

302 Student Rights and Freedoms

Approved by Board of Trustees

Effective Date: June 5, 2017

Responsible Division: Academic Affairs

Responsible Office: University Provost

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I. Purpose

Academic institutions exist for the transmission of knowledge, the pursuit of truth, the development of students, and the general well-being of society. At Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU or University) free inquiry and free expression are indispensable to the attainment of these goals. As members of the academic community, students should be encouraged to develop the capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for truth. Institutional procedures for achieving these purposes may vary from campus to campus, but the minimal standards of academic freedom of students outlined below are essential to any community of scholars. This policy enumerates the essential provisions for students' freedom to learn.

II. Academic Freedom

A. Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom. The freedom to learn depends upon appropriate opportunities and conditions in the classroom, on the campus, and in the larger community. Students should exercise their freedom with responsibility.

B. The responsibility to secure and to respect general conditions conducive to the freedom to learn is shared by all members of the academic community.

III. Freedom of Access to Higher Education

Under no circumstances should a student be barred from admission to MTSU on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, ethnic or national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, disability, age, or status as a covered veteran. Thus, within the limits of the facilities, MTSU is open to all students who are qualified according to its admissions standards. The facilities and services of MTSU are open to all of its enrolled students.

IV. In the Classroom

A. The student has the right to engage in free discussion, inquiry, and expression in the classroom as it is related to the content of the course.

B. Student performance should be evaluated solely on an academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards.

1. Protection of Freedom of Expression. Students should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled.

2. Protection Against Improper Academic Evaluation:

a. Students should have protection through orderly procedures against prejudiced or capricious academic evaluation.

b. At the same time, they are responsible for maintaining standards of academic performance established for each course in which they are enrolled.

3. Protection Against Improper Disclosure. Certain information about students is protected from public disclosure by federal and state laws. Protection against improper disclosure is a serious professional obligation. See [Policy 500 Access to Education Records \(/policies/academic-affairs-students/318.php\)](#). Judgments of ability and character may be provided under appropriate circumstances. (Adapted from AAUP Statement of Rights and Freedoms of Students.)

Forms: none.

Revisions: none.

Last Reviewed: November 2022.

References: Policy 500 Access to Education Records.

