

Handbook of Operating Procedures

NOTIFICATION REGARDING MISSING RESIDENT STUDENTS

A. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to create a protocol for reporting, and the subsequent procedures for responding, to a report that a residential student at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) is missing, as well as to comply with the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008.

B. Persons Affected

This policy applies to students who are currently enrolled at UTRGV, reside in on-campus housing, and have a completed housing contract on file with the Office of Housing and Residence Life at the time of the report that the student may be missing.

C. Definitions

1. Day - A calendar day except for days on which UTRGV is officially closed or when regularly scheduled classes are suspended due to emergent situations.
2. Dean of Students - The dean of students or any delegate or representative of the Dean of Students.
3. Emergency contact - Includes the name(s) and contact information for the individual(s) that the student has identified to UTRGV as the designated person(s) to contact in an emergency situation where the health or safety of the student are of concern.
4. Missing - The whereabouts of the student residing in an on-campus housing facility are unaccounted for within the preceding 24 hours. For example, an on-campus student is absent from UTRGV for more than 24 hours without any known reason or determined to have an interruption in their usual activity pattern for more than 24 hours.
5. Missing person contact - Refers to the individual(s) that a student residing on campus has indicated as the appropriate person(s) to notify in the event she or he is determined missing by the UTRGV Police Department. The information provided is confidential and will only be accessible by authorized campus officials and may not be disclosed outside of a missing person investigation.
6. On-Campus Student Housing Facility - A dormitory or other residential facility for students that is located on an institution's campus, as defined in 34 C.F.R. § 668.46(a).

Student - A person currently enrolled at UTRGV, currently resides in UTRGV on-campus student housing, and has a current housing contract on file with the Office of Housing and Residence Life.

D. Policy

1. If any faculty, staff, or student at UTRGV suspects or has been notified that a student residing on campus may be missing, that individual is required to report this to an authorized UTRGV official:
 - a. UTRGV Police Department
 - b. Dean of Students' Office
 - c. Office of Housing and Residence Life
2. Students living on campus shall provide accurate contact information during the residential check-in process at the beginning of each long semester or summer session. Contact information must be kept current and accurate with the Office of Housing and Residence Life while residing on campus.
3. Each student living in on-campus housing, must identify a contact person(s) whom UTRGV shall notify if the student is determined missing by the UTRGV Police Department.
4. The Office of Housing and Residence Life shall collect and maintain the contact information of the person(s) identified by the student to be used by the UTRGV Police Department during the course of their investigation. The contact information will be confidential and only accessible by authorized UTRGV and law enforcement officials. The information will not be disclosed outside of a missing person investigation.
5. If the student is under 18 years of age and not emancipated, UTRGV will notify the custodial parent or guardian of the student if she or he has been determined to be missing in addition to any contact person(s) designated by the student.
6. The UTRGV Police Department shall determine whether or not the student is missing, the investigation process, and work with external agencies when appropriate.

E. Procedure

1. Upon a report that a student may be missing, the following steps will be taken:
 - a. The UTRGV Police Department must be notified immediately.
 - b. UTRGV Police Department will follow its established protocol for responding to a report that a person is missing.
 - c. The Dean of Students will assist the UTRGV Police Department in determining the last known whereabouts of the student by attempting to reach the student through all forms of personal contact information that the student provided to UTRGV, by conducting a welfare check of the student's assigned room, and by attempting to make contact with

roommates or suitemates as well as contact campus resources (i.e. faculty, IT, ID Card Office, etc.)

- d. If the student cannot be located, then within 24 hours of the student being reported as missing, the UTRGV Police Department will notify:
 - i. the designated missing person contact;
 - ii. The student's parents or guardian, if the student is under 18 years of age and is not emancipated, and
 - iii. The local law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction in the area.
2. The contact information that each student residing on campus indicates as the individual(s) to communicate with in the event she or he is determined missing will be maintained in the Office of Housing and Residence Life.
3. Once the student is located, she or he may be required to meet with the Vice President for Student Success or Dean of Students or their designee to discuss the details of the situation. Applicable UTRGV personnel may be notified in cases deemed appropriate.

F. Relevant Federal and/or State Statute(s), Board of Regents' Rule(s), UTS Policy(ies), and/or Coordinating Board Rule(s)

Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008

34 C.F.R. § 668.46(a) Institutional Security Policies and Crime Statistics

G. Dates Reviewed or Amended

May 13, 2022 - Reviewed and amended (non-substantive: updated responsible executive).