

Assessing and Addressing Problematic Student Behavior: A Guide for Faculty

Assessing Student Behavior

Classroom management issues can be very complex and can fall on a continuum from low risk to severe risk. This guide is intended to help you assess this risk and know how to best respond. Since many TAMUG students are the first person in their family to attend college, many are less familiar with the expectations of a college classroom. In many cases, a private conversation with the student may clarify your expectations and help the student to meet them. In the case of severe behavioral issues, it would be best to contact the Office of Student Life for consultation and to potentially develop a behavioral intervention strategy.

Threat Level	Examples
Low Threat	Inappropriate use of technology; Talking out of turn in class; Repeatedly off-topic in class discussions or disrespectful to faculty.
Intermediate Threat	Continued disruption after previous discussion or increases in severity of previous behaviors.
Severe Threat	Direct threats to self or others. Difficulty determining reality. Severe substance abuse or risk-taking behavior.

Addressing Student Behavior

Addressing student behavior can be tricky and many do not feel well-trained for this aspect of college teaching today. For low-level threats, the best way to deal with this behavior is to address it immediately as it occur (unless doing so would cause the student an undue amount of embarrassment). In some cases, it might be best to discuss it privately with the student after class. An email can often provide guidance without making the student too defensive. Remember that in many cases, the student is unaware that they have violated your expectations. Think about how you would want someone to address the situation with you if roles were reversed.

In the case of more severe behavior, feel free to consult with the Office of Student Life. If you find yourself speaking to a student about severe issues, let them know that they are important to you and that you'd like to help. Also, please know that you can feel free to call Counseling Services. We can often accept emergency walk-ins (without an appointment).

Threat Level	Response
Low Threat	Address the situation as it occurs in class or speak to the student after class if necessary
Intermediate Threat	Readdress with student or call the Office of Student Life for consultation.
Severe Threat	Consult with the Office of Student Life immediately.

Tips for Discussing Behavior with Students

- Don't assume that the student is knowingly violating your expectations.
- Only address behavior concerns in class if doing so won't unduly embarrass the student or escalate the situation.
- Establish expectations as clearly as you can in your syllabus. It's also good to make a general statement that lets the student know that you will address any behavior that concerns you.
 - Example: "The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom."
- Take threats seriously.
- If the student makes direct threats to themselves, to others or to you or if you become aware of a crime, contact University Police immediately at 409.740.4545.
- If a student violates your stated expectations, or if they are disruptive, you have the authority to remove them from class.
- Encourage students to use FREE and confidential counseling services on campus.
- Don't be inhibited by FERPA about sharing information with other employees who have a legitimate need to know about a student's behavior.

Additional Programs

- *Question, Persuade and Refer program*: The Office of Student Life offers training for any faculty, staff, students or student groups who desire it. This program educates participants on how to spot signs of suicide and informs them about the resources available at TAMUG for students in distress.
 - Trainings available by contacting Counseling Services at 409.740.4736.