

<b>Policies of the University of North Texas</b>	Chapter 5
<b>05.045 Workplace Violence</b>	<b>Human Resources</b>

**Policy Statement.** The University of North Texas is committed to providing faculty, staff, students and visitors with an environment of respect and safety that encourages learning and productive employment and that is secure and free from threats, intimidation, and violence.

**Application of Policy.**

Total University.

**Definitions.**

1. Workplace Violence. “Workplace violence” is any physical or non-physical act that results in threatened or actual harm to a person or threatened or actual damage to property. It includes any threatening words or actions whether verbal or non-verbal, including the unlawful possession of a weapon, which creates in the mind of another a reasonable belief of receiving immediate or future harm to any person or property.

**Procedures and Responsibilities.**

**1. Policy.**

The University of North Texas will not tolerate physical or non-physical acts of workplace violence. All alleged violations of this policy will be immediately reviewed to determine whether further investigation is necessary.

Employees who commit violent acts or who are found to engage in behavior in violation of this policy will be subject to corrective and/or disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Students found in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action under the Student Code of Conduct administered by the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities. Appropriate legal action may be taken against visitors who violate this policy, including, but not limited to, trespassing them from campuses within the University of North Texas System.

The University may sanction individuals involved in cases of misconduct in violation of this policy when any such act occurs in one of the following circumstances:

1. the act is committed on university property or at a university-sponsored activity;
2. the act is committed by a university member while acting in an official capacity or while conducting or involving university business.

(Note: This policy shall not be interpreted as inhibiting an employee’s First Amendment rights of free speech and association except as specifically permitted by federal law ( Pickering v. Brd of Education, 391 U.S. 563 (1968); Connick v. Myers, 461 U.S. 138 (1983))

**2. Prohibited Conduct and Behavior.**

Any conduct or behavior that threatens or endangers the health or safety of any person is prohibited. The following is a non-exhaustive list of specific examples of physical and non-physical conduct and behavior that may be considered workplace violence and are prohibited:

- a. Intimidating, threatening or hostile statements, actions or gestures.
- b. Intimidation through direct, conditional, or veiled threats.
- c. Intimidation through unjust exercise of power or authority.
- d. Bomb threats.
- e. Slurs regarding another person's ethnicity, national origin, gender, religion or religious affiliation, disability, or sexual orientation, or profanity or obscene gestures which create in the mind of another a reasonable belief of immediate or future harm, fighting words, etc. (all allegations of discrimination will be addressed under the provisions and procedures established by the Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation Policy, No. 16.004)
- f. Threatening comments regarding, or references to, violent events and/or behaviors.
- g. Physical abuse, assault or attack, or physically touching another person in an intimidating, malicious, or sexually harassing manner – includes, but are not limited to, such acts as hitting, slapping, poking, kicking, pinching, grabbing, pushing, bullying, hazing, "getting in your face", and fist-waving/shaking.
- h. Vandalism, arson, or sabotage.
- i. Throwing objects and things, regardless of the size or type of object being thrown or whether a person is the target of a thrown object.
- j. Intentional damaging or destruction or sabotage of university property or equipment or another's property or equipment or any substantial threat to destroy property or equipment.
- k. Carrying weapons of any kind, other than by a law enforcement officer or as otherwise provided by law, onto university property or onto property utilized for university programs or activities.
- l. Harassing phone calls – includes calls made by one employee to another in the workplace or outside the workplace, or by an employee in the workplace to an individual outside (non-member) of the university.
- m. Any other act or behavior that is judged offensive or inappropriate and violent in the workplace or on campus.

### **3. Employing Unit and Department Manager's and Supervisor's Responsibilities.**

Managers and supervisors are responsible for informing employees of this policy and for its enforcement. Managers and supervisors should evaluate any alleged threat by

assessing its perceived intent and the capacity and the means to fulfill the threat. Factors to consider include the nature of the threat and likelihood that harm will occur.

*a. If the circumstances do not indicate imminent danger to persons or damage to property:*

- (1) Document the circumstances associated with the event to include a record of information from all involved employees and witnesses, and an evaluation of the circumstances (Incident Report Forms are available in Human Resources);
- (2) Contact the Employee Relations Section of the Human Resources Department to report incidences involving employees and contact the Vice President for Student Development for incidences that involve students. These Departments will provide guidance and assistance on items c and d below;
- (3) Promptly develop and implement a plan of action;
- (4) Promptly initiate appropriate corrective/disciplinary action based upon the individual's degree of involvement, to include possible counseling referrals through the University's employee assistance plan. Appropriate action may include obtaining written verification from an individual's physician or mental health provider that he or she does not constitute a threat or harm.

*b. In the event of imminent danger or an incident of violence involving injury to persons or damage to property:*

- (1) Notify the UNT Police;
- (2) Seek assistance for the persons needing care;
- (3) Document circumstances associated with the event to include a record of information from all involved employees or witnesses, and an evaluation of the circumstances (Incident Report Forms are available in Human Resources.)
- (4) Contact the Human Resources Department to report the incident, and to request guidance and assistance on items e and f below;
- (5) Promptly develop and implement a plan of action;
- (6) Promptly initiate appropriate corrective/disciplinary action based on the individual's degree of involvement. Appropriate action may include obtaining written verification from an individual's physician or mental health provider that he or she does not constitute a threat of harm.

#### **4. Vice President for Student Development Responsibilities.**

- a. Disseminate this policy to students and enforce its provisions.
- b. Evaluate any report of an alleged threat by or towards a student by assessing its perceived intent and the capacity and the means to fulfill the threat.
- c. Process and review corrective/disciplinary actions.

d. If appropriate, may require the student to provide written verification from his or her physician or mental health provider that he or she does not constitute a threat of harm.

e. Activate the crisis assessment/response team as needed.

**5. Faculty/Staff/Student Employee Responsibilities or Action.**

a. Be aware of the workplace violence policy.

b. Report violations of the policy to an appropriate administrator (e.g., immediate supervisor, manager, or department head, University Police, and/or the Human Resources Department.)

c. In an effort to promote a safer work environment, employees who are the victims of domestic violence should report issuance of a restraining order against any individual who has threatened to act in violation of this policy. Employees who believe they may be the recipients of violence are encouraged to promptly notify an appropriate administrator, University Police and/or the Human Resources Department. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent allowed by law.

**6. University Police Responsibilities.**

a. Restore order in a conflict situation.

b. Enforce criminal law.

c. Arrange for emergency medical assistance.

d. Participate on a crisis assessment/response team as appropriate.

**7. Risk Management and Environmental Services Department Responsibilities.**

a. Enforce environment health and safety regulations and policies.

b. Evaluate, assess and recommend safety/security measures for prevention of workplace violence.

c. Participate on a crisis assessment/response team as appropriate.

**8. University Human Resources Department Responsibilities.**

a. Disseminate this policy to faculty and staff.

b. Provide guidance and assistance to the employing unit to resolve conflict and assess incidents and complaints.

c. Process and review corrective/disciplinary actions; reviews all disciplinary actions involving suspension or discharge prior to action being taken.

d. Activate the crisis assessment/response team as needed.

**9. Crisis Assessment/Response Team (CART) Responsibilities.**

The CART is composed of representatives from the Human Resources Department, University Police, Risk Management and Environmental Services Department, and other

units when appropriate, such as Legal Affairs, Public Information, Counseling and Testing, Student Development, and the Employee Assistance Program. The CART provides support services before, during, or after a crisis or traumatic event. The Team's services are not limited to responding to violent acts; it also can be called upon to provide services in identifying ways and options on how to prevent or avoid potential acts of violence and assess and review workplace violence issues and incidents. The CART is not designed to address workplace issues that should be handled with appropriate procedures at the employing unit level. It is designed to:

1. Assess and manage incidents involving imminent danger or violence;
2. Respond to acts of violence as appropriate;
3. Determine appropriate action to assist the affected unit/department;
4. Conduct an investigation as appropriate; and,
5. Develop and implement an action plan.

Responsible Party: Crisis Assessment/Response Team

### **References and Cross-references.**

Ethics (Standards of Conduct) Policy, No. 05.015

Illegal Drugs and Alcohol Policy, No. 05.004

Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation Policy, No. 16.004

Sexual Harassment Policy, No. 16.005

Staff Employee Discipline and Involuntary Termination Policy, No. 05.033

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