



STUDENT HANDBOOK

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STUDENT HANDBOOK

When a group of citizens gathers in search of common purposes, it is necessary to establish rules and regulations based on democratic principles that will allow each member of the group to reach their goals. Mech-Tech's Institutional Community assists the institution daily to find and reach those goals that can be achieved through the education it offers.

This handbook has the purpose of providing orientation to the student and reaching an adequate environment that will stimulate the teaching-learning process and that will allow coexistence between the students, faculty, and administrative personnel.

To learn and comply with the regulations established in this handbook is the responsibility of each student enrolled in our Institution.

MISSION

Mech-Tech Institution is a higher education and technical training institution whose mission is to train and re-train youths and adults with the necessary practical and theoretical competencies in professions that will prepare them to compete for employment opportunities that can emerge in these fields and maintain them.

Through our innovative curricula, students will be formed integrally with the capacity to critically address the technological, social, ethical, cultural, and economic challenges of a fast-growing and changing society not only in the human aspect but also intellectually.

ARTICLE I – APPLICABILITY

This regulation applies to students of all the dependencies of Mech-Tech Institute including those considered to be official extensions of the Institution or where official activities are sponsored by it.

ARTICLE II – NON-DISCRIMINATION CLAUSE

Mech-Tech Institute does not discriminate in its activities, educational services, and employment opportunities for reasons of race, color, sex, ethnic origin, social condition, political or religious affiliations, age, or disability.

ARTICLE III – STUDENTS' RIGHTS

- Section 1: Educate and learn. This right transcends the classroom and includes all possible learning relations and experiences with instructors, peers, and institutional personnel.
- Section 2 - Receive and enjoy an education of quality for which the student is enrolled and attends class.
- Section 3 - Receive orientation regarding the Institution's licensing and accrediting agencies, its academic programs, and facilities available.
- Section 4 - Receive orientation of financial aid available, costs, and refund policies that apply in case of withdrawal as well as all information related to the student's rights and duties in reference to the financial aspect.
- Section 5 - Learn and enjoy the human resources available in the Institution which will help students achieve their educational objectives as disposed in the rules.
- Section 6 - Participate in academic, social events, sports, and additional activities planned by the Institution.
- Section 7 - At the beginning of classes, receive adequate orientation from the instructors regarding the purposes and objectives of the course, such as topics to study, lectures, and other work required in addition to textbooks and materials, evaluation criteria to be used, and other daily aspects related to the development and approval of the course.
- Section 8 - Learn, within a reasonable time, the results and/or grade granted in tests and oral and written presentations as well as the achievements or failures incurred.
- Section 9 - Meet with the instructor during the hours assigned and after regular class hours to clarify doubts and receive orientation regarding his/her performance and academic program.
- Section 10 - Express opinions, beliefs, doubts, and criteria divergences as well as present complaints or petitions and cite his/her rights as long as they are manifested correctly, in order, and using the official institutional channels established.
- Section 11 - Maintain the academic records under strict confidentiality and that these are provided only to those who have been previously approved in writing by the student or as established by law.
- Section 12 - The right to be notified of any actions against him/her, the supporting evidence, and to be provided the opportunity to defend himself/herself and present their version of the events.

- Section 13 - Request reasonable accommodation in conformity with the Institutional Policy for People with Disabilities.

ARTICLE IV – RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENTS

- Section 1 - Revise and consider all information regarding the Institution and its programs before matriculating. Once matriculated, it is his/her responsibility to learn, study, become familiarized, and comply with all the regulations, requirements, conditions, and rules of the Institution as established in this document and any other official document of the Institution.
- Section 2 - Study and behave in such a way that his/her conduct is not an obstruction for other members of the academic community while pleading for their rights or complying with their tasks.
- Section 3 - Attend class regularly and on time and be responsible with the compliance of his/her studies and any other academic tasks. In case a student is absent or late to class, he/she will have the responsibility of presenting justifiable evidence to the Campus Director or the Assistant Registrar's Office for the adequate repositioning of the hours and filling out a form for such purposes. If the excuse is not valid, the student will be responsible for the material presented and assigned in class at that time.
- Section 4 - Observe good conduct by showing respect and consideration towards other members of the Institutional Community during class and recess hours as well as in institutional activities. It is also the student's responsibility to help maintain a pleasant and efficient study environment for him/her, peers, and institutional personnel.
- Section 5 - Complete all requirements and demands of the program of study and maintain responsibility in following orientation and instructions from instructors during the teaching-learning process to be able to obtain the degree.

ARTICLE V – STUDENT ACTIVITIES

- Section 1 - Mech-Tech Institute recognizes the right of students to express, present petitions, and participate in activities held by the Institution as part of their integral development.
- Section 2 - All activities held by students and institutional personnel outside the facilities of the Institution, when these are not held under its name or in representation of the school, will be the sole responsibility of its organizers and attendees.
- Section 3 - The Institution's personnel, contractors, representatives, or any other individuals related to the academic community are not authorized at any moment to use a private vehicle or those of faculty and/or administrative personnel to provide transportation to students or any other person related to the Institution. Mech-Tech is not responsible for damages or harm caused by not complying with this rule.

Section 4 - Activities that are against the established rules, order, and environment of the Institution or that obstruct faculty tasks and the good functioning of the academic life, are not authorized.

Section 5 - The distribution of flyers, magazines, or other publications will require previous written authorization from the Campus Director.

ARTICLE VI – DISCIPLINARY RULES AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

The disciplinary measures will be administrative and separate from any other procedure such as that of legal nature. The student will be disciplined for his/her actions, either for not complying, omission, or negligence as author or concealer of the events.

Section 1 - The following actions include, but are not limited to, conduct that will be considered a violation of the disciplinary regulations of Mech-Tech Institute:

- a. Any violation of this Student Handbook, to the rules contained in the Institutional Catalog, to the regulations contained in Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, or any other official document published by the Institution.
- b. The lack of honesty while performing academic tasks. (Depending on the severity of the act, this conduct may result in suspension or expulsion from the Institution).
- c. The alteration or falsification of grades, academic records, grade cards, and other official document of the Institution. (Depending on the severity of the act, this conduct may result in suspension or expulsion from the Institution).
- d. Breach of peace due to improper conduct. (Depending on the severity of the act, this conduct may result in suspension or expulsion from the Institution).
- e. Interruption or obstruction of the regular tasks of the Institution.
- f. Improper or disrespectful conduct towards members of the Institutional Community. (Depending on the severity of the act, this conduct may result in suspension or expulsion from the Institution).
- g. The negative is to comply with instructions given by a Mech-Tech Institute employee or official to maintain institutional order.
- h. Failure to attend to a hearing with an authorized institutional representative after being formally summoned.

- i. Offer incorrect or incomplete information in any document required by the Institution to obtain benefits. (Depending on the severity of the act, this conduct may result in suspension or expulsion from the Institution).
- j. The organization, attendance, and/or support of unauthorized activities as well as the distribution or publication of unauthorized material in institutional facilities.
- k. Misuse or destruction of Mech-Tech Institute's property or of that of a member of the Institutional Community, such as paint, printing, mutilating, or causing structural damages, to facilities, surroundings, equipment, materials, etc. (Depending on the severity of the act, this conduct may result in suspension or expulsion from the Institution).
- l. Assume representation of Mech-Tech Institute without previous authorization. (Depending on the severity of the act, this conduct may result in suspension or expulsion from the Institution).
- m. The violation of any State or Federal law. (Depending on the severity of the act, this conduct may result in suspension or expulsion from the Institution).
- n. The non-compliance or violation of any probation condition or disciplinary sanction imposed in conformity with this Handbook. (Depending on the severity of the act, this conduct may result in suspension or expulsion from the Institution).
- o. The Institution prohibits the consumption, distribution, and possession of drugs, narcotics, alcoholic beverages, and controlled substances in institutional activities and/or institutional property as established in the Policy for the Use and Abuse of Drugs and Alcohol. (Depending on the severity of the act, this conduct may result in suspension or expulsion from the Institution).
- p. Dress inappropriately for a work and study environment. Students must wear closed shoes as per the safety dress code of laboratories and classrooms. Students are not allowed to wear short pants, sleeveless shirts, miniskirts, hot pants, or low-cut tops.
- q. Park in undesignated areas or block another vehicle.
- r. Not provide documents required by the Assistant Registrar or Financial Aid Offices.
- s. Not complying with payments or financial aid applications that are necessary.
- t. The use of cellular phones, electronic games, and portable radios that may distract students and affect the academic environment in the classroom and hallways is strictly prohibited.

- u. By the Institution's policy regarding the possession and use of weapons, it is prohibited to possess, bear, and use firearms, explosives, stabbing objects, or any other object designed to attack or be used as a defense method. That includes but is not limited to paintball guns, pellet pistols, and gauntlets. (Depending on the severity of the act, this conduct may result in suspension or expulsion from the Institution).
- v. The use of coarse language in the Institution.
- w. Smoke, including regular cigarettes, cigars, or "e-cigs," "vapes," "e-hookahs," "vape pens," and "electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS)" inside classrooms, laboratories, offices, hallways, or any other enclosed area.
- x. Aggression threat or attempt to a member of the Institutional Community and/or visitor. (Depending on the severity of the act, this conduct may result in suspension or expulsion from the Institution).
- y. Sexual aggression, lascivious acts, indecent exposure, or other of similar nature as established in the institutional Policy for Sexual Harassment. (Depending on the severity of the act, this conduct may result in suspension or expulsion from the Institution).
- z. The use of the Internet as part of an educational program is a privilege; not a right. A student, who does not make good use of the Internet, can be the object of disciplinary action. It is prohibited to use the internet to access obscene or pornographic material. (Depending on the severity of the act, this conduct may result in suspension or expulsion from the Institution).
- aa. Drive above the speed limit or undergo illegal racing inside of school facilities. (Depending on the severity of the act, this conduct may result in suspension or expulsion from the Institution).
- bb. Adopt any conduct or action that threatens the life or security of any member of the Institutional Community. (Depending on the severity of the act, this conduct may result in suspension or expulsion from the Institution).
- cc. Waste time or fall asleep during lecture hours.
- dd. Late arrival after break time.
- ee. Consume food or drinks inside classrooms, shops, or any other undesignated areas.
- ff. Horseplay or inappropriate jokes.

- gg. Stealing. (Depending on the severity of the act, this conduct may result in suspension or expulsion from the Institution).
- hh. The use of social media to make inappropriate or degrading expressions about a classmate, instructor, or any member of the Institutional Community.
- ii. The use of cell phones or any other electronic or technological means to record and divulge in social media any issues regarding the Institution.
- jj. Exhibit disrespectful behavior or engage in criminal acts outside the institution, while wearing their uniform and/or identification or any Mech-Tech Institute badge.

Section 2 - The violations of disciplinary rules that appear in Section I of Article VI to one or more impositions of the following sanctions:

The violations of disciplinary rules contained in Section I, Article VI of this Handbook will result in the imposition of one or more of the following sanctions:

- a. Verbal reprimand
- b. Written reprimand with a copy of the student record
- c. Monetary repair for caused damages
- d. Disciplinary Suspension for a definite period
- e. Disciplinary Expulsion
- f. Complain to the corresponding authorities

The severity and frequency of a violation will be considered when determining the form of disciplinary action to be administered.

Section 3 - In case there is a violation of the rules established by the Institution and depending on the severity of the situation, the affected individual can **refer** the case to the Campus Director or make a **written complaint** to the Campus Director or the Vice President for Student Affairs.

The procedure will be as follows:

1. An instructor or any other administrative personnel can **refer** a student to the Campus Director due to a violation of the norms established in this Handbook to start conduct-modification strategies or,

2. A professor, student, or any other administrative personnel can **complain**. Mech-Tech Institute will handle the complaint promptly and will follow a fair and impartial process, always aiming for the goal of seeking the truth.
 - a. The affected person will complete a Complaint Form recounting the events and people that were involved.

If there is a violation of Title IX regulations (relationship violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, or harassment), a **Report of Discriminatory Complaint- TITLE IX** will be completed.

In criminal cases or those where it is considered that the complainant's safety is at risk, we will provide orientation regarding the option and convenience of notifying the Police or proper authorities. If the complainant declines, this will be documented in the Complaint form.

- b. The Campus Director will interview all parties involved and will document the preliminary report.
 - c. The Campus Director will evaluate the situation and will issue a citation with the Discipline Committee, if necessary. The citation will be done by phone, email, or in writing. The defendant will be informed of the alleged violations of the Handbook and of the date and time of the hearing before the Discipline Committee. The complainant and the defendant can be accompanied, should they decide so.
 - d. During the hearing, an opportunity will be provided for the student or complainant to present evidence in his/her favor or his/her version of the events. In cases that could be considered as a crime, all the gathered evidence will be preserved in the Discipline Committee file for a reasonable amount of time.

The Discipline Committee or any other Committee designated by the institution may use the technological means it deems necessary (including the online modality) to deal with complaints submitted to its consideration. Members of the Discipline Committee or any other Committee may attend the Committee and/or meet using technological means, provided that the parties can actively participate in the process and maintain communication with each other. In all cases, the defendant will be allowed to provide his version of the facts, as well as evidence in his favor.

- e. The Discipline Committee will determine if the student violated regulations contained in the Handbook within ten (10) class days from the day the Discipline Committee was held.

- f. All decisions will be notified in writing to the student with a copy to the Assistant Registrar and corresponding personnel. The notification will be signed by all members of the Discipline Committee, except on a justifiable occasion. The disciplinary sanction can be notified over the phone, email, or any other means, for the benefit of the student.

Section 4 - A student, who considers that he/she has been sanctioned unfairly, will have the opportunity to appeal the decision within five (5) class days after the date he/she received notification of the sanction. All appeals will be presented in writing to the Campus Director.

In Title IX cases, the complainant can appeal the Committee's determination under the same conditions mentioned in this section.

Once the period of appeal has elapsed without the party affected by the disciplinary sanction having exercised this right, the sanction will be final.

The party that appeals the decision will be notified in writing of the decision of the appeal.

Section 5 - The complainant can request assistance through the Campus Director or a duly authorized official (s) to evaluate alternatives to assist with his or her necessities.

Section 6 - A student who retaliates, intimidates, threatens, coerces, or in some way discriminates against any student or member of the Institutional Community because he/she made a referral or complaint, as established in the Student's Handbook can be suspended or expelled immediately.

ARTICLE VII – POLICY FOR THE USE AND ABUSE OF DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

Mech-Tech Institute has adopted a Policy for the Use and Abuse of Drugs and Alcohol which establishes the procedures and sanctions related to this article. The policy is available in the Student's Portal which can be accessed through www.mtifl.com, the employees' intranet, and a paper copy can be requested to the Campus Director.

ARTICLE VIII – POLICY FOR THE PREVENTION OF HARASSMENT, THREAT, AND BULLYING IN THE INSTITUTION

Mech-Tech Institute, from hereon, Mech-Tech or the Institution, promotes a policy free of harassment intimidation, or bullying. We recognize that all students have the right to develop in a

safe environment which is why Mech-Tech prohibits harassment and intimidation in all of its modalities.

We promote a safe environment where students' rights are protected, provide them with the opportunity to choose their studies and career freely, and help them achieve their academic goals.

I. Objective

Promote an appropriate institutional environment, free of harassment intimidation, or bullying in all of its modalities where the teaching-learning process is stimulated, and that allows adequate coexistence among the Institutional Community members. This protocol applies to all the Institutional Community members within the facilities of Mech-Tech including all the official extensions of the Institution or where official activities or those sponsored by the Institution are being carried through.

II. Definition and Description of Bullying and Cyberbullying

For this Protocol, the definitions of Bullying and Cyberbullying are defined as follows:

- A. **"Bullying"** includes cyberbullying and means systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students and may involve:
 - 1. Teasing
 - 2. Social exclusion
 - 3. Threat
 - 4. Intimidation
 - 5. Stalking
 - 6. Physical violence
 - 7. Theft
 - 8. Sexual, religious, or racial harassment
 - 9. Public or private humiliation
 - 10. Destruction of property
- B. **"Cyberbullying"** means bullying through the use of technology or any other means of electronic communication, which includes, but is not limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic system, photo-electronic system, or photo-optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. Cyberbullying includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person, or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying. Cyberbullying also includes the distribution by electronic means of communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more

persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

- C. **"Harassment"** means any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, use of data or computer software, or written, verbal, or physical conduct directed against a student:
1. Places a student in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property;
 2. Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits; or
 3. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of a school.

III. Institutional Policy:

Mech-Tech Institute promotes a policy free of harassment intimidation or bullying. We recognize that all students have the right to develop in a safe environment which is why Mech-Tech prohibits conduct of harassment and intimidation in all of its forms.

IV. Responsibility of the Members of the Educational Community:

The Institution will provide orientation to the Institutional Community regarding what is established in this Protocol. The Campus Director will participate in the orientation processes and will maintain a registry of the cases reported and intervened.

The Campus Director will provide orientation to the Faculty regarding the bullying conduct and the corresponding grievance form.

All members of the Institutional Community are responsible for informing and documenting any situation that they know of and that may constitute bullying, threat, and intimidation. The Campus Director will initiate an investigation, the corresponding disciplinary processes, and will monitor the compliance of the policy and protocol herein established.

The students must know and comply thoroughly with the Student Handbook and with the institutional policies related to bullying.

V. Prevention Strategies:

The Institution will work on the prevention of bullying through the Campus Director by orienting students and the community in general, using posters, and bulletin boards as well.

The community, in general, will be oriented regarding what constitutes bullying conduct and its consequences at an institutional level (disciplinary sanctions) as well as legal actions.

VI. Procedure for Protocol Disclosure:

All new enrollment groups will receive an orientation at the beginning of their program where an explanation of what constitute bullying and its effect will be provided in addition to emphasizing the disciplinary sanctions of such conduct as well as its legal consequences. In addition, periodic orientations will be provided to the Institutional Community.

The use of informational material will be employed, such as posters and bulletin boards.

VII. Procedure for documentation of cases, confidentiality, and maintenance of records:

The Campus Director will apply the established procedure in the Student Handbook to disclose any harassment intimidation or bullying complaint that may arise.

The alleged bullying victim can request to the Campus Director the corresponding complaint form. The form will be sent immediately to the Vice President of Student Affairs who will begin the corresponding investigation.

The student's records created by the Campus Director are maintained and safeguarded by him/her under lock and key at all times and when he/she is not in the office.

VIII. Complaints Procedure

The procedure established to disclose any complaints due to harassment intimidation or bullying will be applied as per the Student Handbook.

IX. Complaints Investigation Strategies

The institutional personnel that receive the written complaint of the alleged bullying in any of its forms, including cyberbullying, must immediately require the intervention of the Campus Director who will begin the corresponding investigation as disposed of in the Student Handbook.

To avoid a hostile environment and maintain order in the Institution, the Campus Director may implement precautionary measures, including the immediate removal of the student (s) during the investigation process.

X. Intervention Strategies and Sanctions:

Once the complaint is received, the Campus Director will proceed to start the corresponding investigation, and must provide an appointment to the allegedly affected student, the alleged stalker, and witnesses on or within three (3) business days after learning about the complaint. The Campus Director must set the appointment dates as soon as possible according to the availability of those involved and the witnesses.

A. Interview from the Campus Director to those who issue the complaint.

Indicators to observe during the interview:

1. Complainant's information
2. The severity of the alleged bullying
3. Places and frequency
4. Since when it has been occurring
5. Consequences that the victim has had, if any

Confidentiality will be guaranteed in the interview. The Campus Director must communicate to the student that he/she will be protected during the process, and must issue a separate report regarding the interview with the complainant.

B. Interview from the Campus Director to the alleged stalker.

Indicators to observe during the interview:

1. Attitude
2. If he/she assumes responsibility for his/her actions
3. If there is a demonstration of regret
4. If there is a desire to repair the damages

The Campus Director must submit a separate report of the interview with the stalker.

C. Interview of the Campus Director with the witnesses

The Campus Director can interview witnesses separately, and must not let any of the parts nor do the witnesses know each other's versions. The objective is to seek the truth.

The Campus Director may ask open questions to the witnesses and those involved and will submit a separate report of the interview with the witnesses.

- D.** If the Campus Director concludes that bullying exists, he/she will provide an appointment for those involved in the alleged incident to appear before the Disciplinary Committee which will be composed of a minimum of three (3) people that may include, without being understood as a limitation, the Campus Director or the person assigned by him/her, and the Vice-President of Student Affairs or personnel designated by her.

The Discipline Committee will proceed to read the complaint and listen to the defendant, the complainant, witnesses, and any other person (s) that may be considered necessary.

E. Disciplinary Sanctions:

If it is determined that bullying occurred and in conformity with the particularities of each case, one or more of the following sanctions will be imposed on the stalker:

1. Verbal reprimand
2. Written reprimand with a copy to the student's record
3. Monetary compensation for the damages caused
4. Suspension for a definite time
5. Expulsion
6. Report to the corresponding authorities

The Discipline Committee will issue a written notification of the disciplinary sanction to the sanctioned student.

F. Follow-Up Strategies:

The decision of the Discipline Committee will include the corresponding follow-up according to the particularities of each case. For example, it can include correction of the stalker's responsibilities and periodic follow-up and conduct evaluation.

G. Guide for Referrals to Health Professionals:

The Campus Director will make recommendations and referrals that he/she deems necessary, including, without being understood as a limitation, referrals to psychologists, doctors, or any other health specialist.

ARTICLE IX – PERMANENT COMMITTEES

The Institution will create various committees that can have representation of some institutional sectors.

DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE

Section 1 - The Discipline Committee will be composed of a minimum of three (3) people, including but not limited to:

- a. Campus Director
- b. An instructor from the Institution appointed by the Campus Director
- c. Professional Counselor
- d. The Vice President of Student Affairs or a duly designated representative.
- e. Assistant Registrar, Financial Aid or Collections Representatives
- f. Other personnel designated by the Vice President of Student Affairs

Section 2 - The Committee will adopt the necessary policies and procedures for better performance of its responsibilities and guarantee, in all cases, the student's right to be heard and present the necessary evidence for his/her defense.

ARTICLE X – GENERAL DISPOSITIONS

- Section 1 - The President of the Institution and its designated representatives will have the responsibility for the application and compliance of this Regulation.
- Section 2 - What has been disposed of in this Regulation does not limit the President's authority or his designated representatives to take immediate action and adopt those measures that are deemed necessary to guarantee institutional discipline and order.
- Section 3 - The President or its designated representatives can, when deemed necessary and to protect institutional order and normal operations, suspend a student while the Discipline Committees carry out the corresponding investigation.
- Section 4 - The President or its designated representatives have the power to attend and take corresponding actions in unforeseen situations or contemplated in this Regulation.
- Section 5 - Nothing of what has been previously mentioned will hinder the right of the Institution to withdraw any student, for the period deemed necessary and for reasons of physical and/or mental health and as advised by the Campus Director and/or a competent official.
- Section 6 - The non-constitutionality or non-execution of the parts contained in this Student Handbook, will not affect the validity of the remaining parts.

Mr. Edwin J. Colón Cosme
President
Revised – November 2023