oneself to any university official acting in accordance with his/her duties upon request the student identification card is the property of the university

Note: Students may neither allow their student identification card to be used by other persons, nor alter their student identification in any way. Students are responsible for a replacement charge for lost, stolen, or damaged student identification cards.

15. Abuse, Misuse, or Theft of University Computer Data, Programs, Time, or Computer or Network Equipment

- a. Unauthorized or non-academic use of computing and/or networking resources
- b. Unauthorized accessing, copying, or removing of programs, records, or data belonging to the university or another user or copyrighted software
- c. Attempted or actual breach of the security of another user's account and/or computing system; depriving another user of access to university computing and/or networking resources; compromising the

privacy of another user; or disrupting the intended use of computing or network resources

- d. Attempted or actual use of the university's computing and/or networking resources for personal or financial gain
- e. Attempted or actual transport of copies of university programs, records, or data to another person or computer without written authorization
- f. Attempted or actual destruction or modification of programs, records, or data belonging to the university or another user, or destruction of the integrity of computer-based information
- g. Attempted or actual use of university computing and/or networking facilities to interfere with the normal operation of the university's computing and/or networking systems; or causing a waste of such resources (people, capacity, computer) through such actions
- h. Allowing another person, either through one's personal computer account or by other means, to accomplish any of the above
- i. Attempted or actual addition or modification to, or removal or circumventing of institutionally-approved computer security products or processes
- j. Participation in any computer-related activity that may cause the university to incur legal liability or embarrassment
- k. Violation of any policy defined in the university's IT security policies

16. Providing False, Misleading, or Untrue Statements or Misuse of Records

Knowingly providing to the university, or to a university official acting in accordance with his/her duties, either verbally, or through forgery, alteration or misuse of any university document, record, or instrument of identification

17. Skateboards, Roller Blades, and Similar Devices

Use of skateboards, roller blades, or other similar devices in university buildings or on university premises in such a manner as to constitute a safety hazard or cause damage to university or personal property, or disrupt the normal operation of the university

NOTE: Refer to HSCEP OP 76.32, Traffic and Parking Regulations.

18. Academic Misconduct

- a. A student who witnesses academic misconduct or is approached with an offer to gain unfair advantage or commit academic misconduct is obligated to report that violation to the appropriate authority (see Misconduct)

Note: Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action. Faculty and staff are equally responsible for reporting academic misconduct in accordance with the Misconduct policy herein.

- b. Academic misconduct refers to any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the university, or subvert the educational process, including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, falsifying academic records, misrepresenting facts, any act designed to give unfair academic advantage to the student, or the attempt to commit such an act
- c. Cheating includes, but is not limited to:
 - i. Using any aid, source, and/or assistance in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out assignments beyond those authorized by the instructor or administrator of the relevant course, laboratory, field assignment, quiz, test, or examination
 - ii. Failing to comply with instructions given by the test administrator
 - iii. Using, buying, stealing, transporting, or soliciting, in whole or in part, the contents of an examination, test key, homework solution, or computer program
 - iv. Seeking aid, receiving assistance from, or collaborating with another student or individual (collusion) during a course, quiz, test, or examination, or in conjunction with other assignment (including, but not limited to, writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or making presentations), unless specifically authorized by the instructor
 - v. Discussing the contents of an examination with another student who has yet to take the examination
 - vi. Divulging the contents of an examination

- vii. Substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for oneself to take a course, test, or any course-related assignment
 - viii. Paying or offering money or other valuable(s) to, or coercing another person to obtain an examination, test key, homework solution, or computer program, or information about an examination, test key, homework solution, or computer program
 - ix. Falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other academic work offered for credit
 - x. Taking, keeping, misplacing, or damaging university property, or the property of another, if the student knows or reasonably should know that an unfair academic advantage would be gained by such conduct
 - xi. Possession, at any time, of current or previous test materials without the instructor's permission
 - xii. Acquisition or dissemination, by any means, without written permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a member of the university community
 - xiii. Alteration of grade records
 - xiv. Bribing, or attempting to bribe, a member of the university community or any other individual to alter a grade
 - xv. Falsification, fabrication, or dishonesty in reporting laboratory and/or research results
 - xvi. Submitting substantially the same work to satisfy requirements for one course that has previously been submitted to satisfy requirements for another course, without specific permission of the instructor of the course for which the work is being submitted
 - xvii. Possession, during an exam, of prohibited materials, including, but not limited to, study/review materials, class notes, or review questions
- d. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, appropriating, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining, by any other means, another's work (such as words, ideas, expressions, illustrations, or products), in whole

or in part, and submitting that work as one's own for academic credit or to satisfy a requirement

Note: When a student presents the works of another (published or unpublished) in his/her academic work, the student must fully acknowledge the sources according to methods prescribed by his/her instructor.

- e. Falsifying academic records includes, but is not limited to, altering or assisting in the altering of any official record of the university and/or submitting false information or omitting requested information that is required for, or related to, any academic record of the university

Note: Academic records include, but are not limited to, applications for admission, the awarding of a degree, grade reports, test papers, registration materials, grade change forms, and reporting forms used by the Office of the Registrar.

- f. Misrepresenting facts to the university or an agent of the university includes, but is not limited to, providing false grades or resumes; providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit for oneself or another individual; or providing false or misleading information in an effort to harm another student academically or financially

19. Violation of Published University Policies, Rules, or Regulations

Violation of any published university policies, rules, or regulations that govern the behavior of a student or student organization, including, but not limited to, applicable school publications, such as student handbooks, catalogs, professional and ethical standards, and course syllabi

20. Violation of Federal, State, and/or Local Law

Misconduct that constitutes a violation of any provisions of federal, state, or local laws

21. Abuse of the Discipline System

- a. Failure by an accused student to comply with or respond to a notification to appear before the dean of his/her school, dean's representative, and/or an official of the university, including, but not limited to, the student conduct administrator, during any stage of a disciplinary proceeding

Note: Failure to comply with or respond to a notice issued as part of a disciplinary procedure and/or failure to appear will not prevent the dean or dean's representative and/or an official of the university from proceeding with disciplinary action.

- b. Falsification, distortion, or misrepresentation of information in disciplinary proceedings
- c. Disruption or interference with the orderly conduct of a disciplinary proceeding
- d. Filing an allegation known to be without merit or cause
- e. Discouraging or attempting to discourage an individual's proper participation in, or use of, the discipline system
- f. Influencing or attempting to influence the impartiality of a member of a disciplinary body prior to and/or during a disciplinary proceeding
- g. Causing harm to, threatening to cause harm to, or intimidating, whether verbally, physically, or in writing, a member of a disciplinary body prior to, during, and/or after disciplinary proceeding
- h. Failure to comply with the sanctions, conditions, and/or restrictions imposed under this student code
- i. Influencing or attempting to influence another person to commit an abuse of the discipline system
- j. Retaliating against any person or group or people who file a complaint of misconduct in accordance with the student code or file a grievance under the applicable school grievance policy

E. Scientific Misconduct

Allegations of scientific misconduct (fraud, dishonesty, or any kind of misconduct in science) will be investigated by the university's research integrity officer as outlined in [HSCEP OP 73.07 Honesty in Research & Allegations of Scientific Misconduct-Attachment A](#).

Scientific misconduct is defined as fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results; or other practices that materially deviate from those that are commonly accepted within the scientific and academic communities for proposing, conducting, or reporting research. It also includes

other material deviations from accepted scientific practices, such as failure to report unethical research practices, obstruction of another's research, violation of confidentiality; intentional deception, omission, or research dishonesty; repeated incidents of regulatory noncompliance and misuse of research funds. It does not include honest errors or honest differences in interpretations or judgments of data.

- a. Fabrication refers to making up data or results and recording or reporting them.
- b. Falsification is manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results, such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record.
- c. Plagiarism is the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit.
- d. Research misconduct does not include honest error or differences of opinion.

Other Grounds for Dismissal

A regularly admitted student who has not been registered for three consecutive semesters will be dismissed unless a leave of absence has been approved.

Any student who does not complete all requirements for a graduate degree within the time limit will be dismissed. Per reporting guidelines established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), students seeking master's degrees are expected to graduate within five years.

The course director may recommend dismissing students for situations other than those specified above. When doing so, the dean must notify the student in writing of the possibility of dismissal. If it is possible for the student to rectify the situation, he/she must be given a clear statement about what must be done within a specified time period to alleviate the problem. These expectations must be reasonable and consistent with expectations held of all students. If the student does not meet the requirements within the specified time frame, he/she may be dismissed.

If the situation cannot be rectified, the dean will send justification for the dismissal to the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (GSBS) office. If warranted, the GSBS office will notify the student in writing of the grounds for dismissal and the date when the dismissal will be effective. This will normally be the end of the semester in which the student is currently enrolled, but the circumstances of the dismissal will be considered in determining this date.

Students may appeal their dismissal by following the procedures outlined in the Procedure for Grade and Non-Grade Complaints outlined in this handbook (page 8).

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Purpose: To inform students and their parents about federal law that protects the privacy of students' educational records.

Overview

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a federal law that protects the privacy of students' educational 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/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."

- Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's educational records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
- Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records that they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his/her view about the contested information.
- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's educational record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):
 - School officials with legitimate educational interest
 - Another school to which the student is transferring
 - Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes

- Appropriate parties in connection to the student's financial aid
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school
- Accrediting organizations
- In compliance with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena
- Appropriate officials in cases of health or safety emergencies
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific state law(s)

Directory Information

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. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (a special letter or inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of the school.

For additional information or technical assistance, call 202-260-3887 (voice). Individuals who use TDD may call the Federal Information Relay Service at 800-877-8339.

Or you may contact the U.S. Department of Education's [Family Policy Compliance Office \(FPCO\)](#), which is responsible for the administration of FERPA.

Family Policy Compliance Office
 U.S. Department of Education
 400 Maryland Avenue, SW
 Washington, D.C. 20202-5920

Student Health Information

Purpose: To define the health services available to students

1. **Student Fees:** All students are required to pay the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC El Paso) medical services fee each semester. This fee covers access to the health clinic, where students can see a nurse or physician at no charge for minor problems. To receive health services, students must present a student ID card at the time of the appointment. If a student has private insurance in addition to student health services, he/she must submit the receipt for the co-pay to the private insurance company for reimbursement. More information on

this fee and its benefits is located on the [Health and Safety Resources](#) page of the [Student Services](#) site.

NOTE: The student health fee covers only those services provided by Texas Tech Physicians of El Paso at 125 Hague and specific laboratory and radiology services performed at cooperating locations. All other charges incurred are the student's responsibility.

2. **Required Health Insurance:** All Graduate School of Biomedical Science (GSBS) students are required to have adequate health insurance, which is separate from the medical services fee. Options include:
 - a. The Health Sciences Center (HSC) Academic Health Plan (for plan details, visit the [Student Services website](#))
 - b. A health insurance policy outside of the HSC
 - c. An existing family insurance plan

NOTE: Students are expected to have hospitalization insurance coverage for every semester in which he/she is enrolled. Students should be prepared to provide proof of coverage at the time of registration.

3. **Immunization and Screening Fee:** Every fall semester, students are assessed an immunization and screening fee that includes the initial validation and maintenance of immunization records as required for health care personnel. Immunization records are kept up-to-date through the department of occupational health. Annual services include tuberculosis (TB) screenings, influenza vaccines, and hepatitis B vaccines (completed post- matriculation). The department of occupational health also provides follow-up for any blood-borne pathogen exposure that may occur while you are a student at TTUHSC El Paso.

TTUHSC El Paso Title IX

The university does not tolerate discrimination or harassment based on or related to sex, race, national origin, religion, age, disability, protected veteran status, genetic information, or other protected categories, classes, or characteristics. While sexual orientation and gender identity are not explicitly protected categories under state or federal law, it is the university's policy not to discriminate in employment, admission, or use of programs, activities, facilities, or services on these bases.

The university is committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from sex discrimination of any kind. In accordance with Title VII, Title IX, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE), and other federal and state law, the university prohibits discrimination based on sex and other types of sexual misconduct.

Questions regarding Title IX may be referred as follows:

CONTACT	PHONE	ADDRESS	EMAIL
TTUHSC El Paso Title IX Coordinator Rebecca Salcido Executive Director for Human Resources	915-215-4140	TTUHSC El Paso Human Resources Department Administrative Support Bldg. 200 N. Concepcion El Paso, TX 79905	rebecca.salcido@ttuhsc.edu
Office of Civil Rights (OCR)	Customer Service Hotline 800-421-3481		www.ed.gov/ocr

For reports or notices of discrimination and/or harassment against a student:

CONTACT	PHONE	ADDRESS	EMAIL
TTUHSC El Paso Title IX Deputy Coordinator for Students Kathryn V. Horn, M.D. Assistant Vice President for Student Services	915-215-4786	TTUHSC El Paso Office of Student Services 5001 El Paso Drive Room 2140E El Paso, TX 79905	kathryn.horn@ttuhsc.edu

For reports or notices of discrimination and/or harassment by or against employees:

CONTACT	PHONE	ADDRESS	EMAIL
TTUHSC El Paso Title IX Deputy Coordinator for Employees Charlotte Bingham Managing Director of	806-742-3627	TTU Office of Equal Employment Opportunity TTU Administration Bldg. Room 210	eeo@ttu.edu

the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity		Box 1073 Lubbock, TX 79409	
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