

TTU Complaint Policy on File with the Texas Education Agency

COMPLAINTS		In this policy, the terms “complaint” and “grievance” shall have the same meaning.
GUIDING PRINCIPLES		Texas Tech University encourages interns to discuss their concerns and complaints through informal conferences with their program staff.
INFORMAL PROCESS		Concerns should be expressed as soon as possible to allow early resolution at the lowest possible administrative level.
FORMAL PROCESS		If an informal conference regarding a complaint fails to reach the outcome requested by the candidate, he or she may initiate the formal process described below by timely filing a written complaint form. Even after initiating the formal complaint process, a candidate is encouraged to seek informal resolution of his or her concerns. A candidate, whose concerns are resolved, may withdraw a formal complaint at any time.
GENERAL PROVISIONS FILING		Complaint forms and appeal notices may be filed by hand-delivery, email, or U.S. Mail. Hand-delivered filings shall be timely filed if received by the appropriate administrator or designee by the close of business on the deadline. Emails shall be timely filed if they are date and time marked on or before the deadline. Mail filings shall be timely filed if they are postmarked by U.S. Mail on the deadline and received by the appropriate administrator or designated representative no more than three days after the deadline.
RESPONSE		At Level One and Two, “response” shall mean a written communication to the candidate from the appropriate Texas Tech University staff. Responses will be emailed to the candidate’s TTU email address.
DAYS		“Days” shall mean program business days. In calculating time lines under this policy, the day a document is filed is “day zero,” and all deadlines shall be determined by counting the following day as “day one.”
GENERAL PROVISIONS		Complaints arising out of an event or series of related events shall be addressed in one complaint. Candidates shall not bring separate or serial complaints arising from any event or series of events that have been or could have been addressed in a previous complaint. When two or more complaints are sufficiently similar in nature and remedy sought to permit their resolution through one proceeding, Texas Tech University may consolidate the complaints.
UNTIMELY FILINGS		All time limits shall be strictly followed unless modified by mutual written consent. If a complaint form or appeal notice is not timely filed, the complaint may be dismissed, on written notice to the candidate, at any point during the complaint process. The candidate may appeal the dismissal by seeking review in writing within ten business days, starting at the level at which the complaint was dismissed. Such appeal shall be limited to the issue of timeliness.
COST INCURRED		Each party shall pay its own costs incurred in the course of the complaint.

COMPLAINT FORM	Complaints under this policy shall be submitted in writing on a form provided by Texas Tech University. Copies of any documents that support the complaint should be attached to the complaint form. If the candidate does not have copies of these documents, they may be presented at the initial conference. After the conference, no new documents may be submitted unless the candidate did not know the documents existed prior to the conference. A complaint form that is incomplete in any material aspect may be dismissed, but it may be refiled with all the requested information if the refiling is within the designated time for filing a complaint.
AUDIO RECORDING	As provided by law, a candidate shall be permitted to make an audio recording of a conference under this policy at which the substance of the candidate's complaint is discussed. The candidate shall notify all attendees present that an audio recording is taking place.
LEVEL ONE - Initial	Complaint may be filed formally or informally to Teacher Education Department administration. These members include: Certification Officer, Chair of Teacher Education, Associate Dean for Academic Services. A conference will be held with the student to address the concern and try to seek resolution.
LEVEL TWO-Formal	Complaint forms must be filed: 1. Within ten days of the date the candidate first knew, or with reasonable diligence should have known, of the decision or action giving rise to the complaint or grievance: and 2. With the Department Chair for Teacher Education or Certification Officer. A panel will consider the appeal. The student may meet with the panel to support the appeal and to answer questions from the panel. The panel consists of three individuals from the following, a-d, although upon challenge by the student, a panel member may be replaced. A student representative must always be on the panel as follows: a. College of Education (COE), Department Chair for Teacher Education b. College of Education (COE) Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies c. Tech Teach faculty member; d. Tech Teach Site Coordinator e. an undergraduate teacher candidate representative. The panel may call on other individuals as appropriate for additional fact-finding needs. The panel will make a recommendation to the Dean of the College of Education, with the Dean effecting the final disposition of the appeal.

LEVEL THREE - Final

The official TEA complaint process can be found at www.tea.texas.gov in the banner located at the bottom of the page and then select “Educator Preparation Programs”.

The complaint process allows for an applicant or candidate in an educator preparation program to seek redress in areas where they feel that the program did not fulfill requirements for certification or for actions that the candidate feels are wrong. Educator preparation programs may also file a complaint about the actions of other programs when it involves a candidate transferring into a program.

Not all complaints fall under the authority of TEA. TEA has jurisdiction to investigate allegations of noncompliance regarding specific laws and rules, generally related to state and federal requirements. Complaints may address educator preparation program requirements listed in Texas Administrative Code (TAC) in Chapters 227, 228, 229, ethics (TAC 247), fingerprinting (TAC §§227, 232) and certification (TAC §§230, 231, 232, 239, 241, 242)

All complaints filed with the TEA must be in writing. We do not accept complaints by phone or complaints that are submitted anonymously. A person or entity may file a written complaint with TEA by filling out the [complaint form](#) online or by mailing or faxing a hard copy to the address on the form. You may fax your submission to (512) 463-9008 or by emailing it to generalinquiry@tea.texas.gov.

To adequately review and address a complaint, TEA needs specific details. We must be able to identify a clear violation of TAC and determine whether the agency has authority to act upon the allegation.

Complaints submissions should include the following:

- The reasons you believe the issues raised in your complaint are valid. You should also indicate how you believe that TEA can assist you with this matter. Remember that TEA cannot assist you in understanding your contractual arrangement with the educator preparation program, arranging for a refund, obtaining a higher grade or credit for training, or seeking reinstatement to an educator preparation program.
- Documentation to support your claim when possible. For example, if you refer in your complaint to an educator preparation program policy, include a copy of the policy with your complaint. Helpful documentation might include letters or emails exchanged between parties.

Texas Education Agency staff will send confirmation of a complaint within thirty days of receiving the submission. Remember, information the public sends to TEA by email may not be secure. Do not email sensitive information to TEA. The agency will remove confidential or sensitive information when replying by email. TEA will maintain confidentiality of information to the extent the law allows.

TEXAS ADMINISTRATIVE CODE §228.70

****Note – this process specifically addresses concerns about the Educator Preparation Program. If you have concerns about courses, TTU policy, you should follow the university process outlined in the student handbook <https://www.depts.ttu.edu/dos/studentcomplaints.php>**