



Sam Houston  
State University

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT  
2025 - 2026



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## WELCOME



Dear Students,

Welcome to Sam Houston State University! Whether you are a first-year student, transfer student or a returning student, we are honored that you chose Sam Houston State to be your educational home.

SHSU offers many wonderful opportunities for meaningful experiences in and outside of the classroom, and I encourage you to take advantage of as many of these as possible. You will have incredible educational opportunities and will learn from faculty

who are tops in their fields. SHSU is an ideal place to build life-long relationships not only with other students, but with faculty, staff and alumni who are dedicated to helping you succeed academically, professionally, and socially. Embrace the opportunities that come your way.

Every Bearkat is expected to adhere to university rules and regulations, so please read the Student Code of Conduct carefully. I also ask that you protect the rights of others on campus, treat everyone with respect and dignity, be kind and be an integral part of our community.

Remember that Sam Houston State University faculty and staff are dedicated to helping you succeed. We are here to help you. Reach out, ask questions, and engage in the opportunities offered to you.

Welcome to our Bearkat family. Best wishes for a great year!

Sincerely,

Alisa White, Ph.D.  
President, Sam Houston State University

## WELCOME



Hello Bearkats, and welcome to your new home!

Starting a new chapter at Sam Houston State is more than just moving into a dorm residence hall or picking out school supplies. It is stepping into a community where you will learn, grow, and make memories that will last a lifetime.

This university is full of chances to connect, lead, and explore. Whether you're joining a student organization, getting involved in campus events, or finding your voice through student leadership, there's a place here just for you. Trust me, if you are wondering whether you will fit in, you will.

As your Student Body President, I want you to know that your voice matters. Our team at the Student Government Association is here to support you, listen to your ideas, and work to make this campus even better. You're always welcome to stop by our office in the Lowman Student Center, Suite 314, we are here for the big things, the small things, and everything in between.

Be sure to follow us on @samhouston\_sga to stay in the loop on everything happening around campus. We can't wait to see how you leave your mark here.

Once again WELCOME HOME!

Sincerely,

Lily Temple-Dozier  
Student Body President, Sam Houston State University

# INTRODUCTION

## MISSION/VISION/VALUES

### Our Mission

Sam Houston State University is a student-centered community engaged institution whose mission is to offer an accessible, quality higher education. The university offers a variety of innovative and flexible degree programs at the undergraduate, graduate, and professional levels focused on career readiness, personal and professional development, and service. SHSU

### Our Vision

Sam Houston State University will provide a transformative environment that enables students from diverse backgrounds to become leaders who serve their families, communities, and professions. We aspire to make SHSU both the best value in higher education and the top regional public university in the state of Texas. We will accomplish this through providing high quality, innovative, and flexible

### Our Values

Sam Houston State University is a student-focused, collaborative community that values personal growth and life-long engagement through the promotion of integrity and academic excellence.

- Student Success and Support
- Academic Excellence
- Service and Community Support
- Excellence and Belonging
- Collaborative Environment
- Honor
- Creativity and Innovation

provides integrated academic and student success services designed to support traditional and non-traditional students from diverse backgrounds.

academic programs; a commitment to student success, scholarship, and creative works; and engagement that solves the most critical challenges facing the world.

## Strategic Priorities

### Priority #1

Prioritize student success and student access.

### Priority #2

Embody a culture of excellence.

### Priority #3

Elevate the reputation and visibility of SHSU.

### Priority #4

Expand and elevate our service to the State and beyond.

[shsu.edu/strategic-plan/](http://shsu.edu/strategic-plan/)

## BEARKAT

Sam Houston State University's athletic teams have been nicknamed "The Bearkats" since 1923 when the University's name was changed by the Texas State Legislature from Sam Houston Normal Institute to Sam Houston State Teachers College. Prior to 1923, the varsity sports teams were nicknames "The Normals." It is doubtful those who coined the "Bearkat" nickname had a particular animal in mind, however. More likely the name came from a popular local saying of the time, "tough as a Bearkat!" The late Reed Lindsey, who was a student/athlete in the 1920s and later retired as University Registrar, once said that "it was a good fighting name of the time." Since the animal in the saying was though more mythical than real, the spelling settled upon was "Bearkat." In the late 1940s, then SHSU president Harmon Lowman

attempted to change the SHSU mascot from Bearkats to "Ravens" after General Sam Houston's Cherokee nickname). Mrs. Vernon Schuder reported that the alumni were polled; she voted for the raven but that "all those old Bearkats beat us out!" The current Sammy Bearkat mascot character began appearing at SHSU sports events in 1959.

## UNIVERSITY SEAL

The Official University Seal (depiction of Sam Houston with his cane) is used in the most formal applications and expressions of the University's identity and is reserved as a formal insignia for documents of institutional and legal importance.

## UNIVERSITY LOGO

Sam Houston State University has adopted as its official logo an orange "SH." Where the seal is used for more formal presentations, the logo can be used in all other applications.



## UNIVERSITY COLORS

The official colors for Sam Houston State University are: ORANGE & WHITE

## ALMA MATER

Hail to Sam Houston, Schoole we love best,  
Mighty in battle, True to the test.  
Bearkats so loyal, Ever we'll be.  
Orange and white Will lead us to victory!  
Hail, Alma Mater. Hats off to you,  
Ever you'll find us Loyal and true;  
Firm and undaunted, Ever we'll be,  
Here's to the school we love  
Here's a toast to thee.

## FIGHT SONG

Bearkat Fight Song  
Fight, fight you Bearkats!  
Fight on through!  
We're here in back of you!  
You know we're here to win  
So fight until the end.  
FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT!  
Loyal we'll ever be and true to SHSU  
We'll fight and fight with all our might  
For Sam Houston's Orange and White!

## MOTTO

"The measure of a Life is its Service"

# STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

## 1) GENERAL PROVISION:

### 1.01 - Code Applicability

#### Application:

This Code applies to the following:

- Accepted Students
- Admitted Students
- Enrolled Students
- Returning Students
- Student Organizations

#### Exclusions:

This Code does not apply to individuals who have been academically suspended or expelled from the University unless the alleged violation occurred when the individual was subject to this Code before suspension or expulsion.

For disciplinary purposes, this Code does not apply to unrecognized or informal student groups not officially registered with the University. However, such groups may be subject to federal hazing reporting requirements under the Stop Campus Hazing Act. Individual members of unrecognized or informal student groups are subject to this Code.

#### Scope of Conduct:

This Code applies to conduct occurring on University Property or off-campus, including activities sponsored by Student Organizations, when such conduct: (a) adversely affects the University's educational mission or reputation; (b) poses a risk to the health, safety, or well-being of members of the University community; or (c) occurs in connection with University-sponsored or University-affiliated activities or programs.

This Code applies to conduct in virtual or online environments, including social media, online classrooms, or other digital platforms, when such conduct adversely affects the University's educational mission, reputation, or community safety.

Violations by Student Organizations may result in sanctions against the organization and/or disciplinary action against individual members under this Code.

The University may pursue disciplinary action for violations of this Code independently of any civil or criminal proceedings.

For compliance with the Stop Campus Hazing Act, the University will report hazing incidents involving any student organization (recognized or unrecognized) in its Annual Security Report and hazing violations by recognized student organizations in its Campus Hazing Transparency Report as required by federal law.

## Interpretation

Any question or interpretation or application of this Code shall be referred to the Dean of Students or designee, who shall make a final, non-appealable interpretation.

## 1.02 - Definitions

**Accepted Students:** Persons who have been notified of their acceptance and who are engaged in University-related activities or present on University Property.

**Admitted Students:** Persons who have completed admission requirements and who are engaged in University-related activities or present on University Property.

**Complainant:** An individual or entity reporting an alleged violation of this Code.

**Disciplinary Action:** Any proceeding initiated under Section 3 of this Code.

**Enrolled Students:** Persons enrolled in courses at the University, whether full-time or part-time, pursuing undergraduate, graduate, or professional studies, including those participating in online or hybrid programs.

**Hazing:** Any act defined in Texas Education Code, Sections 37.151 - 37.153 or in the Federal Stop Campus Hazing Act. Hazing includes any intentional, knowing, or reckless act committed by a person (whether individually or in concert with others) against another person or persons, regardless of the willingness of such other person or persons to participate, that - (I) is committed in the course of an initiation into, an affiliation with, or the maintenance of membership in, a student organization; and (II) causes or creates a risk, above the reasonable risk encountered in the course of participation in the University or the organization, of physical or psychological injury.

**Hearing Officer:** A University employee appointed by the President, Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA), Or Dean of Students to conduct hearings.

**Notice:** Correspondence (1) sent by mail, addressed to the addressee at the local or permanent address, as shown on University records; (2) personally delivered to the addressee; (3) sent by email to the student's University email address; (4) sent by text message to the student's registered phone number, (5) general information about conduct posted on the Dean of Students' website; (6) posted on the student's residence hall door, (7) sent by receipted delivery (e.g., certified mail, return receipt requested).

**Preponderance of Evidence:** The greater weight of credible evidence is presented.

**Published University Policy:** A written regulation or policy promulgated by the Texas State University System, the University, or any of its schools, colleges, divisions, departments, or offices.

**Respondent:** An individual or Student Organization accused of violating this Code.

**Returning Students:** Persons who are no longer enrolled but are alleged to have violated this Code during their period of enrollment, provided they were not academically suspended at the time of the alleged violation.

**Student Organization:** Registered student organizations, Fraternity & Sorority Life organizations, clubs, society, association, club sports team, athletic teams, bands, student government, and other groups officially recognized by the University. For the purposes of this Code, disciplinary action applies to the collective actions, events, or activities organized or sponsored by such recognized groups, whether on or off University Property, For federal reporting purposes under the Stop Campus Hazing Act, "student organization" includes any group with two or more enrolled students, whether recognized or not.

**University:** Sam Houston State University, including all affiliate campuses - The Woodlands Campus. College of Osteopathic Medicine, Health Professions Building, and Polytechnical College.

**University Official:** Any person acting in an official capacity for the University, including members of the Board of Regents, administrative officers, faculty members, and staff members.

**University Property:** All property - real, personal, tangible, intangible, digital, or intellectual - that is owned, controlled, used, or occupied by the University.

**University-Sponsored Activities:** Events, programs, or functions organized, paid for (in whole or part), or associated with the University or a Student Organization, whether on University Property or at off-campus locations (e.g., retreats, social gathering, competitions, service projects, or conferences).

## 1.03 - Awareness of Policies

It is every student's responsibility to be familiar with and adhere to all published University and TSUS policies, rules, and regulations. Lack of familiarity with these policies, rules, and regulations does not discharge students from the responsibility of compliance. University policies can be located at [shsu.edu/doso](http://shsu.edu/doso); however, this is not an exhaustive list of all published TSUS and University policies.

Individuals with questions on this Code, University Policies, and TSUS rules and regulations are encouraged to contact the Dean of Students' Office for more information.

## 2) STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

### Conduct Required

Students shall conduct themselves in a manner that supports the University's mission as an educational institution. Students who conduct themselves in a manner that violates the Code may be subject to disciplinary actions aimed at educating students and restoring community standards.

## **Prohibited Conduct**

The following conduct, including attempts to engage in them, violates the Code and may result in disciplinary action. These are organized by category for clarity, but this is not exhaustive list of prohibited conduct. Students are responsible for complying with all University policies, TSUS Rules & Regulations, and applicable laws.

**1. Academic Honesty:** Engaging in academic dishonesty as described by the Academic Affairs Honesty Policy, including cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsification of data, or abuse of resource material (e.g., mutilation, destruction, concealment, theft, or unauthorized alteration of instructional materials).

### **2. Alcohol and Drug Violations**

A. Underage Possession or Consumption Of Alcohol: Unlawful possession, consumption, or attempted consumption of alcohol by individual under 21.

B. Alcohol-Related Misconduct: Possession, providing, using, or distributing alcoholic or intoxicating beverages in a manner that violates University policies or that would constitute an offense under appropriate federal, state, or municipal law (e.g., possessing or consuming alcohol in unauthorized campus areas, or being under the influence to the extent that action disrupts University activities or community or individual safety).

C. Public Intoxication: Being impaired by alcohol or drugs in a public place, endangering oneself or others, or causing a disturbance.

D. Driving Under the Influence: Operating a motor vehicle while impaired by alcohol, drugs, or other substances.

E. Illegal Drugs: Possession, using, selling, or distributing any illegal drug or controlled substance on or off University property or during University affiliated activities.

F. Drug Paraphernalia: Possessing, using, delivering, or manufacturing drug paraphernalia on or off University property.

### **3. Safety and Welfare Violations**

A. Campus Disruptive Activities: Conduct that obstructs movement, seizes control or campus spaces, or disrupts University activities through force, threats, or interference (e.g., blocking entrances, occupying classrooms).

B. Endangering Others: Conduct that threatens the health or safety of others, including actions causing or are likely to cause injury or creating a reasonable fear of harm.

C. Hazing - Individual: Any intentional, knowing, or reckless act directed against a student in connection with pledging, initiating, affiliating with, or maintaining membership in a university-affiliated organization. Hazing includes physical brutality, forced consumption of substances, or tasks risking mental or physical harm as outlined in state and federal law.

D. Hazing - Organization: Organizational conduct that condones or encourages hazing, as defined by law. Organizational hazing occurs when an organization condones, encourages, or involves its officers, members, pledges, or alumni to commit or assist in hazing. Hazing is an intentional, knowing, or reckless act, on or off university property, by an individual or group, directed against a student for the purpose of pledging, initiating, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in organization. Acts include but are not limited to physical brutality, activities causing unreasonable risk or harm or adversely affecting the mental or physical health or safety of a student forced consumption of substances, or tasks involving certain illegal acts.

E. Harassment: Threatening or bullying behavior, in person or electronically, that violates Texas law or adversely affects the University community.

F. Stalking or Harassment Concerns: Unwanted, repeated attention or behavior causing fear, intimidation, or emotional distress.

G. Theft and Unauthorized Use: Taking, possessing, or selling property or services without consent, or the unauthorized use of University resources.

H. Weapons Concern: Unlawfully carrying, possessing, displaying, transporting, transferring, or using a weapon.

### **4. Retaliation.**

A. Adverse actions against a person for participating in a complaint process; examples include but are not limited to intimidation or harassment.

### **5. University Policy and Property Violations**

A. Violation of University or System Policy: Intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly violating a TSUS or University policy, regulation, directive, or rule.

B. Failure to Comply: Failing to follow or respond to a University official's directive or an official notice within a designated timeframe.

C. False Report: Providing false information, testimony, or evidence to the University.

D. Failure to Maintain Accurate Contact Information: Providing false contact information or failing to update one's accurate contact information (e.g., email, phone number, address) with the University.

E. Failure to Maintain a Valid Student ID Card: Failing to acquire, maintain, or replace a University-issued ID card, or misusing it.

### **5. Other Violations**

A. Violation of Law: Engaging in conduct that violates federal, state, or local laws, whether on or off University Property.

B. Student Misconduct: Behavior that negatively impacts the University's community reputation, safety, or educational environment.

## 6. Amnesty for Reporting/Seeking Help

Because the University prioritizes the health and safety of its students, students who seek medical assistance for themselves or others due to alcohol or drug intoxication, or who report incidents of hazing, sexual misconduct, or other serious violations, will not be subject to disciplinary action under this Code for their own minor policy violations (e.g., underage drinking) at the time of seeking help or reporting, provided they cooperate with University officials and engage in recommended educational interventions. This policy is intended to remove barriers to seeking help and to encourage health and safety-related reporting.

## 3) ADMINISTRATION OF THE STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

### 3.01 - Authorization to Adjudicate

#### A. Authorization

The Dean of Students or designee, under the direction of the Vice President for Student Affairs, is authorized to administer this Code. Title IX allegations are forwarded to the University's Office of Title IX and Discrimination Resolution for investigation and resolution. Academic honesty matters follow the University's Academic Policy Statement 810213.

#### B. Investigation and Adjudication Timing

**Timing:** The Dean of Students' Office is not subject to timing limitations for initiating an investigation or reaching findings on alleged violations of the Code, provided that the individual or organization remains subject to the Code's applicability.

**Diligent investigations:** The Dean of Students' Office is committed to conducting investigations and adjudication processes diligently and efficiently, striving for a prompt resolution while ensuring thoroughness, fairness, and compliance with any applicable laws. This commitment supports outcomes that protect the rights of all parties and maintains the integrity and safety of the University community. The Dean of Students' Office will prioritize timely handling of all cases, including those requiring coordination with law enforcement or involving multiple parties, consistent with due process requirements.

### 3.02 - Disciplinary Procedures

**A. Initiation:** Disciplinary proceedings begin with the submission of an Incident Report to the Dean of Students' Office. The Dean of Students or designee investigates reported violations, offering students a reasonable opportunity to respond. A registration hold may be placed on a student's account if a student does not respond timely.

**B. Informal Administrative Review.** An Administrative Review is a meeting where the Dean of Students or designee presents alleged violations of the Code, hears the student's perspective, and determines if a violation occurred based on a preponderance of evidence standard. If there is evidence that a violation occurred, a review of sanctions will be provided to the student.

The student can:

- a. waive their right to a hearing by the Student Disciplinary Hearing Committee and accept the findings and sanctions, or;
- b. If the student does not accept the findings or sanctions, they may request a formal review by the Student Disciplinary Hearing Committee (except for matters where the sanction is only a verbal or written warning).

#### Student Response to Findings from Administrative Review.

1. If a student accepts the findings and sanctions from the Administrative Review, the student must submit their written acceptance to the Dean of Students' Office by 5:00 P.M. within 48 hours of delivery of the outcome letter issued by the Dean of Students' Office. If acceptance is not timely provided by the student, then the sanctions are imposed and the right to request a formal hearing is waived.
2. If a student does not accept the findings and sanctions from the Administrative Review, the student must submit a written request for a formal hearing with the Student Disciplinary Hearing Committee to the Dean of Students' Office by 5:00 P.M. within 48 hours of the delivery of the outcome letter issued by the Dean of Students' Office. If a request for a formal hearing is not submitted by the deadline, then the sanctions are imposed and the right to request a formal hearing is waived.

#### C. Sanction Finality

A disciplinary sanction becomes final when:

1. As part of an Administrative Review: (a) upon written acceptance by the student; (b) if only sanction is a warning; or (c) the student has not timely submitted a written request for a formal hearing with the Student Disciplinary Hearing Committee to the Dean of Students' Office.
2. As part of a Student Disciplinary Hearing Committee process: (a) the only sanction assessed is a warning; or (b) the student has submitted a written appeal to the Vice President for Student Affairs or designee by 5:00 p.m. within 48 hours after the Student Disciplinary Hearing Committee provided its written notification of findings and sanctions to the student.
3. Upon written notification to the student of the decision of the Vice President of Student Affairs or designee, whose decision is final and not appealable.

### 3.03 - Disciplinary Sanctions

Sanctions aim to provide a safe learning and living environment, educate students, promote responsible, safe, and legal behavior, and restore relationships. Mitigating or aggravating factors (e.g., motive, disciplinary history, impact on the University or University community, and the likelihood of recurrence) may influence sanctions. Sanctions may be imposed individually or in combination with other sanctions. Examples of sanctions include:

- A. Warning: Written notice that a violation has occurred, with further violations risking additional disciplinary action.
- B. Restricted Privileges: Denial of specified privileges including but not limited to parking, dining, living, or extracurricular participation for a designated period.
- C. Special Project: Completion of an educational essay, community service, or workshop, the purpose of which is to address the violation and prevent recurrence.
- D. Restitution: Compensation for damage caused to the University or any person's property, via payment or community service.
- E. Disciplinary Probation: Indicates a student is not in good standing for a designated period, restricting leadership roles or representation of the University.
- F. Deferred Suspension: Probation for a designated period with the understanding that a further violation results in suspension.
- G. Disciplinary Suspension: Temporary separation from the University, prohibiting enrollment or campus presence for a designated period.
- H. Disciplinary Expulsion: Permanent separation from the University and TSUS components.
- I. Transcript Notation: Notation of disciplinary action on the student's transcript, removable after seven years (except for expulsion).

### 3.04 - Interim Disciplinary Action

**Interim Disciplinary Action:** In a matter involving non-Title IX alleged violations, the President, Vice President for Student Affairs, or designee may take immediate interim disciplinary action, including but not limited to suspension, pending a due process hearing against a student or student organization for violation of a policy or rule of the System or of the University when the continuing presence

of the student or student organization poses a danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disrupting the academic or business processes of the University. The hearing shall be held as soon as practicable after the suspension.

A peace officer may take a person into custody and transport the person to the nearest appropriate mental health facility if the officer has reason to believe and does believe that there is substantial risk to the person or to others unless the person is immediately restrained. The officer shall fully comply with the provisions of the Texas Health and Safety Code, Section 573.001. Such actions are not disciplinary or penal in nature, nor are they treated as interim suspensions or removals, unless the person has violated a policy or rule of the System or of the University. See Chapter VI, Subparagraph 5. (14) of the TSUS Rules & Regulations. As soon as possible, the peace officer shall inform the appropriate Vice President (or designee) of actions taken regarding an affected person under Subparagraph 2.2(14)(b) of the TSUS Rules & Regulations.

**Timing:** The student or student organization will be notified promptly of the interim disciplinary action and may request an administrative review or formal hearing within 10 class days. The Dean of Students or designee will schedule the review or hearing within 5 class days of the request, unless good cause requires an extension.

### 3.05 - Student Disciplinary Hearing Committee - Formal Administrative Review

- A. Composition.** The Committee is composed of faculty, staff, and students.
  - 1. 12 full-time faculty are appointed by the Faculty Senate, with alternating two-year terms ending on August 31.
  - 2. Six staff members are appointed by the University President, with alternating two-year terms ending on August 31.
  - 3. 12 students are appointed by the Student Government Association, serving one-year terms ending on May 31.
  - 4. The Chair of the Committee is appointed by the Vice President of Student Affairs or the Dean of Students.
  - 5. For hearing-related purposes, at least three members of the committee must be present.

#### B. Rights and Procedure

1. Notice. At least five class days before the hearing, the student will receive a written notification from the Dean of Students' Office outlining:

- a. The University policy allegedly violated;
- b. A summary of the facts alleged to constitute the violation;
- c. The date, time, and location of the hearing;
- d. The names of expected witnesses and a summary of their anticipated testimony;
- e. A description of other evidence the Dean of Students or designee plans to present;
- f. Whether the Dean of Students or designee intends to use legal counsel for purposes beyond advising;
- g. The requirement that the student submit a list of witnesses and a summary of their anticipated testimony to the Dean of Students or their designee at least 72 hours before the hearing; and
- h. The names of the Chair of the Committee and members.

2. Student Participation. The student may attend the hearing, question witnesses, and present relevant evidence. The student may provide oral or written statements, including witness statements, and provide their defense. If the student does not attend, the hearing may proceed.

3. Student Advisor. The student may have an advisor or counsel present during the hearing, at the student's expense. The University is not responsible for providing an advisor or counsel.

a. The advisor may not address the committee, question witnesses, or participate in the hearing except to advise the student.  
b. If the Dean of Students or designee uses legal counsel for purposes beyond advising, the student may do the same with prior notification as provided in this section.

4. Impartiality. The student may challenge the impartiality of any Committee member before the presentation of testimony or evidence. The Chair of the Committee determines if the challenged member can serve fairly. If the challenged member withdraws and no appointed alternate is available, the Dean of Students or designee may appoint a replacement for the hearing.

5. Evidence Notification. At least 48 hours before the hearing, both the student and the Dean of Students or designee must exchange the names of witnesses, summaries of testimony, documents, and other evidence to be presented.

6. Burden of Proof. The Dean of Students or designee must present evidence and prove the alleged violation by a preponderance of the evidence standard.

7. Witness Examination. The student, the Dean of Students or designee, and Committee members may question witnesses on relevant matters.

8. Recording. The hearing, excluding the Committee's deliberations, will be recorded by the Committee. The student may request a free electronic copy of the recording. Additional records incurring costs will be paid by the requesting party.

9. Postponement. The Dean of Students or designee may postpone a hearing for good cause. A student's request for postponement must be submitted to the Dean of Students' Office at least 24 hours before the hearing.

10. Chair's Role. The Chair determines the procedure, rules on matters of evidence, and maintains decorum during the hearing. The Chair does not vote on a decision unless to cast a tie-breaking vote.

11. Witness Attendance. The Chair may issue a written request for a witness to testify or produce documents. Students requested to appear are expected to comply with the request.

12. Confidentiality. Only the Committee, Dean of Students or designee, legal counsel, the student, the student advisor, and the current testifying witness may be present during the entire hearing. Witnesses may only stay for introductions, procedural explanations, and their testimony unless agreed to otherwise. All attendees must treat matters discussed confidentially.

13. Evidence Standards. Legal rules of evidence do not apply. Evidence is admissible if credible and reliable for reasonable decision-making. The Chair makes all rulings relating to evidence.

14. Right Against Self-Incrimination. Students cannot be compelled to testify against themselves.

15. Hearing Procedures.

- a. The Chair invites all authorized parties into the hearing room or virtual platform.
- b. The Chair reads a confidentiality statement.
- c. The Chair states the alleged Code violation.
- d. The Dean of Students or designee presents evidence of the alleged violation.
- e. The student may present their defense or relevant information.
- f. The parties may question witnesses.
- g. The parties may present rebuttal evidence.
- h. The parties may offer brief closing statements.
- i. The Committee deliberates privately and decides by simple majority vote of the members present whether the student violated the Code and, if so, determines the sanction(s). The Chair reports the finding(s) and sanction(s) to the parties, including appeal rights if a violation and sanction are found.
- j. The Committee will aim to resolve disciplinary cases within 30 business days of receiving a request for a formal hearing, unless good cause requires additional time.

## 4) APPEAL PROCESS

### 4.01 - Appeals of the Student Disciplinary Hearing Committee to the Vice President for Student Affairs of designee.

An appeal is not a rehearing of the original case. Decisions of the Committee are final for cases resulting in a verbal or written warning. For all other sanctions, either party may appeal to the Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA), or designee based on:

- A. Whether the hearing was fair, meaning the student received notice of the alleged misconduct and an opportunity to present evidence.
- B. Whether the sanction(s) were proportionate to the violation.
- C. Whether the evidence supported the finding.
- D. Whether new evidence, unavailable at the time of the hearing, has been introduced.

### 4.02 - Final Appeal

To complete an appeal, a party must first submit a written notice of the appeal to the VPSA or designee no later than 5:00 P.M. five business days after the Committee's written decision, specifying the reason(s) for the appeal.

Then, all supporting documentation must be filed with the VPSA or designee no later than 5:00 P.M. five business days after filing the notice of appeal. At the VPSA or designees' discretion, parties may present oral or written arguments to support their appeal.

Upon proper and timely completion of the appeal:

- A. The VPSA or designee will review the Committee's materials and may request additional written or oral statements from the parties. The appeal will be conducted within 10 business days after the VPSA or designee receives all supporting documentation, unless the VPSA or designee postpones the decision for good cause.
- B. If the student is required to appear in person, they may have an advisor present, subject to the provisions in this Code.
- C. The VPSA or designee will provide a written decision to the parties, the Chair of the Committee, and the Dean of Students' Office, either affirming, reversing, or modifying the Committee's decision or remanding the case to the Committee for further action.
- D. The VPSA's or designee's decision is final, and not subject to additional appeal.

### 4.03 - Discretionary Review

The VPSA or designee may independently review a Committee's decision and affirm, reverse, modify, or remand it to the Committee for further action.

For a list of university policies, go to [shsu.edu/doso](http://shsu.edu/doso)

MEMBER THE TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM.

Email: doso@shsu.edu  
Phone: 936.294.1785