



# TEXAS TECH™

## Operating Policy and Procedure

### **OP 70.33: Employee Assistance Program**

**DATE:** January 24, 2025

**PURPOSE:** The [State Employees Health Fitness and Education Act \(1983\)](#) of the State of Texas allows state agencies to establish wellness programs in their agency such as an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to establish procedures governing use of and referral to the EAP of Texas Tech University.

**REVIEW:** This OP will be reviewed every two years after publication by the Senior Associate Vice President for Human Resources with substantive revisions forwarded to the Chief of Staff and Vice President for Administration.

## **POLICY/PROCEDURE**

### **1. General Policy**

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a helping program that enhances a healthy work attitude by providing faculty and staff employees the opportunity to manage life's problems before they become serious and impair work performance. It provides employees the opportunity to seek treatment for specific problems such as depression, excessive stress or anxiety, healing from trauma, workplace issues, grief and loss, better couple communication, managing family conflict, and alcohol and drug abuse. EAP services are private, professional, and confidential.

### **2. Eligibility**

All full-time, part-time, and temporary employees are eligible to access the services of the EAP at any time. Immediate family members of the employee, defined as a spouse or child under the age of 18 or still attending high school, are also eligible.

### **3. Accessing the Employee Assistance Program**

#### **a. Self-Referral**

An employee who is experiencing personal problems or whose job performance is affected by personal problems is encouraged to seek help voluntarily from the EAP. EAP records are separate and not a part of an employee's personnel file. An employee's use of EAP services or any other information concerning the nature of the problem is not released to the employer or a supervisor. Confidentiality is regulated by State of Texas and federal guidelines.

An employee may seek assistance or learn more about the program by contacting the EAP directly at 806.743.1327 or 800.327.0328, or by emailing [counselingcenter@ttuhsc.edu](mailto:counselingcenter@ttuhsc.edu). The

EAP is located in [the Counseling Center at TTUHSC](#), Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, 1A300 HSC building.

If an employee contacts a supervisor for assistance with a problem with which the EAP can be helpful, the supervisor should assist the employee in contacting the EAP.

b. **Formal Supervisory Referral**

In situations where an employee's attendance, punctuality, judgment, behavior, or job performance have deteriorated to the point that corrective action is being contemplated, a supervisor may formally refer (i.e., mandate) the employee to the EAP as part of the corrective action process (see attachment). Supervisors must consult with Human Resources prior to formally referring/mandating EAP. When a formal supervisory referral is made, the employee will be expected to sign a "Release of Information" form when they meet with the EAP counselor that permits the counselor to provide three pieces of information to the supervisor. This information includes:

- (1) If the initial appointment was kept;
- (2) If the employee is cooperative with the counselor; and
- (3) If the employee is cooperative with the treatment plan.

**4. Time off for Counseling/Rehabilitation**

Work time lost for counseling or rehabilitation will be charged to accrued sick leave, vacation leave, and/or leave without pay. In the case of a formal supervisory referral by a supervisor, the first counseling/rehabilitation session that results in time lost will not be charged to an employee's accrued leave time or to leave without pay.

**5. Medical Benefits for Counseling/Rehabilitation Services**

The EAP offers up to eight (8) counseling sessions per EAP-eligible employee per fiscal year at no cost to the employee. The Counseling Center is able to accept insurance or self-pay for any counseling or treatment beyond these eight (8) sessions.

**6. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

The ADA prohibits restricting the employment opportunities of qualified individuals who are participating in a supervised drug rehabilitation program and who are no longer engaging in such use and individuals erroneously regarded as being current drug users.

Also, an individual who has successfully completed a supervised drug rehabilitation program and is no longer engaging in the illegal use of drugs, or has been otherwise rehabilitated successfully and is no longer engaging in such use, is protected from discrimination in employment under the ADA.

Alcoholism, which substantially limits major life activities, may be regarded as an ADA-covered disability.

## **7. Posters**

Each Texas Tech department is encouraged to post the name and telephone number of the EAP in a location where all employees may see it.

## **8. Confidentiality**

All information involving counseling, rehabilitation, or treatment through the EAP and the referral agencies utilized by the EAP will be treated as confidential medical information and is maintained in the EAP Office (i.e., the Counseling Center at TTUHSC). All such information will be accessible only to those TTUHSC officials and designated medical or professional persons as have been approved on a valid need-to-know basis. It will not be provided to any party without the written consent of the employee pursuant to administrative or legal procedure or process. Any employee who willfully discloses such information in violation of Texas Tech policy will be subject to corrective action.

## **9. Wellness Workshops**

In addition to confidential counseling services, the EAP also provides wellness workshops on topics such as stress management, communication, and conflict resolution. These workshops may be requested by any TTU department or division.

## **10. Evaluation of EAP Services**

The Employee Assistance Program Director provides quarterly utilization report summaries to the Senior Associate Vice President for Human Resources.

## **11. Right to Change Policy**

Texas Tech reserves the right to interpret, change, modify, amend, or rescind this policy, in whole or in part, at any time without the consent of employees.

## **12. Authoritative Reference**

[Texas Government Code, Chapter 664, State Employees Health Fitness and Education Act of 1983](#)

[Attachment: Supervisor Referral Form for Mandatory Referrals to the Employee Assistance Program](#)