

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA BEHAVIORIAL THREAT ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES

I. INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVE

A. Overview

The University of Alabama (UA) is committed to promoting a safe, respectful, and non-threatening campus environment. Intimidating, threatening, and/or potentially violent behaviors are disruptive to UA's objective of a secure and humane atmosphere for its students, employees, and visitors.

While it is impossible to eliminate all risk, the following Behavioral Threat Assessment Guidelines are designed to educate members of the UA community (students, employees, and visitors) on how to report alarming/threatening behavior and/or potentially violent acts and how this information will generally be assessed and analyzed. UA considers any situation in which an individual presents a violent risk to the campus community as serious in nature. UA encourages all members of the campus community to maintain a reasonable concern for their own self-welfare as well as the welfare of others.

B. Scope – Who Is Covered By These Guidelines

These guidelines shall apply to all UA students and employees as well as visitors to the campus. These guidelines also apply to activities and events that occur on UA-owned and/or controlled property, buildings, premises, facilities, etc. and to activities and events, regardless of the location, sponsored by UA or by any UA-recognized organizations.

These guidelines are not intended to be a set of inflexible requirements, nor are they intended to limit the appropriate discretion of officials as warranted by the specific circumstances of a particular individual/incident. These guidelines do not provide for adjudication of misconduct by, discipline of, or imposition of sanctions on UA employees, students, or visitors. Such action may be taken against individuals whose behavior is addressed under these guidelines pursuant to UA's employee or student disciplinary policies and procedures as well as applicable federal, state, or local laws. These guidelines do not have the force and effect of law.

C. Definitions

Student: Any individual enrolled at UA in any of the recognized admission categories (undergraduate, graduate, etc.).

Employee: Any full or part-time employee of UA, including, but not limited to, exempt or non-exempt staff, faculty, adjunct faculty, graduate research assistants, graduate teaching assistants, student workers, and contract employees.

Visitor: Individuals who are not currently enrolled as students or employed with UA (*e.g.*, visitors, retirees, volunteers, former students, former employees, trespassers, etc.).

LOW Level of Concern: Risk to UA students, employees and visitors appears to be minimal. Threat is vague and indirect in nature. Information within threat is inconsistent, implausible, or lacks detail. Threat is **not** realistic in nature/presentation. Available information suggests person of concern is unlikely to act violently.

MEDIUM Level of Concern: Risk to UA students, employees and visitors appears to be moderate. Violent action is possible, but not probable. Threat is still not entirely realistic in nature. Analysis of threat suggests some thought/action on how to go forward by person of concern, *i.e.*-a specific time and location noted for actions. No clear indication of preparatory steps taken by person of concern. Person of concern may attempt to convey seriousness of situation, *e.g.* - “I’m very serious,” “I’m not kidding,” etc.

HIGH Level of Concern: Risk to UA students, employees and visitors appears to be serious and imminent. Threat is specific and plausible. Person of concern notes a specific ‘target’ and has the capacity to act. Person of concern has taken specific steps in furtherance of threat, *e.g.*-surveillance of target, weapon acquisition/practice, etc. Documented information notes strong possibility of violent behavior.

Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT): UA Division of Student Affairs-sponsored group comprised of representation from Dean of Students Office, Housing and Residential Communities, Office of Student Conduct, University Counseling Center, the University of Alabama Police Department (UAPD), and the Emergency Preparedness and Response Policy Group (Policy Group). The BIT reviews a UA student’s alarming/concerning behavior and provides early intervention and support to students who present behavioral concerns.

Threat Assessment Specialist (TAS): The Director of UA’s Office of Threat Assessment who reviews, analyzes, and assesses an alarming/threatening behavior that has the potential to negatively impact the UA community. The TAS may be contacted at (205) 348-2834 or cdorsey@fa.ua.edu.

Threat Assessment Team (TAT): UA-sponsored multi-disciplinary assessment team comprised of representatives of the UAPD, the Office of Emergency Preparedness, UA Legal Counsel, and the UA Mental Health profession. The TAT reviews significant alarming/threatening behavior and makes recommendations to UA’s Policy Group.

Emergency Preparedness and Response Policy Group (Policy Group): Senior level UA administrators comprised of representatives from Public Safety, Provost/Academic Affairs, Financial Affairs, Student Affairs, and University Relations. The Policy Group reviews the TAT’s recommendations and advises the UA President as appropriate.

II. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Threat Assessment Specialist

The TAS will review, analyze, and assess identified alarming/threatening behavior that has the potential to negatively impact the UA community. The TAS has the authority and discretion to obtain/review pertinent UA information, to review UA personnel files, to take statements from relevant UA parties, and to interpret UA policies. If appropriate, the TAS will provide the results of the assessment to the TAT for further review/actions, or refer the matter to other UA officials for further monitoring or action as needed.

B. Threat Assessment Team

The TAT is tasked with reviewing alarming/threatening behavior and potential acts of violence which have been previously assessed and forwarded by the TAS. The TAT will employ their judgment and discretion in working toward a recommended reasonable response to such behavior. Each situation is unique and must be addressed based on individual circumstances. If necessary, the TAT may consult with other subject matter experts. When appropriate, the TAT will recommend a course of action to the Policy Group.

The objectives of the TAT generally, but not always, include the following:

- To review provided information regarding a threat or potential act of violence and identify its elements.
- To categorize the **Level of Concern** for a specific threat and recommend a reasonable response. Also, in the case of a completed act of violence, to determine, with the available information, the risk of any additional acts of violence.
- To develop a case management strategy for addressing the perceived threat or act of violence and to determine a plan for implementing that strategy including reasonable monitoring as needed.

C. Emergency Preparedness and Response Policy Group

The general role of the Policy Group is to consider the recommendations of the TAT and to exercise its judgment and discretion in approving/amending recommended actions to address any significant risk or threat. The Policy Group will notify the President of any situation as appropriate and will seek additional guidance as needed.

D. Behavioral Intervention Team

The primary role of the BIT is to provide support and resources to students, which includes reviewing student behavior that presents as alarming/concerning and recommending intervention steps. Additional topic matter experts may be added to the BIT due to the specific conditions of a particular situation. Should the BIT reasonably believe the student presents a potential significant risk or threat; the matter will be referred to the TAS for further evaluation.

E. Human Resources

Human Resources (HR) may be consulted in assessments involving campus violence, threats of violence and disruptive/alarming behavior related to UA employees.

F. Managers and Supervisors

The TAS, TAT and Policy Group are problem-solving resources, not a replacement for appropriate managerial action. Managers or supervisors who are UA employees and have the responsibility and authority to take action in a case involving campus violence, threats of violence, and risks of disruption/alarming behavior **must** implement all approved recommendations from UA officials involved in the assessment of such a situation (*e.g.* - TAS, TAT or Policy Group).

G. University Community

UA students and employees are urged to be alert for any behavior that presents a threat of violence. Further, UA students and employees should be familiar with these guidelines and with the methods for reporting actual or potential threats to the UA community.

Responsibility to Report: Members of the UA community are expected to immediately report any situation involving behavior by a UA student, employee, or visitor that is alarming or may be threatening to the safety of the UA community. Any member of the UA community who becomes aware of such a situation should report the matter to the appropriate UA personnel as outlined in Section III and fully cooperate during the Behavioral Threat Assessment process.

UA students and employees, who in good faith make such reports, shall not be subjected to any retaliation or harassment by anyone associated with UA.

III. REPORTING THREATS AND VIOLENCE

A. Emergency Situations – HIGH Level of Concern Behavior

A situation involving a **HIGH Level of Concern** to the UA community **should be considered an emergency and immediately reported to UAPD.** UAPD may be reached as follows:

- 911 or (205) 348-5454 from any UA phone
- (205) 348-5454 from a non-UA phone

Examples of **HIGH Level of Concern** situations include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Possession of weapons (guns, knives, etc.) on campus;
- Possession of bombs or bomb-making materials on campus;
- Physical assault or attempted physical assault, with or without weapons, on campus;
- Explicit threats to inflict physical harm to one's self or others.

UAPD will investigate all reported or suspected crimes independent from any other UA review.

B. Non-Emergency Situations – MODERATE and LOW Levels of Concern

Any situation involving a threat of violence or alarming/disruptive behavior which is clearly not within the "emergency situation" classification should be reported as follows:

UA Student – If the alarming/threatening behavior involves a current UA student, the information should be forwarded to the chairperson of the BIT (Dean of Students Office - <http://dos.ua.edu/>, (205) 348-3326).

UA Faculty – If the alarming/threatening behavior involves a current UA faculty member, the information should be forwarded to the Dean's Office of the involved College/School and to HR Partners (<http://hr.ua.edu/hr-partners>).

UA Staff – If the alarming/threatening behavior involves a current UA staff member, the information should be forwarded to the Vice-President's Office of the applicable division and to HR Partners (<http://hr.ua.edu/hr-partners>).

UA Visitor – If the alarming/threatening behavior involves a visitor to the UA community, the information should be forwarded to UAPD.

Reporting parties should ensure their information is personally received by the appropriate individual(s) and they should never rely on a voice messaging system.

Should the receiving party reasonably believe the situation presents a potential significant risk or threat; the matter should be referred to the TAS (See Page 2) for further evaluation.

Examples of behavior falling under the reporting responsibility for non-emergency situations include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Stalking, harassing, and/or physically intimidating behavior towards others;
- Signs of substance abuse (decline in personal hygiene, mood swings, tardiness, etc.);
- Inappropriate fascination with guns or weaponry;
- Unwarranted aggressive/ irrational behavior through words and/or actions, fits of rage, etc.;
- Significantly notable depression, unhappiness, or irregular emotional behavior;
- Anger management problems, impulsivity, confrontational or disturbing words and actions;
- Expression of suicidal ideations, feelings, or acts;
- Threatening communications (statements, displays, photos, etc.) in any format; or
- Intentional damage to UA property.

Any possible violation of criminal law is to be reported to UAPD for additional investigation.

C. Confidentiality

When possible, reports will be handled in a confidential manner.

D. Notice

- * The Behavioral Threat Assessment Guidelines do not impose a duty on any UA official.
- * Nothing herein is intended, nor shall be interpreted, to deny any disabled person any reasonable accommodation provided by law.
- * UA reserves the right to amend these guidelines from time to time without notice.
- * These guidelines are managed and maintained by UA's Office of Threat Assessment.
- * Questions regarding these guidelines should be directed to the TAS.

These guidelines supersede all prior UA guidelines/policies concerning campus violent behavior.