

Workplace Conduct Policy

Policy number: 414
Policy owner: Office of Human Resources

Date of initial publication: Not available
Date of latest revision: August 17, 2023

SECTION I. PURPOSE

This policy is intended to summarize the general expectations for workplace conduct for St. Thomas employees. All St. Thomas employees are expected to conduct themselves in a professional, courteous and civil manner and in compliance with University mission, convictions, policies and applicable law.

Policies in the University Policy Repository set additional standards of conduct not specifically referenced in this policy.

SECTION II. SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all regular full-time and part-time hourly and salaried staff employees, faculty employees to the extent not superseded by the faculty handbook, term appointments, temporary employees, on-call employees and student workers.

SECTION III. DEFINITIONS

When used in this policy, the following terms have the following meanings:

- a. ***St. Thomas community standards*** means the St. Thomas mission, convictions, policies and applicable law (including applicable regulations).

SECTION IV. POLICY

A. General

All employees are expected to know and understand University policies and to conduct their work and themselves with integrity, in a professional manner that is consistent with the University's community standards and that reflects positively on the workplace.

B. Attendance and Punctuality

St. Thomas expects employees to work during their scheduled hours. Employees have a responsibility to be on the job when scheduled and to be on time. Unauthorized absence or tardiness or failure to return from scheduled breaks may result in disciplinary action.

- Employees are expected to be at their workplace at the start of their workday and at the appropriate time after any lunch and rest breaks, unless they have made prior arrangements with their supervisor.
- On an occasion when an unplanned absence from work cannot be avoided, employees must notify their supervisor. As much advance notice as possible is expected to be given. If your supervisor is not available, contact the individual designated by the department head.

- To the extent possible, notification is expected to be given by telephone, followed by an email.
- Failure to notify the supervisor of any anticipated absence or delay in reporting for work may be grounds for disciplinary action.
- Employees are encouraged to schedule medical, dental, and other medical related appointments before or after normal work hours, but if it is necessary to be absent during work hours, the supervisor must be given as much advance notice as possible.
- Employees who are absent from work for three consecutive days without notifying their supervisor and following departmental protocol (except in extenuating circumstances) are considered to have voluntarily terminated.
- Excessive absenteeism and tardiness may result in disciplinary action.

C. Confidential Nature of University Affairs

In the course of performing your duties, you may receive information that is confidential in nature, including but not limited to information from student education records, financial information and/or other information of the University that is confidential or proprietary in nature. The University expects that confidential information will be shared only with those employees who have a demonstrated “need to know.” The University further expects that employees will use appropriate data security measures to prevent unauthorized disclosures of confidential information. Employees are expected to follow the [Data Security Classification Policy](#) and related protocols.

Any information regarding students and employees, with the exception of “directory information”, will be regarded as confidential. Access to confidential or sensitive information will be limited to those employees who “need to know.” All employees who have access to student information are required to follow the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ([FERPA](#)) with respect to such information.

Information regarding the University that is made available to the public through the University’s public website, announcements, advertisements or publications may be shared with individuals in and outside the University because it is public information. If an employee is unsure if information about the University or its operations is public, the employee is expected to treat the information as confidential.

Verification of employment is handled through The Work Number (1-800-367-5690, company code 4563940). In the absence of a written release of information by the employee, information provided for verification of employment will be limited to the employee’s job title and dates of employment.

Employees handling confidential information are responsible for its security. Extreme care must be used in the storage and/or destruction of confidential information. Disclosure of confidential information may subject an employee to disciplinary action.

D. Community Relations

The University of St. Thomas is dedicated to providing quality education for its students and a welcoming work environment for its employees and visitors. This dedication has enhanced the reputation of the University, and has contributed to its growth and success. In order to continue this tradition of excellence, it is important that you and the University work together. A successful work environment at St. Thomas will be the result of everyone's efforts.

University constituents are among our organization's most valuable assets. Depending on an employee's position, constituents may include students, parents, fellow employees, and/or other members of the public. The way we do our jobs presents an image of our entire organization. Constituents judge St. Thomas and all of us by how they are treated with each employee contact. Nothing is more important than being courteous, friendly, helpful, and prompt in the attention you give to others.

Requests to fellow employees and campus departments are expected to be reasonable and made with respect to the individual and the department's area of expertise. Individual differences are expected to be handled in a professional, non-confrontational manner.

All communications are expected to be honest, and made in a manner likely to be understood by the constituent. Communication and actions are expected to be productive in nature, not degrading or demeaning.

E. Alcohol and Drugs

The University of St. Thomas complies with both the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 and the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989. Drug and alcohol abuse affects the health, safety and well-being of employees and students, and restricts the University's ability to carry out its mission. Employees are expected to be familiar and comply with the University's Alcohol and Drug-Free University Policy.

The University prohibits the following while on University property or as a part of any University-sponsored event or University-funded activity:

- The unlawful possession, use or distribution of alcohol, drugs or drug paraphernalia, and the possession, use or distribution of cannabis;
- Being under the influence of illicit drugs or impaired by alcohol or cannabis; and
- The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of controlled substances in the workplace.

An employee who is convicted of a criminal drug-related or alcohol-related violation occurring in the workplace must notify Human Resources no later than five (5) days after the conviction.

Employees reporting to work under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol, or under the influence of a substance that impairs their ability to safely and/or effectively perform their work, are not allowed to remain on University property.

The University is a tobacco free and smoke free campus. All employees share in the responsibility of complying with the [Tobacco-Free and Smoke-Free Campus policy](#).

At some University events, alcohol consumption will occur. Those who consume alcohol at University events are expected to comply with applicable laws and conduct themselves in a professional, responsible and safe manner.

Violation of any of the standards set forth above will result in appropriate disciplinary action up to and including termination from the University and referral for prosecution. A drug-related or alcohol-related conviction, even for off-campus conduct not part of University-sponsored or University-related activities, may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, depending on the nature of the employee's position, the severity of the offense, and other relevant circumstances.

Any employee, or other member of the University community who is concerned about substance use, abuse and rehabilitation is strongly encouraged to contact their family physician or health plan. Employees may seek assistance through the University's Employee Assistance Program. For information about the University's Employee Assistance Program, please contact Human Resources.

F. Harassment and Workplace Violence

St. Thomas prohibits behavior that is disrespectful or harassing to another individual. Such behavior is demeaning and destructive, and causes isolation to the individual(s) who are targeted and creates an environment that is not true to the University's Catholic tradition. As a Catholic university we expect all members of this community to treat one another with mutual respect and civility. The following examples are illustrative of the types of behaviors that will not be permitted, but these examples are not intended to be all-inclusive:

- Attacks or unwelcome physical contact directed at an employee, student, or visitor at the University.
- Verbal, physical, or emotional intimidation through the threat of force or violence toward the body, possessions or residence of a University community member.
- Verbal assaults, use of slang references, racial epithets, and jokes that demean and degrade any person due to their race, color, gender, culture, sexual orientation, national origin, age, ability, language competency, religious tradition, economic status or other protected class status; and verbal or physical portrayals which perpetuate stereotypic beliefs and attitudes.
- Non-verbal offensive behavior, hostile attitude, hostile or offensive gestures, graffiti, offensive written materials.
- The use of abusive language.
- Assault on a fellow employee, student, or visitor at the University.

Any University employee found to be in violation of this policy will be disciplined, which may include, but is not limited to, termination of employment.

Any employee who believes they have been a victim of discrimination or harassment are expected to report the behavior to their immediate supervisor or Human Resources. Employees who believe they have been a victim of sex discrimination or sexual harassment alternatively may report the behavior to the Title IX Coordinator. Action will be taken in a timely manner to follow-up on the complaint.

G. Outside Employment

The University realizes that some employees may have a job in addition to their employment with the University. Outside employment must not compromise the University's interests or adversely affect the employee's ability to perform their duties for St. Thomas.

Outside employment will not be considered an excuse for poor job performance, absenteeism, tardiness, leaving early, refusal to travel, refusal to work overtime or different hours, or any other failure to meet the requirements of the job.

Employees who are injured or become ill as a result of employment outside the University are not eligible for the University's worker's compensation or short-term disability benefits.

H. Personal Appearance

Employees' dress and grooming must be appropriate to the work situation. The appearance of employees shall be based on the following guidelines:

- Employees are expected to dress in a manner that is standard and acceptable in business establishments for the type of responsibilities of the employee and the department in which they work.
- The dress of service and trade workers shall take into consideration the requirements of safety and comfort. Employees are subject to any uniform requirements of their department.

Direct any questions about appropriate dress to your supervisor.

I. Professional Behavior

It is important for all employees to work together and behave in a manner that promotes the efficient operation of the University and supports a respectful and effective working environment. Behavior that supports this philosophy includes, but is not limited to:

- Being at the workplace ready to work at the start of the scheduled shift;
- Notifying the supervisor timely when absent from work or unable to report to work on time;
- Following all University safety and health regulations;
- Wearing appropriate clothes for the job;
- Performing assigned tasks efficiently;
- Maintaining a clean and orderly workplace;
- Treating all customers and visitors of the University with an efficient, respectful, service-oriented attitude;
- Refraining from offensive or undesirable language or behavior.

Any conduct not appropriate to an effective and respectful work environment may subject an employee to disciplinary action up to and including termination. Following are examples of inappropriate behavior. These examples are not intended to be all-inclusive:

- Violation of any of the St. Thomas community standards;
- Theft or misuse of University property or of another employee's property;
- Gambling on University property;
- Use of someone else's password or sabotaging physical or computerized records;
- Falsification of any University record or report, including employment application and time records;
- Punching timecards for others.

J. Personal Phone Calls and Mail

The telephone and mail facilities at St. Thomas are important communication tools for employees and the University's customers and business associates. For that reason, employees are expected to check their email at least once in a 24-hour period during the workweek, if not more frequently, depending upon your role. The University's telephone lines are expected to be confined to business calls. Personal calls are expected to be limited to those that are absolutely necessary and be as brief as possible. Personal cell phone usage and personal internet browsing at assigned workstations are expected to be limited.

To avoid an increase in volume of mail, employees are expected not to use the University's address for receiving personal mail. Outgoing personal mail, however, may be handled through the University's mail center.

University stationery may not be used for personal correspondence.