

Office of Counseling and Disability Services

Counseling Services

Counseling and Disability Services (C&DS) provides various services for students related to transition to college, emotional adjustment, mental health, developmental issues, academic skill-building and crisis intervention. Counselors will assess the nature and extent of a student's concern and make appropriate recommendations.

- **No-Fee Services:** All services are provided with no extra fee to currently enrolled University students. Ongoing counseling services are available for students only. However, faculty, staff, and students are welcome to use C&DS for brief consultation and to obtain educational information and referral services.
- **Confidentiality:** All counseling services (CS) provided are confidential except where state law mandates. The staff abides by the ethical standards of the American Psychological Association and the American Counseling Association. Records maintained by CS are not available to a third party without the student's written permission. CS records are not a part of UST academic or administrative records.
- **Consultation and Counseling:** CS offers brief consultation, ongoing individual counseling, group, and couples (when both are UST students) counseling for students who are experiencing personal concerns, academic performance issues, family concerns, relationship matters or other emotional distress. Services typically follow a short-term, brief intervention model.
- **Community Consultation and Referral:** CS acts as a resource to members of the extended UST community about concerns for the emotional well-being of others. A list of mental health resources is maintained and the department will assist students in connecting with appropriate resources. Faculty and staff may also contact the department for referral information.
- **Education and Training:** CS offers workshops and campus events to educate on a variety of topics pertaining to mental health and academic success. C&DS maintains a lending library of self-help materials. The department website offers information about a variety of wellness and mental health matters.
- **Academic Support:** CS provides counseling and workshops on issues such as time management, test anxiety, and improving concentration and study skills.
- **Crisis Intervention:** CS is typically available for students experiencing a mental health crisis requiring immediate attention during regular business hours. If there is a psychological crisis after-hours, students may contact Campus Police at 713-525-3888 to reach an on-call counselor, go to a local hospital emergency room, or call 911. There are certain University holiday breaks (Spring, Fall and Winter Breaks, Thanksgiving, Easter) when the University is closed and on-call psychological crisis services are not available.

More information is available at www.stthom.edu/counseling. For an appointment or additional information, contact Counseling and Disability Services at 713-525-2169 or 713-525-6953.

DISABILITY SERVICES FOR STUDENTS

Counseling and Disability Services (C&DS) provides academic accommodations for students with disabilities. The University abides by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and other legal mandates that stipulate qualified students with disabilities receive reasonable accommodation to ensure equal access to programs and opportunities at the University. The University must balance the individual's right to receive equal access and the University's right to ensure the integrity of its programs.

Disabilities may be defined by the following:

- learning disabilities

- health impairments
- physical limitations
- psychiatric disabilities

Students should set an appointment with professional staff at C&DS to review the nature and history of the disability as well as present concerns related to the academic environment. The procedure for Disability Services is as follows:

1. If a student believes he/she may qualify for reasonable accommodations due to an impairment that creates a disability, the student will be asked to supply current professional diagnostic documentation of the disability and the student's needs. Appropriate documentation identifies the disability and indicates how it substantially limits current major life activities (e.g., learning, working, walking, seeing, hearing) as related to the academic environment. For students who have not had a previous professional evaluation or documentation, referrals may be provided.
2. To receive reasonable accommodations, the Committee for Academic Accommodation reviews the student's request. Students must sign a release of information after which the Committee will review the documentation and determine reasonable accommodations to meet the student's needs in the academic environment. Each student's situation is individually assessed and reviewed. Information regarding accommodations is shared with UST faculty, staff, or administration only on a "need-to-know" basis and will be handled discreetly.
3. Once the student has been approved to receive accommodations, letters outlining the accommodations will be made available for the student to distribute to instructors and academic advisors. Each semester the student must request a new set of letters to ensure continuation of academic accommodations. If testing accommodations are granted, C&DS will notify the office of Career Services and Testing.

Students are encouraged to notify C&DS if problems arise related to their disability and receiving accommodations. Students should follow grievance procedures outlined in this publication to advance complaints related to disability issues.

The University strives to resolve differences through informal procedures whenever possible. Student complaints regarding Section 504-based academic accommodations or general access issues should be directed to the Executive Director of Counseling and Disability Services, who functions as the University's Section 504 Coordinator for students. For grievances regarding employment concerns at the University, complaints should be directed to the Associate Vice President of Human Resources.

More information is available at www.stthom.edu/counseling. For an appointment or additional information, contact Counseling and Disability Services at 713-525-2169 or 713-525-6953.

DISABILITY NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

It is the policy of the University of St. Thomas not to discriminate on the basis of disability in admission and access to, or treatment or employment in its program or activities, as required by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, (involving disability discrimination), and the implementing regulations.

If you have any questions regarding this policy, please contact the following persons:

Section 504 Coordinators:

Primary for Students: Executive Director of Counseling and Disability Services (713) 525-3162

Primary for Faculty and Staff Employees: Associate Vice-President of Human Resources (713) 525-3813

Secondary for Students: Associate Vice President for Student Affairs (713) 525-3570

Secondary for Faculty and Staff Employees: Vice President for Finance (713) 525–6960

University of St. Thomas 3800 Montrose Boulevard

Houston, Texas 77006

If you believe you may have been discriminated against in violation of this policy, please immediately contact the Section 504 Coordinators, the Office of Human Resources or the Office of Student Affairs for a copy of the University's Discrimination Grievance Procedures.

Discrimination Grievance Procedures

The University of St. Thomas has adopted an internal grievance procedure providing for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any action prohibited by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. Information will be kept confidential to the extent possible. The Section 504 Coordinators will maintain the files and records related to all complaints filed, the written findings, and resolutions. The Executive Director of Counseling and Disability Services will maintain files and records for students; the Associate Vice–President of Human Resources will maintain files and records for faculty and staff employees. Federal law strictly prohibits any retaliation against a person who exercises the right to file a complaint of discrimination. Retaliation is prohibited whether or not the complainant prevails with the complaint. Charges of retaliation shall be treated as separate and distinct from the original complaint of discrimination and may be filed utilizing this grievance procedure.

1. Complaints

1. **Disability Discrimination of Students.** Complaints by students involving disability discrimination should be filed with the Section 504 Coordinator. The Section 504 Coordinator for students is the Executive Director of Counseling and Disability Services.

Location: Office of Counseling and Disability Services, Crooker Center, second floor. Telephone: (713) 525–3162

1. **Disability Discrimination of Faculty and Staff Employees.** All disability discrimination complaints by faculty or staff employees should be filed with the Associate Vice–President of Human Resources

Location: Administrative Services, Human Resources Telephone: (713) 525–3813

1. **Discrimination Grievance Officers.** The persons designated above to receive complaints under these procedures shall be referred to as Discrimination Grievance Officers. If the designated Grievance Officer is the accused party, the complaint may be filed with the other Grievance Officer the Vice President for Student Affairs for students) or the Vice President for Finance (for faculty and staff employees).
2. **Complaints by Mail.** Complaints may also be mailed to the appropriate Discrimination Grievance Officer at the following address:

University of St. Thomas 3800 Montrose Boulevard

Houston, Texas 77006

The complaint and its envelope should be marked "Confidential."

2. Procedure

1. Contents of Complaint. Complaints must be filed in writing with the Discrimination Grievance Officer and must contain the following:
 1. Name and address of the person making the complaint ("Complainant").
 2. A brief description of the alleged discriminatory action or actions.
 3. The date or dates of the alleged discriminatory actions.

4. The person or persons alleged to have engaged in the discriminatory action or actions.
2. **Deadline for Filing the Complaint.** The complaint must be filed with the appropriate Discrimination Grievance Officer within 30 days after the Complainant becomes aware of the alleged discrimination.
3. **Informal Resolution.** The Grievance Officer will notify the appropriate Vice President of the complaint, if deemed necessary. If the accusing individual is a student, the Executive Director of Counseling and Disability Services will address the complaint. If the accusing individual is a faculty or staff employee, then the Associate Vice–President of Human Resources will address the complaint.
 1. The Grievance Officer shall determine whether the matter may be promptly resolved informally (for example, when the complaint arises from miscommunication between the parties, or when the accused party admits wrongdoing and agrees to take appropriate corrective action). Informal resolution will be attempted as soon as possible and need not wait for the written response of the accused party, unless deemed appropriate by the Grievance Officer. If the Associate Vice–President of Human Resources is the accused party, the Complainant will contact the Vice President for Finance instead of the Associate Vice–President of Human Resources. If the Executive Director of Counseling and Disability Services is the accused party, the Complainant will contact the Vice President for Student Affairs instead of the Executive Director of Counseling and Disability Services. If the area Vice President is the accused party, the Grievance Officer will contact the President instead of the Vice President.
4. **Response.** The accused party will be provided a copy of the complaint and will provide the Grievance Officer a written response within five business days after receiving a copy of the complaint. The Grievance Officer may waive the requirement for a written response if the matter has been informally resolved.
5. **Investigation.** If it appears that the matter cannot be informally resolved, the Grievance Officer will proceed with the investigation. The investigation may be informal, but shall be impartial and as thorough as appropriate under the circumstances. The Complainant and the accused party shall be given an opportunity to submit evidence relevant to the filed complaint. The Grievance Officer may also interview persons who the officer believes may have knowledge bearing on the matter and may require the Complainant or accused party to provide additional documentation, information or evidence that the officer deems appropriate.
6. **Determination and Resolution.** The Grievance Officer will prepare written recommended findings as to the validity of the complaint and will, after consultation with the area Vice President recommend resolution of the complaint, if any (“Recommendation”). The Recommendation will then be given to the area Vice President, who will make the final decision and communicate the decision to the Complainant and the accused party (“Determination”).
7. **Reconsideration.** Either party may appeal the Determination by filing a notice of appeal (“Notice”) with the President of the University. The Notice must be filed within five business days after receipt of the Determination, and must include a copy of the Determination and a description of the issues being appealed. Copies of the Notice shall be provided by the appealing party to the Grievance Officer and the appropriate area Vice President. The Grievance Officer will provide a copy of the Notice to the other party. The other party may file a rebuttal statement to the appeal within five business days after receipt of the Notice. The President (or designee) shall review the matter and take any appropriate action, including, but not limited to affirming, modifying or reversing the Determination or requiring that additional investigation be performed. The President shall provide a written decision to both parties, the appropriate area Vice President and the Grievance Officer.