

**Faculty/Staff
Resource Guide
for Disruptive Students**

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Academic Expectations

Austin Peay State University offers its students an environment where effective teaching and learning are significant part of their experience. Instructors and students must work together to create a classroom setting that is fostering of the exchange of ideas and information. Every student and faculty member has the right to experience this educational atmosphere; therefore, each student at Austin Peay State University must conduct themselves in a respectful way that does not hinder the classroom experience and in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

Austin Peay State University faculty can access this resource guide when dealing with disruptive behavior in the classroom.

Academic and Classroom Misconduct

(As stated in the Student Handbook)

1. The instructor has the primary responsibility for control over classroom behavior and maintenance of academic integrity and can order the *temporary removal* or exclusion from the classroom of any student engaged in disruptive conduct or conduct violative of the general rules and regulations of the institution. *(This exclusion can be for one class period only.)* Extended or permanent exclusion from the classroom or further disciplinary action can be effected only through appropriate procedures established by the Division of Student Affairs.
2. Academic dishonesty may be defined as any act of dishonesty in academic work. This includes but is not limited to, plagiarism, the changing or falsifying of any academic documents or materials, cheating and giving or receiving of unauthorized aid in tests, examinations or other assigned work. Students guilty of academic misconduct, either directly or indirectly through participation or assistance, are immediately responsible to the instructor of the class. Penalties for academic misconduct will vary with the seriousness of the offense and may include, but are not limited to, a grade of "F" on the work in question, a grade of "F" in the course, reprimand, probation, suspension, and expulsion.
3. If the student believes that he or she has been erroneously accused of academic misconduct, and if his or her final grade has been lowered as a result, the student may appeal the case through Academic Grievance Procedures.
4. Class attendance and punctuality requirements are contracted between the faculty and the students through specific expectations for attendance and punctuality and specific consequences that are outlined by individual faculty members in the printed syllabus for each course. Students are expected to attend class regularly and on time and are responsible for giving explanations/rationale for absences and lateness directly to the faculty member for each course in which they are enrolled. In cases where student absences are the result of emergency circumstances (e.g., death in the family, a student's serious injury or incapacitating illness), for which student(s) are unable to make immediate contact with faculty, the student may contact the Central Student Affairs office for assistance in providing such immediate notification to faculty. However, the student remains responsible for verifying the emergency circumstances to faculty and for discussing arrangements with faculty for possible completion of course work requirements, if feasible.

Student Code of Conduct

The APSU Student Code of Conduct is an important document for both students and faculty. This can be found on the Student Affairs website at http://www.apsu.edu/student_affairs/judicial1.htm . Disruptive behavior should be addressed immediately by the instructor in order to maintain a positive classroom environment.

The purpose of this guide is to assist instructors in addressing disruptive behavior in an appropriate manner and prevent future occurrences.

Disruptive Behavior Defined

According to the Student Code of Conduct, “disruptive behavior in the classroom may be defined, but is not limited to, behavior that obstructs or disrupts the learning environment (e.g., offensive language, harassment of students and professors, repeated outbursts from a student which disrupts the flow of instruction or prevents concentration on the subject taught, failure to cooperate in maintaining classroom decorum, the presence of non-enrolled visitors in the classroom [see APSU Policy No. 3:032, Minors on Campus Policy], etc.), the continued use of any electronic or other noise or light emitting device which disturbs or interrupts the concentration of others (e.g., disturbing noises from beepers, cell phones, palm pilots, laptop computers, games, etc.)”

Examples of Disruptive Behavior and Possible Responses

Failure to cooperate in maintaining classroom decorum

- Ask the student to discontinue the behavior immediately.
- If necessary, meet with the student after class.

Eating, drinking, gum chewing, smoking or using smokeless tobacco

- Ask the student to discontinue the behavior immediately.
- Remind the student of the standards outlined in the syllabus and at the beginning of the semester.

Presence of non-enrolled visitors in the classroom

- Inquire as to why the visitor is present in the classroom.
- Let the student and/or visitor know that everyone must be enrolled in the course.

Excessive tardiness, unexcused exits from class (to obtain snacks or to talk to someone by phone or in person without notifying the instructor prior to class.)

- Make a general comment to the class to affirm that this is disruptive.
- Ask the student a question on the topic.
- Privately, let the student know that this is unacceptable.

Verbal or physical threats to students or faculty, harassment of students or instructors (mocking instructors, use of offensive language), yelling or screaming

- Stay calm and composed.
- Don't oppose what the student is saying. Try to move the conversation off the angry student.
- Keep eye contact with the student and begin to move closer to him/her.
- Leave the student a way to withdraw from the altercation.
- Ask if any other students have similar feelings. Peer pressure can begin to come in effect.
- If a student makes an inappropriate comment, do not accept it. Correct the comment.
- If a student begins to criticize, ask how he/she would solve the problem. If the student has no solutions, it often weakens his/her original argument.
- Speak with the student one on one after class.
- If the student is completely undermining the classroom atmosphere, he/she can be asked to leave.
- Call Campus Police immediately, if violent or threatening behavior becomes an issue.

Disputing the instructor's authority and expertise

- Acknowledge that instructors are uncertain of answers also.
- Take in the student(s) feelings and go on to the next topic.
- Ask the class members their opinion on the question/issue.
- Recognize that the classroom is a shared learning environment for students and instructors.

Grandstanding (students who take over the classroom discussion whether it is on subject or not), rambling, speaking without being recognized by the instructor

- Acknowledge the comments, and that they have the right to an opinion, but the class needs to move on.
- Allow time for the student to state his/her perspective.
- Recognize positive aspects.
- Ask the student to state his/her question or to condense his/her main point.
- Let the student know he/she can discuss the subject more if there is time at the end of class.
- Restate a significant point to bring their attention back to the current subject.
- Begin to ask questions to students who are still on topic.
- Shift the conversation by using visual aids such as the board, overhead projector or textbooks.
- Let the class know that it is the quality of responses that concern you rather than the quantity.
- Do not mock students or comment to others about the disruptive student. Try to move the class forward without engaging that student.
- Speak with the student during a break or after class to address his/her concerns.

Gripping (This could be justifiable criticisms.)

- Let the student know that policies are set. The instructor may not be able to change them.
- If the student has a legitimate issue, confirm it.
- Inform the student that the problem will be discussed with the appropriate individual confidentially.
- Notify the student of time sensitivity.
- If the student is upset regarding a grade, be sure that expectations are set early for tests and papers. Sample papers and test answers can be provided.
- Offer constructive criticism for the student to improve on the next assignment.
- Notify students of how to appeal decisions, if they choose to do so .

Usage of electronic devices (cell phones, pagers, iPods, MP3 players, laptops, etc.), engaging in communication unrelated to class (passing Notes, prolonged chattering), overt inattentiveness (sleeping in class, engaging in activity other than class activities, preventing other students from paying attention)

- Don't humiliate the student(s).
- Ask the students for their opinion on the class discussion or ask for their ideas.
- Nonchalantly move closer to the student(s).
- Try to make eye contact with the student(s).
- Make a comment to the class about the group without looking at them directly.
- Bring the conversation closer to the student(s) by standing near them and engaging those around them.
- If all else fails, stop and wait for the behavior to discontinue.

Lack of involvement in the classroom discussion or activities

- Vary your teaching methods to include other outlets for these students such as writing assignments or having students pair up to discuss a topic.
- When the student makes any effort to contribute, praise them for their input.
- Ask the student a direct question to get their opinion on the topic.
- Give the student a task that could bring out their strengths such as a small group leader.
- Engage eye contact with the student often.

Poor personal hygiene (consistent lack of personal care that can distract students around them.)

- In a one-on-one conversation, ask the student if he/she sees an issue with his/her hygiene.
- Provide the student with resources on campus that could possibly help alleviate the issue.
- Use sensitivity in all of these conversations.

Dressing in a way that distracts students and/or the instructor (Pajamas, obscene words or pictures on clothing, or indecent exposure)

- Speak to the student privately to let him/her know that his/her attire is distracting to those around them.
- If the behavior continues, call Office of Student Affairs.

Note: There are students who suffer from emotional and/or mental distress or psychological disorders. Regardless of their personal situations, these are not justifiable reasons to disrupt the classroom. The Office of Disability Services should be contacted at (931) 221-6230 to discuss any claims or accommodations for disabilities. Additionally, contact Student Counseling Services at (931) 221-6162 to discuss any observations and/or concerns of emotional distress. Lastly, the Office of Student Affairs should be contacted for any disruptive behavior of a student.

Strategies to Prevent Disruptions in the Classroom

These strategies are meant to help faculty set a high level of classroom expectations for students. Students should understand their responsibility in the educational process.

- Exhibit the behaviors you would like the students to display
 - Be prepared and on time for class.
 - Turn off cell phone or other electronic devices.
 - Be respectful.
- Be available for students during office hours. Promote that time as an opportunity for students to discuss any issues they may be having rather than class time.
- Outline academic and behavioral expectations on the syllabus. Ask yourself these questions:
 - What behavior is acceptable and unacceptable? Chattering, tardiness, electronic device use, eating, drinking, sleeping, etc?
 - What academic and/or disciplinary penalties would you assign for non-permitted behaviors?
 - How do you define plagiarism? How will you handle it?
- When reviewing the syllabus with students, explain why certain behaviors will not be tolerated.
- When administering penalties or approval of excuses, do so impartially and in accordance with the guidelines outlined in the Student Code of Conduct and the syllabus. This will prevent students from accusing instructors of bias tendencies.
- Using sensitivity in your approach with students can help prevent student disruptions. Carefully phrasing criticism and questions can alleviate the urge for students to reply with unfavorable responses.
- Showing support for students and acknowledging their contribution will allow instructors to identify weak arguments and ineffectual points and maintain a positive relationship with students.

Protocol for Managing Disruptions in the Classroom

When dealing with a disruptive student, remember your nonverbal cues will speak as loudly as verbal message. Tone of voice, body language and facial expressions make up 93% of the message. Only 7% of the message is the actual spoken words. While it is easy to become frustrated in these situations, remember that actions speak louder than words. Speak in a calm, courteous manner and state your thoughts directly. Before jumping into a situation, remember that peaks of anger last 20-30 seconds. Let this time pass before resolving the situation. Other students in the classroom are looking to the instructor to address the situation. Disruptive behavior can make other students uncomfortable.

- Address any issues immediately. If not, the issues can escalate.
- If a disruptive behavior is noticed, a statement can be made to the entire class to make a point. For example, "Students should be focusing on the class discussion and put away any other distractions."
- Refrain from attacking remarks or tone. Use this opportunity as a teachable moment.
- Stay calm and composed. Do not take disruptive behavior as a personal attack. Exhibit the behavior that is wanted from the student.
- Attend to the issue in a direct, clear approach. This can be a stern look or a respectful request in class. If necessary, the instructor can speak with the student(s) after class or meet during office hours.
- When meeting students after class, explain why specific behavior was of concern. Refer to the guidelines you set at the beginning of class, and remind them of the consequences.
- Some students may not be disrupting class, but are disrespectful such as the use of electronic devices. This annoyance can be discussed with the student after class.
- Conversations with students regarding behavioral issues should be in a private setting.
- If a student continues to be disruptive, the student can be asked to leave class. If that student refuses to leave, Public Safety/Campus Police may be contacted. Additionally, in these specific situations, please notify Student Affairs immediately following the class period.
- Students should receive verbal and/or written warnings to advise them of the consequences if the disruptive behavior continues.
- Make notes of any disruptive behavior and the actions you took against it, i.e. verbal and/or written warnings, meetings, etc. Please include date, time, location and nature of all occurrences. Any inappropriate e-mails should be saved as well. This information can be used to identify patterns of behavior and can help decide how to move forward with the student(s) Department chairs should be kept up to date on any ongoing issues.
- If the student's behavior is continuously disruptive and not hazardous to the instructor and other students, the disruptive student may have other issues to take into consideration such as psychological disability. The student in question may not be able to change his/her poor behavior even after reprimand. The instructor should consult with the Office of Student Affairs and/or Student Counseling Services in order to decide how to proceed.
- If unsure whether a student has the potential for violence, take precautions in order to prevent a possible dangerous setting. An instructor can agree to meet with the student

only in the presence of other staff. Call Public Safety/Campus Police immediately if a student becomes volatile in class.

- If an instructor feels there is student who is threatening violence, he/she should report the student immediately to APSU campus police.

How to Cope With a Potentially Dangerous Student

When faced with a potentially dangerous student, call the Austin Peay State University Campus Police at (931) 221-7786 or 911. If this is not possible, keep the following in mind:

- A safe distance should be kept between the student in question and the instructor and other students. Face the student, and do not underestimate his/her abilities.
- In order to avoid escalating the situation, do not touch him/her or his/her property, unless being physically attacked.
- Remain calm and talk to the student. Do not threaten him/her.
- If violence is imminent, class should be adjourned.
- Do not mention any topics that could upset the student further. Keep the student occupied with thoughts to settle the situation or get the student to exit the area. If possible, have the student removed by a police officer.
- Immediately contact APSU campus police and the Office of Student Affairs.

Reporting a Disruptive Student

The office of Student Affairs has a Complaint/Incident form and a Temporary Exclusion Notice that can be completed and submitted to Room 206 of the Morgan University Center. Both forms can be accessed at the Student Affairs Student Code of Conduct web page under Judicial Procedures or at the following links.

Complaint/Incident Form:

http://www.apsu.edu/student_affairs/Complaint%20Form%20f08.pdf

Temporary Exclusion Notice:

[http://www.apsu.edu/student_affairs/Exclusion%20Notice%20\(2\)%20f07.pdf](http://www.apsu.edu/student_affairs/Exclusion%20Notice%20(2)%20f07.pdf)

Campus Resource Contact Information:

Office of Student Affairs

Gregory R. Singleton
Dean of Students
E-Mail: singleton@apsu.edu

Morgan University Center
Room 206
Box 4598
Clarksville, TN 37044
Phone (931) 221-7341
FAX (931) 221-6304
Website: www.apsu.edu/student_affairs

Public Safety and Campus Police

Shasteen Building
Box 4425
Clarksville, TN 37044
Phone: (931) 221-7786
E-mail: police@apsu.edu
Website: www.apsu.edu/Police/

Office of Disability Services

Morgan University Center
Room 114
Box 4578
Clarksville, TN 37044
Phone: (931) 221-6230
E-mail: ods@apsu.edu
Website: www.apsu.edu/disability/

Student Counseling Services

Ellington Bldg, Room 202
Box 4564
Clarksville, TN 37044
Phone: (931) 221-6162
E-mail: dalep@apsu.edu
Website: www.apsu.edu/counseling/

(After Hours/Emergencies)
(931) 221-4848

Appendix A

Austin Peay State University Division of Student Affairs

INCIDENT/COMPLAINT FORM

Instructions: Please complete the General Information section of the Incident/Complaint Form, write a factual and accurate description of the incident, sign the form and submit it to the Office of Student Affairs, Room 206 of the Morgan University Center.

General Information:

Date of this Report:

Reporting Individual(s):

Telephone Number:

E-mail Address: _____

Check your APSU category: ___ Staff _____ Faculty ___ Student

Date of Incident: _____

Time of Incident: _____

Location of Incident:

Name of Individual(s) accused and/or involved:

Description of Incident: Please write a description of the incident, in chronological order. Provide details concerning your observations, actions of individuals and accurate statements made by all parties that you recall. Include names of witnesses.

My signature below asserts that all of the information given above is true and accurate to the best of my recollection and knowledge.

Signature of Reporting

Individual: _____

Date Submitted: _____ **Time:** _____ **a.m.** _____ **p.m.**

Received By: _____

Date: _____

(Please understand that the accused student will have the right to view your statement and may request a copy of the statement to assist him/her in preparing for a disciplinary hearing.)

Appendix B

USE THIS FORM WITH THE INTENTION OF INITIATING A PERMANENT EXCLUSION

Exclusion Notice

Student's Name: _____

Student's I.D.: _____

You are being temporarily excluded from the following class:

Department/subject	Course Number	Section Number
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In accordance with outlined standards of this course and University policies, this is a temporary exclusion which, subject to my intention to file a complaint through the disciplinary process, may result in your permanent exclusion from this class.

A copy of this notice, when sent to the Office of Student Affairs, will initiate an investigation of your violation of the Code of Student Conduct.

Name of Faculty/Instructor (Please Print): _____

Signature of Faculty/Instructor: _____

Date of Notification: _____

Copies of this notice have been sent to

- Dean of Students
- Department Chair/Head
- College Dean
- Vice President of Student Affairs
- Vice President of Academic Affairs

References

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