

## Texas A&M University -San Antonio

### Educator Preparation Programs (EPP)

#### STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The Educator Preparation program at Texas A&M-San Antonio is designed to develop and prepare highly effective educators who are Ready from One. During the course of this preparation, there are many requirements placed upon students and the program, including ensuring compliance of all state rules governing educator preparation in the state of Texas.

**Informal Grievance Process:** In the event a concern arises, students are encouraged to discuss issues and complaints through informal conferences with the faculty or staff member involved. Concerns should be addressed as soon as possible to allow early resolution at the lowest administrative level. Students with concerns regarding activities associated with program admission, field placements and certification testing issues may submit an appeal to the Educator Preparation Program office. Directions for the appeal process can be accessed through the Educator Portal, student program handbook or in the EPP office. Appeal forms may be obtained in the EPP office in Suite 212 in the Madla Building.

**Formal Grievance Policy:** If an informal conference or appeal decision fails to produce an acceptable outcome from the student's perspective, he or she may initiate the formal grievance process. A student, whose concerns are resolved, may withdraw a formal complaint at any time.

**Filing a Formal Grievance:** In the event the student feels the informal process is not effectively remediating concerns, the student may begin the formal EPP Grievance Process. The Formal Grievance process for students involved in an EPP shall begin with the Department Chair of Educator Leadership and Preparation or the Department Chair of Counseling and Kinesiology, depending upon the certification being sought. All formal grievances are to be filed in a timely manner.

**Level 1:** Any student wishing to file a formal grievance should submit the following information in writing:

1. Specific grievance includes detailed information
2. Complainant's name, address, and telephone number
3. Specific dates
4. If possible, names of other persons involved regarding specific remedies sought.

Grievance documents will be hand delivered to the Department Chair's office and logged in for documentation purposes. The Department Chair or designee will provide a written response to the appeal within ten business days of receipt.

**Level 2:** If a student did not receive relief requested at Level One or the time for response has expired, the candidate may appeal the decision to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities. The level 2 grievance should include:

1. Specific grievance includes detailed information
2. Complainant's name, address, and telephone number
3. Specific dates
4. If possible, names of other persons involved regarding specific remedies sought
5. No additional complaints or grievances may be added at this level

The grievance should be submitted by entering the incident into the online submission system at [https://tamusa-advocate.symphlicity.com/public\\_report](https://tamusa-advocate.symphlicity.com/public_report) within 10 business days of the receipt of the level 1 decision. Decisions regarding whether complaints submitted after this deadline will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Director of Student Rights and Responsibilities in cooperation with the Dean of the College of Education and Kinesiology.

After the grievance is received, the investigative period may last up to 30 business days; extenuating circumstances may cause the University to deviate from the defined time frames. An investigation shall follow the submission of the grievance.

1. The Student Conduct Officer of Student Rights and Responsibilities or designee shall conduct the investigation. The student conduct officer will take and gather all facts pertaining to the grievance.
2. This procedure ensures thorough investigations, affording all involved parties an opportunity to submit evidence relevant to the grievance.

The Student Conduct Officer of Student Rights and Responsibilities or Dean of the College of Education and Human Development shall send a written resolution to the complainant with the outcome(s), reason(s) for the decision, any remedies afforded, if any, and notice of the level 2 appeals process. A copy of the resolution will be provided to the employee overseeing the area or individual and the resolution shall be kept on file for one calendar year in the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities who will review all information and shall inform the appealing student of a final decision.

Level 2 Appeal Procedure: Students have the right to appeal any decision of the conduct administrator within 5 calendar days from the date of the decision. Those wishing to appeal their outcome need to submit a formal request in writing to the Director of the Office Student Rights and Responsibilities.

**Level 3:** After the EPP student has exhausted all attempts at resolving a complaint through the College of Education and Human Development and the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities, the student may seek relief with the Texas Education Agency. Information on how to file a complaint with TEA may be secured by accessing the A&M-SA Educator Portal, A&M-SA College of Education and Human

Development website, posted in the EPP certification office, in administrative offices in the College of Education and Human Development and in paper form upon request.

The official TEA complaint process can be found at [www.tea.texas.gov](http://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 a 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 TEA must be in writing. Complaints to TEA are not accepted by phone nor are anonymous complaints. 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. Submissions may be faxed to (512)463-9008 or emailed to [generalinquiry@tea.texas.gov](mailto:generalinquiry@tea.texas.gov).

To adequately review and address a complaint, TEA needs specific details. TEA staff 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:

1. The reasons you believe the issues in your complaint are valid. You should also indicate how you believe that TEA can assist you in this matter. Remember that TEA cannot assist you 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.
2. Documentation to support your claim when possible. For example, if you refer in your complaint to an educator preparation program procedure, include a copy of the procedure with your complaint. Helpful documentation might include letters or e-mails exchanged between the parties.

Texas Education Agency staff will send confirmation of a complaint within 30 days of receiving the submission. Remember, information sent to TEA by public 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**