



Table of Contents

What is in this handbook?	3
The UCW Gender Equity Committee	3
Mission	3
Membership & Staff	3
United Campus Workers	3
About A Better Balance.....	3
Part 2. Tennessee Campus Workers: Know Your Rights.....	5
Sex Discrimination	5
Sexual Harassment.....	5
Pregnancy Discrimination & Accommodations.....	5
Pumping at Work	6
Digital Know-Your-Rights Resources.....	6
Part 3. Free Legal Help	7
Part 4. Middle Tennessee State University	8
General Grievance/Complaint Processes	8
Title IX and Civil Rights Violations	10
Sexual Misconduct.....	12
Flowchart for Reporting Sexual Assault at MTSU.....	12
Confidential Reporting	12
Mandatory Reporters.....	12
Paid Parental Leave.....	13
Lactation Spaces on Campus	14
Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)	14
Leave Policies.....	14
ADA Workplace Accommodations / Disability Rights.....	15
Workers Compensation	15
Additional Campus Resources.....	16
Sexual Violence Resources.....	16
LGBT+ Students and Allies.....	16

Intercultural and Diversity Affairs	16
Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance	16
Additional Middle Tennessee Community Resources	16
Domestic Violence Center	16
MTSU Counseling Services:	16
MTSU June Anderson Center for Women and Nontraditional Students:	17
Sexual Assault Center - Nashville, TN	17
Tennessee Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence	17
Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN)	17
National Center for Victims of Crime, Victim Service Helpline	17
Additional Legal Assistance	17
Medical Assistance	17

What is in this handbook?

This handbook provides information and resources related to rights surrounding gender, sexuality, parental, and civil rights in one guide. The handbook does not offer legal advice, but does link to more detailed information about your campus policies, as well as your state and federal rights. It also provides resources for accessing services and addressing complaints that are housed in various locations across campus and in the larger community.

The UCW Gender Equity Committee

Mission

The United Campus Workers Gender Equity Committee is a committee composed of UCW-CWA staff, faculty, graduate employees and lecturers at public colleges and universities across Tennessee. Our mission is to advance workplace equity and justice for all gender identities in higher education. We believe in a higher education system that provides institutional resources to address pay inequity, protects gender non-conforming workers and students, and supports a fairer system of promotion and tenure. Through education, campus-based organizing, and legislation we aim to shape campus cultures and policies so that employees have a voice and decision-making power around these issues. Additionally, the Gender Equity Committee is responsible for participating in CWA's National Women's Committee initiatives.

Membership & Staff

We thank the following committee members and UCW organizers for their work to bring the Know Your Rights Handbook to fruition: Jayme Brunson, Allie Cohn, Kristina Cantin, Jaclyn Michael, Heidi Marsh, Peter Talley, Jayanni Webster, Cassie Waters, Eli Stanfield, and Dana Smith. If you are interested in joining the Gender Equity Committee or bringing an issue to our attention, please contact: gec@ucw-cwa.org

United Campus Workers

Middle Tennessee Chapter

Middle Tennessee Organizer

Dana Smith, dana@ucw-cwa.org

About A Better Balance

A Better Balance is a non-profit legal organization that promotes fairness for working women and families. We leverage the power of the law to ensure that no one has to

make the impossible choice between their job and their family. Our Southern office is based in Nashville, Tennessee, and serves families throughout the state of Tennessee and the Southeast.

For more information, visit: <https://www.abetterbalance.org/>

Part 2. What does federal and state law say?

The U.S. and Tennessee both have anti-discrimination laws. Federal law applies to employers with 15 or more employees, including state employees, and Tennessee law applies to employers with 8 or more employees, including state employees. Below is specific information on laws related to sex discrimination, sexual harassment, and pregnancy discrimination:

Sex Discrimination

Federal and Tennessee law prohibit sex discrimination in the workplace. Sex discrimination means being treated differently at work such that it negatively affects the **terms or conditions** of your employment and that treatment is **because of your sex**. Changes in the terms or conditions could mean things like being hired or fired, and differences in your job position or duties; your work schedule, shift, or job location; your pay rate or salary; or advancement and training opportunities. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is the federal agency enforcing anti-discrimination law. It maintains that discrimination based on gender identity, including transgender status, and sexual orientation is discrimination based on sex and violates federal law.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and is prohibited by federal and Tennessee law. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature or based on sex that affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Pregnancy Discrimination & Accommodations

Under federal and Tennessee law, it is illegal for employers to treat employees unfairly because they are pregnant. Your boss cannot fire you, cut your hours, or treat you differently simply because you are pregnant, and you cannot be asked about pregnancy or plans to have children in a job interview. Under federal and Tennessee law, you have a right to reasonable accommodations in the workplace for pregnancy-related needs, including lactation, if you can prove that other similarly situated employees are being accommodated. Reasonable accommodations include the ability to sit or carry a water bottle, more frequent breaks, and temporary limits on heavy lifting, among others. You may also have a right to reasonable accommodations under federal and Tennessee disability law if you have a pregnancy-related disability.

Pumping at Work

Under Tennessee law, you are entitled to reasonable break time to express milk during the workday, unless it would unduly disrupt your employer's operations. Your employer must also make reasonable efforts to provide you with a private space that is close to your work area, other than a toilet stall, where you can express milk. Federal law also provides a right to break time and space to pump for certain employees.

Digital Know-Your-Rights Resources

Our online resources provide more information about the laws available to help you succeed at work while caring for your family. You can be your own best advocate in the workplace, and we are here to help. For more Tennessee-specific information, visit www.babygate.abetterbalance.org/tennessee.

Part 3. What if I need legal help?

Is your employer treating you unfairly because you are pregnant, breastfeeding, recovering from childbirth, or caring for your new child or seriously ill family member? Are you having difficulty obtaining time off from work to care for yourself or a loved one? We're here to help. Call A Better Balance's national legal helpline at 1-833-NEED-ABB (1-833-633-3222) for free and confidential information about your workplace rights around caring for yourself and your family. A Better Balance's consultations are to provide information only. If you are seeking legal representation, please let us know and we can discuss possible options with you.

Part 4. What does University policy say?

Middle Tennessee State University

Staff, faculty, and students can find all Middle Tennessee State University policies at <https://www.mtsu.edu/policies>

How do I file a general complaint or grievance?

University Policy 852: Administrative, Professional, and Faculty Grievance or Complaint Grievances

This grievance and complaint policy applies to all administrative/professional staff and faculty members (including full-time faculty on term or temporary contracts). Student workers, graduate assistants, adjunct faculty, and temporary workers are not included in this policy.

Grievances under this policy include any action taken against the employee that the employee contends:

- Violates MTSU policy or involves inconsistent application of the same policy;
- Violates state or federal law;
- Violates any constitutional right.

(See [Policy 852](#) for concerns excluded from this policy.)

Grievances must be initiated within fifteen (15) working days after the grieved action occurs.

Complaints

A complaint must be brought to the attention of the employee's immediate supervisor within fifteen (15) working days after the employee receives notice or becomes aware of the problem. The employee and supervisor shall discuss the complaint in an attempt to resolve the matter in a mutually satisfactory manner. The supervisor shall conduct any necessary or appropriate investigation and inform the employee in writing of a decision based upon full and fair consideration of all the facts within fifteen (15) working days of the initial discussion. A copy of the decision will also be forwarded to HRS.

If the employee is not satisfied, the employee may file a written request within fifteen (15) working days of receipt of the Step 1 decision to HRS requesting that complaint be elevated to Step 2. If no decision is communicated to the employee within fifteen (15) working days of the initial discussion, the complaint will automatically proceed to Step 2 of the complaint process. If the employee's immediate supervisor is the subject of the complaint, the employee may skip Step 1 and move their complaint to Step 2.

In Step 2, the next level of management will schedule a face-to-face meeting with the employee to discuss his/her complaint within fifteen (15) working days. The procedure and time limits for the next level of supervisor shall be the same as outlined in Step 1. (See [Policy 852](#) for further instructions.)

University Policy 853: Classified Grievance and Complaint Policy

Grievances

Grievance Form

This grievance and complaint policy applies to classified employees. Student workers, graduate assistants, adjunct faculty, and temporary workers are not included in this policy.

Grievances under this policy include:

- Demotion, suspension without pay, or termination for cause;
- Work assignments or conditions of work that violate statute or policy.

Within fifteen (15) working days after the grieved action occurs, employees may submit a grievance form to Human Resource Services and give a copy of the form to their supervisor.

Complaints

Complaint Form

A complaint must be brought to the attention of the employee's immediate supervisor within fifteen (15) working days after the employee becomes aware of the problem. The employee and supervisor shall discuss the complaint in an attempt to resolve the matter in a mutually satisfactory manner. The supervisor shall conduct any necessary or appropriate investigation and inform the employee in writing of a decision based upon full and fair consideration of all the facts within fifteen (15) working days of the initial discussion. A copy of the decision will also be forwarded to HRS.

If the employee is not satisfied, the employee may file a written request within fifteen (15) working days of receipt of the Step 1 decision to HRS requesting that the complaint be elevated to Step 2 (Next level of management). If no decision is communicated to the employee within fifteen (15) working days of the initial discussion, the complaint will automatically proceed to Step 2 of the complaint process. If the employee's immediate supervisor is the subject of the complaint, the employee may skip Step 1 and move the complaint to Step 2.

In Step 2, the next level of management will schedule a face-to-face meeting with the employee to discuss his/her complaint within fifteen (15) working days. The procedure and time limits for the next level of supervisor shall be the same as outlined in Step 1.

(See [Policy 853](#) for further instructions.)

What does MTSU Policy say about sexual misconduct, discrimination, and harassment?

University Policy 26: Discrimination and Harassment Based on Protected Categories Other Than Sex

Using the procedures outlined in this policy, faculty and staff must promptly report to the appropriate University contact any complaint or conduct that might constitute discrimination or harassment as defined by this policy, whether the information concerning a complaint is received formally or informally. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

All faculty and staff members are required to cooperate with investigations of alleged discrimination or harassment. Failure to cooperate may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. Students are also required to cooperate with these investigations and failure to do so may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

University Policy 27: Misconduct, Discrimination, and Harassment Based on Sex Including Pregnancy, Sexual Orientation, and Gender Identity/Expression

This policy is adopted by Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU or University) specifically to address misconduct, discrimination, and harassment based on sex (hereinafter to include claims based on pregnancy or sexual orientation/gender identity/expression) as well as the following offenses defined herein: dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking; and, to establish procedures for responding to incidents of sexual misconduct, discrimination, and harassment. Sexual misconduct and harassment are forms of sexual discrimination prohibited by Title IX and MTSU.

Title IX

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in education.” Contains a link to the Sexual Violence Reporting Form.

Title IX Contact Information

Title IX Coordinator

Marian V. Wilson, Ph.D

Assistant to the President, Institutional Equity and Compliance

116 Cope Administration Building

1301 East Main Street

Murfreesboro, TN 37132

(615) 898-2185
marian.wilson@mtsu.edu

Title IX Deputy Coordinators

For complaints against students, faculty, staff, and visitors:

Christy C. Sigler, J.D.
Deputy Title IX Coordinator/Investigator
116 Cope Administration Building
1301 East Main Street
Murfreesboro, TN 37132
(615) 898-2185
christy.sigler@mtsu.edu

For complaints against students:

Laura Sosh-Lightsy
Assistant Dean, Office of Student Conduct
208 Keathley University Center
1301 East Main Street
Murfreesboro, TN 37132
(615) 898-2750
laura.lightsy@mtsu.edu

For complaints against faculty, staff and visitors:

Marian V. Wilson, Ph.D.
Assistant to the President, Institutional Equity and Compliance
116 Cope Administration Building
1301 East Main Street
Murfreesboro, TN 37132
(615) 898-2185
marian.wilson@mtsu.edu

For Athletics:

Diane Turnham
Senior Associate Athletic Director/Senior Women's Administrator
151 Murphy Center
1301 East Main Street
Murfreesboro, TN 37132
(615) 898-2938
diane.turnham@mtsu.edu

How do I report sexual misconduct, harassment, or discrimination?

Flowchart for Reporting Sexual Assault at MTSU

Provides definitions related to sex-based misconduct, discrimination, and harassment. Also provides information on how to report as well as how the university will respond.

Confidential Reporting

Reports to designated sexual assault care providers (including victim's advocates designated as such by the University), professional licensed counselors (including the MTSU Counseling Center), or to professional medical healthcare providers (including the MTSU Student Health Center) are confidential in every respect, to the extent allowed by law.

Mandatory Reporters

Reports to a responsible employee will not be absolutely confidential but will be handled in as confidential a manner as possible. Responsible employees are required to report the relevant details of any disclosed incidents of sexual misconduct, discrimination, or harassment to the Title IX Coordinator.

Employees in the following list are designated as responsible employees:

- Title IX Coordinator, Title IX Deputy Coordinators, and designees;
- University Police;
- Residence hall/housing area coordinators, resident directors, and resident assistants;
- President, Provost, Vice Presidents, Associate Vice Presidents, Assistant Vice Presidents;
- Deans, Associate Deans, Assistant Deans, Directors, Associate Directors, Assistant Directors, Department Chairs/Heads;
- Faculty and graduate assistants;
- Academic advisors;
- Advisors for student organizations;
- Athletic coaches and trainers; and
- Campus Security Authorities.

To report an offense to law enforcement:

MTSU University Police

615-898-2424

1412 E Main St, Murfreesboro, TN 37132

Murfreesboro Police Department
615-893-1311
1004 N Highland Ave, Murfreesboro, TN 37130

Rutherford County Sheriff's Department
615-898-7770
940 New Salem Rd, Murfreesboro, TN 37129

To report an offense to the University:

MTSU Office of Student Conduct
615-898-2750
studentconduct@mtsu.edu
Room 208 of the Keathley University Center on the MTSU campus

MTSU Title IX Coordinator
(615) 898-2185
marian.wilson@mtsu.edu
116 Cope Administration Building

I'm pregnant, what are my rights on the job?

The Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA) is an amendment to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Discrimination on the basis of pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions constitutes unlawful sex discrimination under Title VII. People affected by pregnancy or related conditions must be treated in the same manner as other applicants or employees who are similar in their ability or inability to work.

Hiring and Working Conditions

An employer cannot refuse to hire a person because of their pregnancy related condition as long as they are able to perform the major functions of her job. An employer cannot refuse to hire a person because of its prejudices against pregnant workers or because of the prejudices of co-workers, clients, or customers. The PDA also forbids discrimination based on pregnancy when it comes to any other aspect of employment, including pay, job assignments, promotions, layoffs, training, fringe benefits, firing, and any other term or condition of employment.

Employees who give at least three (3) months advance notice to their supervisor of their anticipated date of departure for such leave, their length of leave, and their intention to return to full-time employment after leave, shall be restored to their previous or similar positions with the same status, pay, length of service credit, and seniority, wherever applicable, as of the date of their leave.

Where can I find lactation spaces on campus?

Mother's Room, MTSU Student Union Room 332

How much paid parental leave time am I allowed?

It is the policy of MTSU to provide a period of up to four (4) months of leave to eligible employees for adoption, pregnancy, childbirth, and nursing the infant, where applicable, in accordance with T.C.A. § 4-21-408. With regard to adoption, the four (4) month period shall begin at the time the employee receives custody of the child.

Employees who have been employed by the State for at least twelve (12) consecutive months as full-time employees, as determined by MTSU, are eligible for this leave.

Upon receipt of a written request for parental leave, the President or designee will process the request in accordance with the provisions of this policy and the employee's eligibility for leave under [Policy 827 Family, Medical, and Servicemember Leave](#).

What does FMLA mean? Do I qualify?

[MTSU FMLA Policy](#)

[About FMLA](#)

- The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) requires MTSU to provide up to twelve weeks of job-protected leave to "eligible" employees for certain family and medical reasons.
- In order to be eligible for FMLA, an employee must work for at least 12 months and work at least 1,250 hours during the year preceding the start of the leave. The determination of whether the employee meets the eligibility criteria for FMLA is based on the amount of service possessed by the employee as of the date the leave actually begins.
- FMLA Qualifying Events include: Birth of a child, adoption, to care for the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent with a serious health condition, or the employee's own serious health condition.
- A serious health condition is defined as: Any hospitalization, pregnancy, anytime a physicians certification has been completed certifying a serious health condition, or any definition stated in [MTSU Policy 827](#).

What is MTSU's Leave Policy?

[MTSU Leave Policy](#)

This policy outlines the types of leave available to Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU or University) employees. This policy shall apply to all regular full-time and part-

time MTSU employees. Exceptions to this policy may be made upon approval of the President or designee.

Types of leave available include:

- Annual Leave
- Sick Leave
- Bereavement Leave
- Leave of Absence, Parental Leave
- Military Leave
- Civil Leave
- Transfer of Leave
- Voting Leave
- Transfer of Sick Leave between Employees
- Disaster Relief Service Leave
- Volunteer Firefighter Service Leave.

What are my rights as a disabled employee?

Americans with Disabilities Act at MTSU

Investigating discrimination claims is an important part of MTSU's Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance promise to promoting and respecting a culturally diverse campus. If you feel your access needs are not being met appropriately, please make contact. You are also able to seek assistance for disability discrimination claims from the U.S. Office for Civil Rights.

For Discrimination Complaints for External Individuals, Faculty, Staff, and Students, contact:

Marian V. Wilson, PhD

Assistant to the President for Equity
And Title IX and Title VI Coordinator

Institutional Equity and Compliance

(615) 898-2185

How does workers compensation work?

Worker's Compensation (WC) is a benefit to all employees who have had a work related injury/illness.

Any employee who suffers an injury/illness within the scope of his/her employment is eligible to file a worker's compensation claim.

Employees covered under workers compensation include: Full-time regular employees, part-time regular employees, hourly workers, student workers, graduate assistants, and adjunct faculty.

In the event an employee is injured at work, please follow [this procedure](#). For additional information, please contact the HRS office at 615-898-2929.

[Worker's Compensation Discrimination](#)

Worker's Compensation has a history of discriminating based on gender and other protected classes. If you've experienced discrimination related to Worker's Compensation, please contact the [Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance](#). iec@mtsu.edu

116 Cope Administration Building
Murfreesboro, TN 37132 615-898-2185
Phone: 615-904-8041

Additional Campus Resources

[Sexual Violence Resources](#)

Provides information on sexual violence, which includes rape, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking. There is a Sexual Violence Reporting Form available. The report form is only checked during regular business hours.

[LGBT+ Students and Allies](#)

These links provide resources such as the locations of All Gender Facilities, counseling, definitions, and information about the Safe Zone Training Program.

- [Campus Resources](#)
- [Trans Resources](#)
- [Trans Facilities](#)
- [Safe Zone](#)

[Intercultural and Diversity Affairs](#)

[Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance](#)

Additional Middle Tennessee Community Resources

[Domestic Violence Center](#)

2106 E. Main Street
24-hour crisis line: 615-494-9262 OR 615-896-2012
Domestic Violence Crisis Line: 615-896-2012
Sexual Assault Crisis Line: 615-494-9262

[MTSU Counseling Services](#)

MTSU Keathley University Center #326-S

615-898-2670

MTSU June Anderson Center for Women and Nontraditional Students

MTSU Student Union Building #330

615-898-5812

Sexual Assault Center - Nashville, TN

1-800-879-1999

Tennessee Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence

Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN)

1-800-656-HOPE to be routed to a rape crisis center near you

National Center for Victims of Crime, Victim Service Helpline

1-800-FYICALL

Additional Legal Assistance

Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee

615-890-0905

1-800-238-1443

526 North Walnut Street

Murfreesboro, TN 37130

Medical Assistance

MTSU Student Health Services

615-898-2988

1848 Blue Raider Dr, Murfreesboro, TN 37130

St. Thomas Rutherford Hospital

615-396-4100

1840 Medical Center Pkwy #203, Murfreesboro, TN 37130

StoneCrest Medical Center

615-768-2000

200 StoneCrest Boulevard, Smyrna, TN 37167