

**RULES
OF
MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY**

**CHAPTER 0240-07-05
STUDENT CONDUCT**

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0240-07-05-.01 PURPOSE.

- (1) Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU or University) is committed to fostering a campus environment that is devoted to learning, growth, and service. We accept and practice the core values of honesty and integrity, respect for diversity, positive engagement in the community, and commitment to non-violence. The Office of Student Conduct was created to uphold these values, educate the community about behavioral expectations, and hold members of the student community accountable to these rules and expectations.
- (2) Student members of the University community are expected to uphold and abide by standards of conduct that form the basis of these rules. Each member of the University community bears responsibility for their conduct. When community members fail to exemplify and uphold these standards of conduct, student conduct procedures are used to assert and uphold these standards.
- (3) The student conduct process at MTSU exists to protect the interests of the University community and the individual student while striking a balance between these two (2) interests. Students and student organizations that do not act in accordance with MTSU rules and expectations will be challenged and may be sanctioned accordingly. Sanctions are designed to assist students and student organizations in achieving acceptable standards of behavior while providing tools and resources for life-long learning and conflict resolution.
- (4) Generally, a victim's input shall be sought during the disciplinary process; however, the right and responsibility for disposition of any individual complaint is reserved by the University. If a victim withdraws his/her/its complaint or refuses to offer testimony during the course of a disciplinary proceeding, the University reserves the right to proceed without his/her/its input.
- (5) The University is committed to respecting students' constitutional rights. These rules shall be interpreted in a way that does not violate students' constitutional rights, including, without limitation, the rights protected by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 49-8-101(a)(2)(A) and 49-8-203(a)(1)(D). **Administrative History:** New rules filed February 8, 2022; effective May 9, 2022.

0240-07-05-.02 DEFINITIONS.

- (1) Student. For the purposes of these rules, a student shall mean any person who is admitted and/or registered for study at MTSU for any academic period, either full-time or part-time, undergraduate, graduate, or professional studies. This shall include any period of time following admission and/or registration, but preceding the start of classes for any academic

(Rule 0240-07-05-.02, continued)

period. It will also include any period which follows the end of an academic period through the last day for registration for the succeeding academic period, and during any period while the student is under suspension from the University. Finally, a student shall also include any person subject to a period of suspension or removal from campus as a sanction which results from a finding of a violation of these rules. In summary, the University considers a person a student when an offer of admission has been extended and thereafter as long as the student has a continuing educational interest in the University.

- (2) Student Organization. For the purposes of these rules, a student organization is a group consisting primarily of currently enrolled students which has become officially recognized by the University following successful completion of the registration process.
- (3) University Official(s). For the purposes of these rules, a University Official is an administrator within the Office of Student Conduct, specifically, the Assistant Dean for Student Conduct and/or the Student Conduct Coordinator or their designees.
- (4) Notice. For the purposes of these rules, a notice is a written communication sent to a student or student organization as directed by these rules. A notice provided to a student will be sent via the student's official MTSU email account as well as a hard copy letter sent via first class USPS mail to the student's local address as indicated in the student information system. A notice sent to a student organization will be sent to the organization's president at that student's MTSU email address and his/her local address. Students have the responsibility to regularly check their University-issued email accounts and to ensure that the local address on file with MTSU is current. The requirement to provide notice will be satisfied when sent as indicated and any period for response will begin on the date the email and/or letter is sent, whichever is sent first.

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 49-8-101(a)(2)(A) and 49-8-203(a)(1)(D). **Administrative History:** New rules filed February 8, 2022; effective May 9, 2022.

0240-07-05-.03 RESPONSIBILITY AND JURISDICTION.

- (1) The President of MTSU is authorized to take such action as may be necessary to maintain campus conditions and to preserve the integrity of the University and its educational environment. The President has determined that the responsibility for the administration of student conduct at MTSU is a function of the Dean of Students' office and/or the appropriate adjudicating body. The Dean of Students' designees are University Officials as defined in this rule at 0240-07-05-.02(3). The University Officials are authorized to make the determination and/or recommendation of the method of hearing for each complaint or allegation and to provide other opportunities for conflict resolution outside of the conduct process consistent with these rules. The University Officials shall implement requirements for the administration of the student conduct program.
- (2) Matters concerning academic misconduct are the responsibility of the Office of the University Provost and/or the University Academic Misconduct Committee.
- (3) Students and student organizations are responsible for compliance with applicable University rules at all times. Student organizations are subject to discipline for the conduct and actions of individual members of the organization while acting in their capacity as members of, or while attending or participating in any activity of, the organization.
- (4) Disciplinary action may be taken against a student or student organization for violations of these rules which occur on University owned, leased, or otherwise controlled property, while participating in international or distance learning programs, and off campus, when the conduct impairs, interferes with, or obstructs any University activity or the mission, processes, and functions of the University. MTSU may also take disciplinary action for any off-campus behavior

(Rule 0240-07-05-.03, continued)

that affects a substantial University interest. A substantial University interest is defined to include:

- (a) Any situation where a student's conduct may present a danger or threat to the health or safety of others;
 - (b) Any situation that significantly impinges upon the rights, property, or achievements of others;
 - (c) Any situation that is detrimental to the educational mission and/or interests of the University.
- (5) MTSU may enforce these rules regardless of the status or outcome of any external proceedings instituted in any other forum, including any civil or criminal proceeding. Should a student withdraw from the University with University disciplinary action pending, the student's record may be encumbered by the appropriate University office until the proceedings have been concluded. The University may take action even if a student is absent from the proceeding.
- (6) Confidentiality of Discipline Process. Subject to the exceptions provided pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. 1232g and/or the Tennessee Open Records Act, T.C.A. § 10-7-504(a)(4), a student's disciplinary files are considered "education records" and are confidential within the meaning of those Acts, provided that students have the right to review their own disciplinary files.

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 10-7-504(a)(4), 49-8-101(a)(2)(A), and 49-8-203(a)(1)(D). **Administrative History:** New rules filed February 8, 2022; effective May 9, 2022.

0240-07-05-.04 STUDENT CONDUCT RULES: VALUES AND BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS. MTSU has adopted the following Community Standards of conduct. Each person who joins or affiliates with the University community does so freely and is expected to abide by these Community Standards. Following each Community Standard is a non-exclusive list of prohibited behaviors for which both students and student organizations may be subject to disciplinary action if such prohibited behavior is engaged in. These prohibited behaviors are considered inappropriate and in opposition to the Community Standards and expectations set forth by MTSU.

- (1) Community Standard: MTSU is committed to developing and nurturing a community devoted to learning, growth, and service. Behavior by students or student organizations including, but not limited to, the following, may be considered as being in violation of this Community Standard.
 - (a) Alcoholic Beverages.
 - 1. The use and/or possession of alcoholic beverages on University owned or controlled property. This offense includes the violation of any local ordinance, state, or federal law concerning alcoholic beverages, on or off University owned or controlled property, where an affiliated group or organization has alcoholic beverages present and available for consumption. It will not be considered a violation of this rule if a student of legal drinking age possesses or consumes alcohol purchased from a third-party vendor during approved events taking place at a sports authority facility so long as the beverage is consumed within the sports authority facility. It will also not be considered a violation of this rule if a student of legal drinking age possesses or consumes alcohol provided at an event approved by the President to serve alcoholic beverages so long as the beverage is consumed within the confines of the designated area of the event.

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2. A student who is under the influence of alcohol should not be reluctant to seek assistance in the event of a health or safety emergency for fear of being sanctioned. The Office of Student Conduct will generally not pursue disciplinary action against a student (or against a witness) for his/her improper use of alcohol (e.g., underage drinking) under that circumstance. This practice only applies to amnesty from violations of this rule. It does not grant amnesty for criminal, civil, or legal consequences for violations of federal, state, or local law.
- (b) Drugs.
1. The unlawful possession or use of any drug or controlled substance (including, but not limited to, any stimulant, depressant, narcotic or hallucinogenic drug, or marijuana), sale or distribution of any such drug or controlled substance. This offense includes:
 - (i) The violation of any local ordinance, state, or federal law concerning the unlawful possession or use of drugs, on or off University owned or controlled property;
 - (ii) Abusing legally obtained drugs by failing to take the drug as prescribed/directed and/or providing the prescribed drug to another person;
 - (iii) Using a prescription drug that has not been prescribed to the individual.
 2. Any reasonable suspicion of drug use or possession including, but not limited to, the odor of burnt or raw marijuana, physical characteristics of impairment, and/or possession of any paraphernalia that can be used for drug consumption may lead to an investigation and possible violation of this rule.
 3. A student who is under the influence of drugs should not be reluctant to seek assistance in the event of a health or safety emergency for fear of being sanctioned. The Office of Student Conduct will generally not pursue disciplinary action against a student (or against a witness) for his/her improper possession or use of drugs under that circumstance. This practice only applies to amnesty from violations of this rule. It does not grant amnesty for criminal, civil, or legal consequences for violations of federal, state, or local law.
- (c) Drug Paraphernalia. The use or possession of equipment, products, or materials that are used or intended for use in manufacturing, growing, using, or distributing any drug or controlled substance. This offense includes, but is not limited to, the violation of any local ordinance, state, or federal law concerning the unlawful possession of drug paraphernalia, on or off University owned or controlled property.
- (d) Public Intoxication.
1. Appearing on University owned or controlled property or at a University sponsored event while under the influence of a controlled substance or of any other intoxicating substance to the degree that the individual may be endangered; there is endangerment to other persons or property; or, the individual unreasonably annoys people in the vicinity.
 2. A student who is under the influence of alcohol or drugs should not be reluctant to seek assistance in the event of a health or safety emergency for fear of being sanctioned. The Office of Student Conduct will generally not pursue disciplinary action against a student (or against a witness) for his/her improper use of alcohol (e.g., underage drinking) under that circumstance. This practice only applies to

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amnesty from violations of this rule. It does not grant amnesty for criminal, civil, or legal consequences for violations of federal, state, or local law.

- (e) Explosives, Fireworks, and Flammable Materials. The unauthorized possession, ignition, or detonation of any object or article which could cause damage by fire or other means to persons or property, or possession of any substance which could be considered to be, and used, as fireworks.
- (f) Violation of University Rules. Any violation of the rules of the University.
- (g) Violation of State or Federal Laws. Any violation of state or federal laws or regulations proscribing conduct or establishing offenses, which laws and regulations are incorporated herein by reference.
- (h) Disorderly Conduct. Any behavior that unreasonably disrupts the academic environment (e.g., including, but not limited to, that which interferes with teaching, classroom operations, research, etc.) or unreasonably interferes with operations, events, or programs on University owned or controlled property, or during a University event. This includes, but is not limited to, unauthorized use of sirens, loudspeakers, and other sound amplification equipment.
- (i) Misuse of or Damage to Property. Any act of misuse, vandalism, malicious or unwarranted damage or destruction, defacing, disfiguring, or unauthorized use of property belonging to another including, but not limited to, any personal or University property, fire alarms, fire equipment, elevators, telephones, University keys, library materials, and/or safety devices.
- (j) Obstruction of or Interference with University Activities or Facilities. Any intentional interference with, or obstruction of, any University program, event, or facility including, but not limited to, the following:
 - 1. Any unauthorized occupancy of facilities owned or controlled by the University or blockage of access to or from such facilities;
 - 2. Interference with the right of any University member or other authorized person to gain access to any activity, program, event, or facilities sponsored or controlled by the University;
 - 3. Any obstruction or delay of a campus security officer, public safety officer, police officer, firefighter, EMT, or any official of the University, or failure to comply with any emergency directive issued by such person in the performance of his/her duty;
 - 4. Participation in, or inciting others to participate in, activities that substantially impede University operations;
 - 5. Interference of either: (1) the instructor's ability to conduct class; or (2) the ability of other students to participate in and profit from instructional activity; or,
 - 6. Obstruction of the free flow of pedestrian or vehicular traffic on University owned or controlled property, or at a University event.
- (k) Unacceptable Conduct in Disciplinary Proceedings. Any conduct at any stage of a University disciplinary process or investigation that is contemptuous, disrespectful, threatening, or disorderly. This includes, but is not limited to, false complaints, retaliation, providing false testimony or other evidence, and attempts to influence the impartiality of

(Rule 0240-07-05-.04, continued)

a member of a judicial body, verbal or physical harassment or intimidation of a judicial board member, complainant, respondent, or witness.

- (l) Unauthorized Access to University Facilities and/or Grounds. Any unauthorized access and/or occupancy of University facilities and grounds is prohibited including, but not limited to, gaining access to facilities and grounds that are closed to the public, being present in areas of campus that are open to limited guests only, or being present in academic buildings after hours without permission.
 - (m) Pornography or Obscenity. Public display on property owned, leased, or controlled by the University of literature, films, pictures, or other materials which an average person applying contemporary community standards would find taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest; depicts or describes sexual conduct in a patently offensive way; and, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.
 - (n) Student Identification Cards. Failure to possess at all times a valid student identification card or an alternate ID that will prove student status; or, failure to surrender ID card to a University Official upon proper request.
 - (o) Gambling. Unlawful gambling in any form.
 - (p) Joint Responsibility. Any attempt to commit any of the offenses listed under this section, or the aiding or abetting of the commission of any of the offenses listed under this section (an attempt to commit an offense is defined as the intention to commit the offense coupled with the taking of some action toward its commission). Being present during the planning or commission of any offense listed under this section will be considered as aiding and abetting. Students who anticipate or observe an offense must remove themselves from the situation and are required to report the offense to the University.
 - (q) Litter. Dispersing litter in any form onto the grounds or facilities of the University or on property owned, leased, or controlled by the University.
 - (r) Sirens and Loudspeakers. Unauthorized use of sirens, loudspeakers, and other sound amplification equipment.
 - (s) Graffiti. Damage or defacement of MTSU property or on property owned, leased, or controlled by the University by painting, chalking, writing, stenciling, or by any other means of application on such property.
- (2) Community Standard: Honesty and Integrity. The notions of personal and academic honesty and integrity are central to the existence of the MTSU community. All members of the community will strive to achieve and maintain the highest standards of academic achievement in the classroom, and personal and social responsibility on and off campus. Behavior by students or student organizations including, but not limited to, the following, may be considered as being in violation of this Community Standard.
- (a) Theft, Misappropriation, or Unauthorized Sale of Property. Any act of theft, misappropriation, or unauthorized possession or sale of University property, or any such act against a member of the University community or a guest of the University, including identity theft.
 - (b) Failure to Cooperate with University Officials. Failure to comply with directions or directives of University Officials acting in the performance of their duties.

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- (c) Providing False Information. Giving any false information to, or withholding necessary information from, any University Official acting in the performance of his/her duties in connection with a student's admission, enrollment, or status in the University.
 - (d) Misuse of Documents or Identification Cards. Any forgery, alteration of, or unauthorized use of University documents, forms, records, or identification cards including, but not limited to, the giving of any false information, or withholding of necessary information, in connection with a student's admission, enrollment, or status in the University.
 - (e) Financial Irresponsibility. Failure to meet financial responsibilities to the University promptly including, but not limited to, knowingly passing a worthless check or money order in payment to the University.
 - (f) Violation of Imposed Disciplinary Sanctions. Intentional or unintentional violation of a disciplinary sanction officially imposed by a University Official or a constituted body of the University.
 - (g) Unauthorized Surveillance. Making or causing to be made unauthorized images of a person in a location in which that person has a reasonable expectation of privacy, without the prior effective consent of the individual, or in the case of a minor, without the prior effective consent of the minor's parent or guardian, recognizing that the parent cannot consent on behalf of a child for criminal acts as provided in state law. This includes, but is not limited to, taking video or photographic images in shower/locker rooms, residence hall rooms, and restrooms, and storing, sharing, and/or distributing of such unauthorized images by any means.
 - (h) Unauthorized Duplication or Possession of Keys. Making, causing to be made, or the possession of any key for a University facility without proper authorization.
 - (i) Fire Drills. Failure to evacuate University facilities or willfully disregarding any emergency or fire alarm signal.
- (3) Community Standard: Respect for Diversity. The MTSU community is composed of individuals representing different races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, cultures, and ways of thinking. We respect individual differences and perspectives and acknowledge our commonalities. Behavior by students or student organizations including, but not limited to, the following may be considered as being in violation of this Community Standard.
- (a) Harassment or Retaliation. Any act against another person or group in violation of MTSU rules, as well as federal and/or state laws prohibiting discrimination or retaliation.
 - (b) Retaliation also includes, in this context, an act intended or reasonably likely to dissuade a person from participating in the student disciplinary process or pursuing a complaint about a violation of MTSU rules, as well as, state or federal law.
- (4) Community Standard: Commitment to Non-violence. MTSU is committed to the principles of non-violence and peaceful conflict resolution. Community members will freely express their ideas and resolve differences using reason and persuasion. Behavior by students or student organizations including, but not limited to, the following, may be considered as being in violation of this Community Standard.
- (a) Threatening or Dangerous Conduct. Any conduct, or attempted conduct, which poses a threat to the safety of others or when the behavior is disruptive of the University's learning environment.

(Rule 0240-07-05-.04, continued)

- (b) Hazing. Hazing, as defined in T.C.A. § 49-7-123(a)(1), means any intentional or reckless act, on or off the property, of any higher education institution by an individual acting alone, or with others, which is directed against any other person(s) that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of that person(s), or which induces or coerces a person(s) to endanger such person(s) mental or physical health or safety. Hazing does not include customary athletic events or similar contests or competitions, and is limited to those actions taken and situations created in connection with initiation into or affiliation with any organization.
- (c) Firearms and Other Dangerous Weapons. Except as may otherwise be permitted by law, the possession or use of firearms, explosives, fireworks, inflammables, dangerous chemical mixtures, and/or dangerous weapons of any kind including, but not limited to, knives, tasers, asp batons, tactical or telescoping batons, brass knuckles, whips, BB guns, pellet guns, propelled missiles, and/or stun guns is prohibited. The possession or use of ammunition, which includes, but is not limited to, bullets, paint balls, pellets, and BBs is prohibited. Any possession or use of replica/toy guns including, but not limited to, BB guns or cap guns, pellet guns, paintball guns, water guns, "Super Soakers," toy knives, slingshots, or other items that simulate firearms or dangerous weapons is prohibited.
- (d) Sexual Misconduct.
 - 1. Sexual misconduct includes dating violence, domestic violence, stalking and sexual assault as defined by applicable University rules.
 - 2. A student who is a victim of sexual misconduct and who was under the influence of alcohol or drugs during the sexual misconduct incident should not be reluctant to seek assistance for fear of being sanctioned for his/her improper use of alcohol or drugs. The Office of Student Conduct will generally not pursue disciplinary action against the victim (or against a witness) for his/her improper use of alcohol or drugs (e.g., underage drinking) if the victim or witness is making a good faith report of sexual misconduct. This practice only applies to amnesty from violations of this rule. It does not grant amnesty for criminal, civil, or legal consequences for violations of federal, state, or local law.

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 49-7-123(a)(1), 49-8-101(a)(2)(A), and 49-8-203(a)(1)(D). **Administrative History:** New rules filed February 8, 2022; effective May 9, 2022.

0240-07-05-.05 CLASSROOM MISCONDUCT.

- (1) The instructor has the primary responsibility for maintenance of academic integrity and managing classroom behavior, and can order the temporary removal or exclusion from the classroom of any student engaged in disorderly conduct as defined in Rule 0240-07-05-.04(1)(h), or conduct that violates applicable rules of the University for each class session during which the conduct occurs. Extended or permanent exclusion from the classroom, beyond the session in which the conduct occurred, or further disciplinary action can be effected only through appropriate procedures of the University. If an instructor wishes to remove a student from the classroom for a longer period of time or permanently, he/she must refer the student to the Office of Student Conduct.
- (2) The instructor is expected to outline behavioral expectations for each class at the beginning of the academic term and as needed throughout the semester.

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 49-8-101(a)(2)(A) and 49-8-203(a)(1)(D). **Administrative History:** New rules filed February 8, 2022; effective May 9, 2022.

0240-07-05-.06 DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS.

- (1) A disciplinary sanction is a consequence for being found in violation of University rules. The following disciplinary sanctions are applicable to both students and student organizations. Upon a determination that a student or student organization has violated these rules, disciplinary sanctions may be imposed, either singly or in combination, by the appropriate University Official.
- (2) Pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-7-146, the University will notify the parent/guardian of students under the age of twenty-one (21) who have been found responsible for alcohol and/or drug-related violations. In addition, the parent/guardian may be contacted in any instance in which the safety of the student has been threatened either through the student's own behavior or the behavior of others.
- (3) Definition of Sanctions:
 - (a) Restitution. Restitution may be required in situations which involve destruction, damage, loss of property, or unreimbursed medical expenses resulting from physical injury. When restitution is required, the student or student organization is obligated to compensate a party or parties for a loss suffered as a result of disciplinary violation(s). Any such payment in restitution shall be limited to actual cost of repair, replacement, labor, or financial loss.
 - (b) Reprimand. A written or verbal reprimand or notice may be given to any student or student organization whose conduct violates any part of this rule and provides notice that any further violation(s) may result in more serious consequences.
 - (c) Service to the University or Local Community. A student or student organization may be required to donate a specified number of service hours to the University or the local community. All community service hours must be approved by the Office of Student Conduct prior to a student or student organization beginning the service.
 - (d) Specified Educational/Counseling Program. A student or student organization may be required to participate in specified educational or counseling program(s) relevant to the offense, or to prepare a project or report concerning a relevant topic.
 - (e) Apology. A student or student organization may be given the opportunity, under certain circumstances, to voluntarily apologize to MTSU or its guests, another student or student organization, faculty or staff member, or any other affected party, either verbally or in writing, as an alternative or in addition to the imposition of other sanctions, for the behavior related to an offense.
 - (f) Restriction. A restriction upon a student's or student organization's privileges for a period of time may be imposed. This restriction may include, but not be limited to, denial of the ability to represent the University at any event, ability to participate in University travel, eligibility to hold office in a student organization, use of facilities, parking privileges, participation in extracurricular activities, and/or restriction of organizational privileges.
 - (g) Probation. Official notice that the continued enrollment of a student or recognition of a student organization on probation will be conditioned upon adherence to these rules. Any student or student organization placed on probation will be notified in writing of the terms and conditions of the probation. Any conduct in further violation of these rules while on probationary status or the failure to comply with the terms and conditions of the probation may result in the imposition of more severe disciplinary sanctions, specifically suspension or expulsion.

(Rule 0240-07-05-.06, continued)

- (h) **Housing Probation.** Continued residence in campus or student housing may be conditioned upon adherence to these rules, as well as, University housing rules. Any student placed on housing probation will be notified in writing of the terms and length of the probation. Probation may include restrictions upon the activities of the student, including any other appropriate special condition(s). If a student incurs additional violations during the probationary period, the student may become a candidate for housing suspension.
- (i) **Involuntary Housing Reassignment.** A student may be involuntarily moved to another housing assignment if necessary.
- (j) **Housing Suspension and Forfeiture.** Removal from University housing for a specified period of time or permanently. A student suspended from housing may not reside, visit, or make any use whatsoever of a University housing facility or participate in any University housing activity during the period for which the sanction is in effect. A suspended student shall be required to forfeit housing fees (including any unused portion thereof and the Housing Pre-Payment). A suspended student must vacate the housing unit as directed by University staff. This sanction may be enforced with a University Police trespass restriction, if necessary.
- (k) **Suspension.** Separation of a student or a student organization from the University for a specified period of time. This includes all instructional delivery methods (including, but not limited to, on ground, online, distance education, etc.). A suspended student organization will forfeit its recognition as a student organization for the duration of its suspension. Suspension may be accompanied by special conditions for readmission or recognition.

Any student or student organization receiving a sanction of suspension shall be restricted from the campus of MTSU during the period of separation unless on official business with the University verified in writing by the Dean of Students' office. A suspended student or organization (through its authorized representative) must submit a written request to be on campus to the Dean of Students a minimum of forty-eight (48) business hours in advance of the scheduled time of his/her business on campus. The request must specify the specific reason the student/organization seeks to be on campus and the location that the student/organization wishes to visit. The Dean of Students will issue a written decision regarding the request to be on campus, and the student/authorized representative of the organization is expected to carry that written decision with him/her during the time of the visit, if the request is approved. Students/organizations who have been suspended are not permitted to live or board in University facilities or housing unless otherwise approved or provided by the University. This sanction will be enforced with a University Police trespass restriction, if necessary.

- (l) **Expulsion.** Permanent separation from the University. The imposition of this sanction is a permanent bar to the student's admission, or a student organization's recognition by the University.

A student or student organization that has been expelled may not enter University property or facilities without obtaining prior approval from the Dean of Students. Any student receiving a sanction of expulsion shall be permanently restricted from the campus of MTSU unless on official business with the University verified in writing by the Dean of Students. An expelled student or organization (through its authorized representative) must submit a written request to be on campus to the Dean of Students' office a minimum of forty-eight (48) business hours in advance of the scheduled time of his/her business on campus. The request must specify the specific reason the student/organization seeks to be on campus and the location that the student/organization wishes to visit. The Dean of Students will issue a written decision

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regarding the request to be on campus, and the student/authorized representative of the organization is expected to carry that written decision with him/her during the time of the visit, if the request is approved. Students/organizations who have been expelled are not permitted to live or board in University facilities or housing unless otherwise approved or provided by the University. This sanction will be enforced with a University Police trespass restriction, if necessary.

- (m) Revocation of Admission, Degree, or Credential. Under circumstances deemed appropriate, an offer of admission, a degree or a credential awarded may be revoked or rescinded.
- (n) Other Sanctions. Additional or alternate sanctions may be created and designed as deemed appropriate to the offense and the student's or student organization's need for education, growth, and reform.
- (o) Interim Involuntary Withdrawal or Suspension. As a general rule, the status of a student or student organization accused of a violation of these rules should not be altered until a final determination has been made in regard to the charges. However, interim involuntary withdrawal or suspension, pending the completion of disciplinary procedures, may be imposed upon a finding by the appropriate University Official that the conduct or attempted conduct of the student or student organization poses a direct threat to the safety of any other member of the University, its guests, or property; or, if the behavior is materially and substantially disruptive of the University's learning environment or other campus activities. Violation of an interim or final "No Contact Directive" or other restriction issued in conjunction with an investigation conducted pursuant to MTSU rule concerning misconduct, discrimination, and/or harassment based on sex, including pregnancy, sexual orientation, and gender identity/expression may result in temporary discipline up to and including an interim involuntary withdrawal or suspension being imposed on the violating student or student organization. In any case of interim involuntary withdrawal or suspension, the student or student organization, shall be given an opportunity at the time of the decision, or as soon thereafter as reasonably possible, to contest the interim involuntary withdrawal or suspension in an interim involuntary withdrawal/suspension hearing. During an interim involuntary withdrawal or suspension, the student or student organization shall be denied access to residence halls, campus (including all classes), and/or all other University activities or privileges for which the student or student organization might otherwise be eligible, as the Dean of Students or designee may determine to be appropriate. A preliminary hearing will be held by a designee of the Dean of Students in consultation with appropriate University Officials and the Vice President for Student Affairs, within five (5) business days of the interim involuntary withdrawal or suspension to determine if the interim involuntary withdrawal or suspension should continue until a formal hearing of the charges by a University adjudicating body can be held. During this preliminary hearing, the student or student organization will be given notice of the allegations supporting the imposition of interim involuntary withdrawal or suspension and a summary of the evidence that supports the allegations. The student or student organization will be afforded an opportunity to respond to the allegations. If the interim involuntary withdrawal or suspension is upheld, the formal hearing concerning withdrawal, suspension, or expulsion shall be held as soon as practical. Conditions may be placed on a student or student organization for his/her/its return to the University. The student or student organization may be required to provide documentation that he/she/it has taken steps to mitigate the previous behavior (e.g., including, but not limited to, having followed a treatment plan, submitted periodic reports, granted permission for the University to talk to the treating professional).
- (p) Temporary Student Organization Cease and Desist. A temporary organizational cease and desist is instituted when the University has received information indicating that the continued activity of the student organization could (1) potentially put students or the

(Rule 0240-07-05-.06, continued)

community at risk; (2) cause irreparable harm to the University or student organization; (3) influence the integrity of an investigation; and/or (4) increase the student organization's or University's fault or liability. A temporary student organization cease and desist can be issued by the University alone or in conjunction with a national/regional organization cease and desist. The Office of Student Conduct will notify the parent office (i.e. Student Organizations and Service and/or Fraternity and Sorority Life) and the designated student representative that the student organization has been temporarily restricted from conducting business. During the time of the temporary cease and desist, the student organization will be prohibited from conducting organizational business including, but not limited to, organizational meetings, social activities, philanthropic activities, and representation of the University. The cease and desist duration will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 49-7-146, 49-8-101(a)(2)(A), and 49-8-203(a)(1)(D). **Administrative History:** New rules filed February 8, 2022; effective May 9, 2022.

0240-07-05-.07 STUDENT CONDUCT HEARING OFFICERS AND/OR BOARDS. As permitted by state law and at the direction of the University President, violations under these rules may be heard by the following: administrative judge appointed by the Administrative Procedures Division of the Office of the Secretary of State, hearing officers and/or boards or committees.

- (1) The University Official and/or their designee shall conduct all preliminary reviews and disciplinary conferences. These staff members will also conduct investigations as necessary.
- (2) The Student Judicial Board shall consist of nine (9) students. The Board may be convened to hear cases involving alleged violations of University rules committed by students and student organizations. If the student or student organization is found responsible, the Board recommends appropriate disciplinary sanctions to the Dean of Students. This Board may also be convened to hear matters relative to the interpretations of the Student Government Association constitution and any other Student Government Association legislation, as well as cases regarding student parking citations. Information regarding application, selection procedures, qualifications, and vacancies can be found in the Student Government Association constitution.
- (3) The University Discipline Committee determines whether or not a student or student organization is to be held responsible for violation(s) of these rules. If found responsible, the Committee recommends appropriate disciplinary sanctions to the Vice President for Student Affairs.
- (4) The Student Appeals Committee hears appeals of disciplinary decisions rendered by the Student Judicial Board and the University Discipline Committee and makes a recommendation for disposition of the appeal to the Vice President for Student Affairs.

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 49-8-101(a)(2)(A) and 49-8-203(a)(1)(D). **Administrative History:** New rules filed February 8, 2022; effective May 9, 2022.

0240-07-05-.08 DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES.

- (1) Responsibility for Administration. The administration of discipline is a function of the Dean of Students' Office and/or the appropriate adjudicating body with the exception of matters concerning academic misconduct, which is a function of the Office of the University Provost and/or the Academic Misconduct Committee. Complaints involving discrimination and harassment, including sexual discrimination, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking will be investigated pursuant to applicable MTSU rules. If a violation is determined to have occurred, the student or student organization will be subject to the disciplinary process provided in this rule or other applicable University rules.

(Rule 0240-07-05-.08, continued)

- (2) **Standard of Proof.** The standard of proof utilized in all student disciplinary matters is the preponderance of the evidence. Students and student organizations should be aware that the student conduct process is different from criminal and civil court proceedings. The student conduct process is built on fundamental fairness. Due process, as defined in this rule, includes written notice of the student conduct rules that are in question and an opportunity to be heard by an objective decision-maker. Students and student organizations will only be found in violation of the student conduct rules when it is more likely than not that a violation occurred. This is called a preponderance of the evidence. Sanctions will be fundamentally proportional to the severity of the violation, the student's willingness to comply with student conduct rules in the future, and the cumulative conduct history of the student.
- (3) **Disciplinary Referral.** Reports of behaviors and incidents involving students and student organizations may be referred for evaluation and possible disciplinary action by the University Police, residence hall staff members, faculty, staff, students, and other members of the University and city community. Referrals should be in writing and should be directed to the Assistant Dean for Student Conduct. A hard copy of a written referral may also be dropped off at the Office of Student Conduct. Contact information and email and office addresses can be located on the Office of Student Conduct website.
- (4) **Preliminary Review.** All disciplinary referrals will undergo a preliminary review. The appropriate University Official will review the referral to determine if the possibility exists that a student conduct rule was violated, if additional information is needed prompting an investigation, if immediate action is warranted, and if there are other University entities that need to be put on notice that the behavior has occurred. If the University Official determines that there is a possibility that a student conduct rules violation has occurred and additional information is not needed, he/she will issue a disciplinary charge(s) against the student or student organization. If the University Official determines that additional information is needed, he/she will conduct an investigation. If immediate action is needed, the University Official will consult with the appropriate University Officials such as, but not limited to, the Office of the University Counsel, to determine the best course of action. If other entities need to be informed of the matter, the University Official will consult with the appropriate University Officials to determine the specific information that will be shared about the behavior or incident.
- (5) **Notice of Disciplinary Charges and Disciplinary Conference.**
 - (a) A disciplinary charge means an allegation of a potential violation of the student conduct rules. The purpose of a disciplinary conference is to determine whether there is a preponderance of the evidence to support the charges, and if so, to determine responsibility and appropriate sanctions. When disciplinary charges are issued to a student or student organization, the Student Conduct office will issue a written notice of the alleged violation(s) and the student's rights, and establish a disciplinary conference meeting date and time for the student or student organization, and assigned University Official. During this disciplinary conference, the student or student organization will be reminded which University rules are alleged to have been violated, and the student or student organization will be given an opportunity to explain his/her/its version of the behavior or incident, or to otherwise refute the allegations. Students and student organizations must be notified in writing that they are afforded the following rights in the disciplinary conference:
 1. The right to know what disciplinary violation(s) they have been charged with;
 2. The right to tell their side of the story, present evidence, and request that fact witnesses be permitted to share information on their behalf;

(Rule 0240-07-05-.08, continued)

3. The right to be accompanied by an advisor of their choosing whose participation is limited to directly advising the student or student organization. The advisor cannot be a student who has been charged with a violation of the student conduct rules related to the same incident for which the meeting has been called;
 4. The right to receive the decision and their imposed sanctions in writing.
- (b) The University Official will review the incident taking into account all information gathered pertinent to the matter, as well as the information provided by, or on behalf of, the student or student organization. A determination will be made as to whether or not there has been a violation of the student conduct rules and, if so, what the appropriate sanction(s) will be. The University Official may also determine that additional information or follow-up is needed prior to being able to make a determination regarding responsibility for a student conduct rules violation and may delay a decision until such a time that the needed information is acquired. The University Official can also refer the matter to the University Discipline Committee, if the case is particularly complex or the student or student organization would be best served by having a committee review the case.
- (c) If the student or student organization alleged to have engaged in misconduct does not respond after having been provided notice of the disciplinary conference, the University Official will make a determination as to responsibility for the alleged conduct violation based on the information gathered to that point and will impose a sanction as deemed appropriate.
- (6) Hearing Options. The majority of student disciplinary cases are resolved at the Disciplinary Conference level when the student or student organization accepts responsibility for the violation and the recommended sanction(s). However, if this does not occur, the matter may proceed to a hearing. If the recommended sanction is suspension, expulsion or revocation of recognition of the student organization, the student or student organization has two (2) choices regarding resolution of the disciplinary case. The first choice is to request a hearing before the University Discipline Committee. The second choice is to request a hearing pursuant to the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act (UAPA). The University Official will explain the two (2) choices, and the student or student organization will indicate his/her/its selection in writing. Once the selection is made, the student or student organization cannot elect another option or revert back to the original decision rendered by the University Official. In addition, the Office of Student Conduct can refer a matter to a hearing when the case is unusually complex and/or problematic.
- (a) Student Judicial Board (SJB) and University Discipline Committee (UDC) hearings.
1. The SJB and UDC will hear student disciplinary cases when requested by a student or student organization, or when referred by the Office of Student Conduct. The SJB or UDC makes its recommendation(s) to the Dean of Students or Vice President for Student Affairs, respectively. The Dean of Students and Vice President can uphold the recommendation(s), reverse the recommendation(s), or send the recommendation(s) back to the SJB or UDC for reconsideration of the sanctions only.
 2. The Office of Student Conduct has the responsibility for scheduling SJB and UDC hearings, including the selection of date, time, and location as well as providing information to the student or student organization about the hearing format and process. The student or student organization will be notified of the hearing schedule a minimum of five (5) business days in advance of the actual hearing date. These hearings are closed to the public unless all parties agree, in writing, to an open hearing.

(Rule 0240-07-05-.08, continued)

3. Students and student organizations are afforded the rights guaranteed in the Disciplinary Conference (see Rule 0240-07-05-.08(5)(a)) as well as the following additional rights, which shall be provided in writing:
 - (i) The right to receive notice of the date, time, and place of the hearing at least five (5) business days in advance of the hearing;
 - (ii) The right to receive a list of the witnesses the University expects to present at the proceeding and those the University may present if the need arises;
 - (iii) The right to request a copy of the University's investigative file, redacted in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, (20 U.S.C. § 1232(g), and the federal regulations implementing that statute, as amended;
 - (iv) The right to request copies of all documents, copies of all electronically stored information, and access to tangible evidence the University has in its possession, custody or control and may use to support claims or defenses, unless the use would be solely for impeachment;
 - (v) The right to be accompanied by more than one (1) advisor at the discretion of the adjudicating body and the Office of Student Conduct. The advisor(s) cannot be another student who has been charged with a violation of the student conduct rules related to the same incident as the student. The student may choose to be advised by legal counsel; however, legal counsel's participation shall be limited to directly advising the student;
 - (vi) The right to call witnesses on his/her/its behalf. It is the student or student organization's responsibility to contact his/her/its witnesses and inform them of the hearing unless the witness is also a University witness. University witnesses are contacted by the Office of Student Conduct;
 - (vii) In cases where the accused may be subject to a sanction of suspension or expulsion, or in the case of a student organization, withdrawal of recognition, some form of cross-examination must be permitted if credibility is in dispute and material to the outcome. Cross-examination must be conducted live and in front of the fact-finder but does not require personal confrontation. At the discretion of the hearing officer, cross-examination may be conducted by remote questioning or through a representative.
 - (viii) The right to question witnesses;
 - (ix) The right to be informed of an appeal option, if applicable.
- (b) Uniform Administrative Procedures Act.
 1. All cases which may result in: (a) suspension or expulsion of a student from the University for disciplinary reasons; or, (b) revocation of the registration of a student organization, are subject to the contested case provisions of the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act (UAPA), T.C.A. §§ 4-5-301, et seq., and shall be processed in accordance with the Uniform Contested Case procedures unless the student or student organization waives those procedures and chooses to have the case disposed of administratively in a disciplinary conference or by going before the University Discipline Committee. If the student/student organization wishes to pursue the case administratively or through the UDC, he/she/it must waive the right to a UAPA hearing in writing. Prior to making this decision, the University

(Rule 0240-07-05-.08, continued)

Official assigned to the matter will explain the differences between the hearing options and will provide to the student/student organization a document setting out the student/student organization's rights as are found in Rule 0240-07-05-.08 (E)(F).

2. In all cases involving a hearing under the UAPA contested case provisions, the President or designee shall determine, based upon the nature of the case, whether the hearing shall be before an administrative judge or a hearing officer alone or a Hearing Committee presided over by an administrative judge or a hearing officer. The President is responsible for appointing an administrative judge, a hearing officer and/or Hearing Committee at the request of the Office of Student Conduct. The Office of Student Conduct has the responsibility for working with the Office of the University Counsel to schedule UAPA hearings including the selection of date, time, and location as well as assisting in the scheduling of any necessary preliminary meetings.
3. The case will proceed pursuant to the UAPA and University rules implementing same.

(7) Separation of Functions.

- (a) A person who has served as an investigator, University Official or advocate in a student disciplinary matter may not serve as an administrative judge or hearing officer, or assist or advise an administrative judge or hearing officer in the same proceeding.
- (b) A person who is subject to the supervision, direction or discretion of one (1) who has served as investigator, University Official or advocate in a student disciplinary matter may not serve as an administrative judge or hearing officer or assist, or advise an administrative judge or hearing officer in the same proceeding.
- (c) A person may serve as an administrative judge or hearing officer at successive stages of the same disciplinary matter, unless a party demonstrates grounds for disqualifications in accordance with T.C.A. § 4-5-302.
- (d) A University Official may serve on the Hearing Committee, or as an administrative judge or hearing officer in the UAPA hearing where authorized by law and not subject to disqualification or other cause provided in T.C.A. Title 4, Chapter 5.
- (e) Nothing in this rule prohibits an attorney for the University from providing legal advice to multiple University employees who serve in different roles in the process of disciplining a student.

(8) Interim Involuntary Withdrawal or Suspension Hearings.

- (a) Hearings conducted with regard to interim involuntary withdrawals or suspensions imposed prior to or pending the outcome of a disciplinary investigation or proceeding shall be conducted consistent with the minimum requirements of due process applicable to a UDC hearing, taking into account the need for a timely hearing. The evidence presented at the hearing shall be limited to that which is relevant to the basis asserted for imposition of the interim involuntary withdrawal or suspension. The following special conditions apply to involuntary withdrawal/suspension hearings:
 1. The University shall conduct an assessment to consider the nature, duration, severity, and probability of the threat posed and/or disruption caused by the student or student organization, relying on the best available objective evidence and, if applicable and obtainable, the most current medical evidence;

(Rule 0240-07-05-.08, continued)

2. Failure of the student or representative of a student organization to appear for or cooperate with a mandated assessment will result in an involuntary withdrawal without further process;
 3. The University shall also determine whether reasonable modifications of its internal policies, practices, or procedures could sufficiently mitigate the identified risk;
 4. Absent exigent circumstances creating an imminent risk of harm, the University will make the decision to involuntarily withdraw or suspend based on the threat the student or student organization poses to others;
- (b) If exigent circumstances warrant the immediate removal of a student or student organization from the University, the student or student organization will receive, at a minimum, notice and an initial opportunity to present evidence immediately after being placed on the interim involuntary withdrawal or suspension, and the opportunity to initiate full due process within thirty (30) days of the removal.
- (9) Appeals
- (a) Eligibility. A student who has been suspended or expelled from the University, or a student organization whose recognition has been revoked as the result of disciplinary action has the right to file an appeal. Students or student organizations subject to disciplinary action that does not include suspension or expulsion from the University, or revocation of recognition of the student organization do not have an appeals option.
 - (b) It is the responsibility of the adjudicating body to inform the student or student organization of the right to appeal and to whom the appeal should be presented. It is not the function of the appeals process to permit a rehearing of the factual issues presented to the adjudicating body, but rather to ensure that the disciplinary procedure has been implemented fairly and consistently with these rules.
 - (c) For UAPA decisions, the appeal procedures are set forth in the UAPA and University rules implementing same.
 - (d) UDC decisions.
 1. Time Limitations. An appeal must be submitted in writing and received by the Dean of Students within ten (10) calendar days of the date on which notice was sent to the student or student organization as provided at 0240-07-05-.02(4) of this rule that the approving authority has affirmed the suspension or expulsion.
 2. Grounds for Appeal. The appeal must specify grounds which would justify consideration. The written appeal must contain the substantive proof on which the student or student organization is basing the appeal. Appeals that do not include the specific information that substantiates the appeal will be immediately denied. General dissatisfaction with the outcome of the decision shall not be accorded as a basis for consideration of an appeal. An appeal may be filed based on one (1) or both of the following conditions:
 - (i) An error in procedural due process by the adjudicating body which prejudiced the disciplined student or student organization to the extent that a fundamentally fair hearing was denied as a result of the error;
 - (ii) The emergence of new evidence which could not have been previously discovered by the exercise of due diligence and which, had it been

(Rule 0240-07-05-.08, continued)

presented at the initial hearing, would have substantially affected the original decision of the adjudicating body.

3. The Dean of Students will review the written appeal to determine if the appellant has met the requirements for filing an appeal. Appeals which do not allege sufficient grounds shall be denied consideration and dismissed. Appeals which do allege sufficient grounds will be accepted for consideration and forwarded to the appellate body. The appellate body shall not conduct a rehearing, but will consider only the record made by the adjudicating body. The appellate body may, at its own discretion, permit written or oral statements from the concerned parties in interest at the time the appeal is considered. The appellate body will make a recommendation to the Vice President for Student Affairs whether to affirm, modify, or reverse the decision of the UDC or to return the matter to the original adjudicating body for reconsideration.
- (10) **Effect of Noncooperation.** A student who fails to respond to a notice of disciplinary charges and disciplinary conference within the time frame specified will have a hold placed on his/her records. The hold will be removed at such time as the sanction imposed has been completed and the matter closed. In the event a student or student organization fails to cooperate, ignores, or otherwise does not respond after a reasonable amount of time to a notice of a Disciplinary Conference, he/she/it will be deemed to have waived the opportunity for a hearing. Decisions concerning responsibility and the imposition of sanctions may be made in the student's absence.
- (11) **Retention of Records.** The Office of Student Conduct will maintain disciplinary records created in matters covered by this rule, including records and evidence presented during any investigation, hearing, and appeal in the manner required by state records retention requirements. Disciplinary records are maintained by the Office of Student Conduct. A permanent disciplinary file will be maintained if a student or student organization is suspended or expelled from the University. Files developed in cases in which a lesser sanction has been imposed will be retained for a period of five (5) years after date of action unless sanctions specify that they should be retained for a longer period. Files developed in cases that are covered under the Clery Act will be retained for a period of seven (7) years after the date of action per federal requirements. Files developed in cases where a student or student organization is found not responsible for student conduct rules violations will be maintained for statistical purposes; however, the record will not be reportable as an official disciplinary record in that student's or student organization's name.

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 4-5-301, et seq., 49-8-101(a)(2)(A), and 49-8-203(a)(1)(D). **Administrative History:** New rules filed February 8, 2022; effective May 9, 2022.

0240-07-05-.09 ALTERNATIVE RESOLUTION OF DISCIPLINARY INCIDENTS.

- (1) **Mediation.** Students or student organizations involved in conflict(s) with another individual(s) may elect to have the conflict(s) mediated with the assistance of a third-party mediator assigned by the appropriate University Official. The Office of Student Conduct must agree that mediation is an appropriate resolution to the presenting disciplinary incident. The following conditions must be accepted by the parties:
 - (a) All parties involved must willingly agree to the mediation process;
 - (b) The resolution that results from the mediation process will be written, signed by all parties, and will bind the parties to the agreed terms until such terms are completed or an alternative agreement is developed by the parties;
 - (c) The agreement reached through mediation is not subject to any appeals process;

(Rule 0240-07-05-.09, continued)

- (d) If the agreement is not upheld, the parties may be referred back to the Office of Student Conduct for appropriate disciplinary action to be taken;
 - (e) If no form of resolution can be determined by mutual consent, the matter will be referred to the appropriate student conduct body.
- (2) **Informal Agreement.** There may be times when it is appropriate for a student or student organization to come to an informal agreement with the University regarding his/her behavior and attempts to correct the behavior. The Office of Student Conduct will make these determinations on a case-by-case basis. An informal agreement can only be initiated by the Student Conduct Coordinator, Assistant Dean for Student Conduct, and/or the Dean of Students. Any informal agreement reached with a student or student organization will be documented by the Office of Student Conduct and signed by both parties.

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 49-8-101(a)(2)(A) and 49-8-203(a)(1)(D). **Administrative History:** New rules filed February 8, 2022; effective May 9, 2022.

0240-07-05-.10 AUTHORITY OF THE PRESIDENT. The President of the University retains final authority on all University matters, including disciplinary decisions. Therefore, any disciplinary action is subject to final review by the President. At his/her discretion, the President may determine to intervene in order to negotiate a mutually acceptable resolution to any disciplinary proceeding, or subsequently, to convert any finding or sanction imposed to a lesser finding or sanction, or to rescind any previous finding or sanction, in appropriate cases.

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 49-8-101(a)(2)(A) and 49-8-203(a)(1)(D). **Administrative History:** New rules filed February 8, 2022; effective May 9, 2022.