

# disruptive and **threatening** student behavior

DEAN OF STUDENTS OFFICE



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## Contacts:

Dean of Students Office.....	621-7057
Counseling and Psychological Services .....	621-6490
Police (non-emergency) .....	621-8273
Police (emergency) .....	<b>9-1-1</b>

**guidelines**  
**for faculty and sta**

# General Overview

What is the difference between **disruptive** and **threatening** behavior?  
How does The University of Arizona define each one?

**Disruptive Behavior** is conduct that materially and substantially interferes with or obstructs the teaching or learning process in the context of a classroom or educational setting.

**Threatening Behavior** is any statement, communication, conduct or gesture, including those in written form, directed toward any member of the University community that causes a reasonable apprehension of physical harm to a person or property.

## Disruptive Behavior

Disruptive behavior is detrimental to the academic community because it interferes with the learning process, inhibits the ability of instructors to teach effectively, diverts university energy and resources away from the educational mission and may indicate a significant level of personal problems or distress on the part of the disrupter.

### Disruptive behavior IS:

- The student in your class who is *persistently tardy* or *leaves early*;
- The student who *talks incessantly* while you are delivering a lecture;
- The student who loudly and *frequently interrupts* the flow of class with questions or interjections; or
- The student who *becomes belligerent* when you confront his or her inappropriate behavior in class;
- *Cell phones* ringing in a classroom, text messaging, chatting online;
- Persistent and *unreasonable demands for time* and attention both in and out of the classroom.

### Disruptive behavior is NOT:

- Cultural differences;
- Appropriate demonstrations of disagreements or differences of opinion;
- A clash of values or beliefs;
- Needing extra time or attention based on reasonable accommodation.

## Preventing Disruptive Behavior

- Set clear expectations about classroom behavior and include these expectations in the syllabus
- Review these expectations in class and develop agreements as a class during the first session
- Talk to students or speak with students in private and immediately upon first disruptive incident
- Model professional behavior. Respond to inappropriate remarks in a professional and mature manner. Put-downs or witty comebacks can potentially escalate a situation

## Appropriate Referrals for Disruptive Students and Students in Crisis

- Emotional issues/anger management  
Please refer to CAPS, **621-6490**
- If a student has threatened you or someone else:  
Call police immediately (**9-1-1**)
- If you are concerned about a student and are not sure what the appropriate resource is, notify the Dean of Students Office, **621-7057**

# What Do I Do?

## Recommendations For Intervention

### Step #1

Ask the student to immediately and respectfully end the behavior by:

1. Asking the student to stay after class so that you can discuss why the behavior is inappropriate or disruptive (\*see Meeting with a Disruptive Student: Guidelines, to the right),

OR

2. Taking a break during class and ask the student to end the behavior.

*NOTE: All of these verbal conversations should be followed up via an email to the student which summarizes the conversation.*

### Step #2

*(Behavior Continues)*

1. Let the student know that he/she needs to meet with you as soon as possible about his/her continued behavior in order to return to class (\*see Meeting with a Disruptive Student: Guidelines, to the right).
2. Follow up in writing to the student via email outlining the behavior, the rules that were violated, and future expectations for class participation through a written warning.
3. The warning should also include notice that any subsequent violation of the classroom rules or this policy will result in the instructor filing a Student Code of Conduct Complaint with the Dean of Students Office for failure to comply with this policy.

*NOTE: Faculty member should keep a log describing disruptive behavior and documenting the meetings and conversations that have occurred with the student. These documents should be kept on file.*

### Step #3

1. If the student has not changed his/her behavior, the case must be referred to the Dean of Students Office (621-7057) and a Student Code of Conduct Complaint must be completed.
2. Submit all related documentation including but not limited to an official complaint form, any written documentation for prior incidents, names of witnesses and incidents describing disruptive behavior to the Dean of Students Office.
3. The instructor must also notify his/her Department Head or Dean of the matter as well.

### Meeting with a Disruptive Student: Guidelines

The meeting is an opportunity for the student to understand the inappropriateness of his or her behavior and to develop strategies for continuing successfully in the class.

#### During the meeting:

1. *Remain calm.* This may be difficult if the student is agitated or confrontational, but your calm and reasoned response will best control the meeting.
2. *Do not take behavior or remarks personally.* Disruptive behavior usually results from other life problems or a general academic frustration.
3. *Be specific* and identify the inappropriate behavior the student has exhibited. Describe the behavior, don't focus on the person. Explain why the behavior is a problem.
4. *Review the classroom rules and this policy.*
5. *Ask questions* and summarize what you hear the student saying.
6. *Focus on areas of agreement* between you and the student. Conclude by summarizing any resolution and articulating expectations and the behavior that is required for the future.

