
Revision Responsibility: Administrative Assistant to the President
Responsible Executive Officer: President

Source/Reference: [TBR Policy 5:01:02:00](#) [Columbia State Policy 02:07:00](#)
[TBR Policy 4:01:05:50](#) [Columbia State Policy 05:01:00](#)
[TBR Policy 3:02:00:01](#) [Columbia State Policy 05:23:00](#)
[TBR Policy 3:02:01:00](#) [Columbia State Catalog and Student Handbook](#)
[TBR Guideline P-080](#)

PURPOSE

This policy provides directions for students who wish to file and seek resolution to an informal or formal complaint. In addition, it outlines directions for tracking formal written complaints.

DEFINITIONS

- I. Informal Complaint – Informal complaints are resolved verbally or in writing with the supervisor, instructor, Director/Campus Director, or at the Dean level. Informal complaints should be completed prior to submitting a formal complaint.
- II. Formal Complaint (*SACSCOC written student complaint*) – Formal complaints are resolved by submission via the Formal Complaint Form and contain the required elements as listed below.
 - A. College department indicated in complaint
 - B. Complainant contact information:
 1. Name
 2. Student ID Number, if applicable
 3. Complete Mailing Address
 4. Phone Number
 5. E-mail address
 - C. Summary description of the complaint
 - D. Previous actions taken to resolve complaint
 - E. Resolution desired
- III. Complaint File - The complaint file includes the original written complaint, the written response, and any supporting documentation for each formal complaint.
- IV. Formal Complaint Log - A log kept by the Administrative Assistant to the President that summarizes the complaint details. It assists leadership with identifying trends or patterns that may reflect a need to improve or enhance business, student, or instructional processes or services.

POLICY

Columbia State Community College is committed to providing a quality educational experience for all students. Any student who feels that he/she has not received fair treatment, or has a complaint regarding some situation or condition (financial aid, tuition, parking tickets, advisement, records, admissions, facilities, classroom concerns, student conduct, etc.) at the College, may file a complaint.

PROCEDURES

I. Informal Complaint Resolution

- A. The first step a student should take in resolving a concern or informal complaint is to directly address the concern with the faculty member, staff member, or student in question.
- B. Informal complaints are to be dealt with through discussions between the complainant and the College contact in question. If the complaint involves a faculty or staff member, the complainant should, unless there is some compelling reason otherwise, first discuss the complaint with that faculty or staff member.
- C. The first step a student should take in resolving a concern or complaint is to directly address the faculty member, staff member, or student in question. There may be times in which a student might feel uncomfortable directly addressing the faculty or staff member in question. If this is the case, the student should speak to the academic dean concerning a faculty member, the Vice President of Academic Affairs concerning an academic dean, or to the *Director or Associate Vice President* concerning the business or other services issue. If the issue is with another student and the student with the concern is uncomfortable addressing the other student, he or she may contact the Vice President of Student Affairs, Vice President of the Williamson Campus, or the Campus Director at their campus. If there is no resolution at that level, the student may file a formal, written complaint.
- D. If the issue is with another student, and the student with the concern is uncomfortable addressing the other student, he or she may *contact the Vice President of Student Affairs, Vice President of the Williamson Campus, or the Campus Director* at their campus.
- E. If there is no resolution to the complaint at this level, the student may file a formal, written complaint.
- F. In the event the first level supervisor is a Vice President, the Vice President will determine if the complaint must be processed as a formal or informal complaint.

II. Formal Complaint Resolution

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- A. The complaint must be submitted through the electronic complaint form provided on the College website www.columbiastate.edu/student-services/complaint.html or ChargerNet and must contain the following information:
1. College department indicated in the complaint
 2. Complainant contact information as follows:
 - a. Name
 - b. Student ID, if applicable
 - c. Complete Mailing Address
 - d. Phone number
 - e. E-mail address
 3. Summary description of the complaint
 4. Previous actions taken to resolve complaint
 5. Resolution desired
- B. The Vice President/President handling the complaint is to gather information as necessary, including information from all parties involved for review and resolution.
- C. A written response (hard copy or e-mail) is to be sent to the complainant, with a copy to the Administrative Assistant to the President, who will note the resolution on the Formal Complaint Log.
- D. If a satisfactory resolution cannot be reached, the complainant may file a written complaint with the President, except in those cases where policy determines the final ruling is specified to be another administrator. In cases appealed to the President, the President will gather information and provide a final written response to the complainant, with a copy to the file, and information forwarded to the Administrative Assistant for notation on the Formal Complaint Log.
- E. A Complaint File, which includes the complaint form, the response, and any supporting documentation resulting from a complaint, is filed in the appropriate Vice President/President's Office for a period of five years.

III. Student Appeals

- A. Procedures for student appeals (administrative, financial aid, grades, etc.) and grievances (discrimination and harassment) are outlined in the [Columbia State Community College Catalog and Student Handbook](#) or other policies.
- B. Student appeals that move forward to the Vice President are considered formal complaints and are to be so recorded on the Formal Complaint Log.

IV. Tracking Complaints

- A. The following offices are to manage and track formal complaints:



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1. Vice President for Academic Affairs
 2. Vice President for Advancement
 3. Vice President for Finance and Administration
 4. Vice President for Student Affairs
 5. Vice President for Williamson Campus and External Services
 6. President
- B. The Formal Complaint Log shall be maintained in the office of the Executive Assistant to the President. The Administrative Assistant will periodically review the log with the respective Vice President to assure completeness. The log will be examined in Cabinet for process and service improvement as deemed necessary by the President.

New Policy: March 1, 2012 approved by Cabinet; Revised and approved by Cabinet June 2019; Revised and approved by Cabinet June 2020; Updated and approved by Cabinet and signed by the President January 2021; updated name of policy for greater clarity August 2021; updated and approved by Cabinet and signed by the President January 2022; updated, reviewed/accepted by Cabinet, approved and signed by the President June 2022; updated/signed by President May 2023.