

# AP 408 - Student Complaint Procedure

**Associated Board Policy:** 408.00

**Procedure Owner:** Executive Director of Student Services

**Related Procedures:** Student Complaint Process for Online Students

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## I. Procedure Scope and Purpose

The purpose of the student complaint policy is to provide equitable and orderly processes to resolve complaints by students against College personnel.

This procedure applies to student complaints about any aspect of the teaching and learning process and the broad provision made by the college to support that process.

- A. This procedure may not be used:
  - a. Where the complaint can be dealt with under miscellaneous general policies that provide a specific process for resolution of complaints, i.e. Title IX, EOE, Grade Appeal.
  - b. To challenge the academic judgment of faculty.
- B. No action will be taken on anonymous complaints.
- C. A complaint must be based on evidence that the complainant honestly and reasonably believes to be substantially true. Those responsible for resolving complaints under this procedure must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the complainant is protected against any subsequent recrimination or victimization.
- D. Students and employees involved in the consideration and resolution of concerns and complaints have various rights and responsibilities, which are outlined in the appendix to the policy.

## II. Definitions

*Administrator:* President, Vice-President, Associate Vice-President, Executive Director and Director.

*Student complaint:* A student complaint is defined as a difference or dispute between a student and a member of the College faculty or staff related to services rendered. A formal assertion in writing that the terms of this agreement, or of laws, standards or regulations incorporated by this agreement, are being violated by a person, institution, state, agency or other organization or entity operating under the terms of this agreement.

## III. Procedure

The purpose of this procedure is to provide students with a fair and efficient process to present and resolve complaints relating to matters of academic and non-academic concerns and to have those complaints heard in a fair and impartial manner. To initiate an informal complaint, students must complete the **Student Complaint form**.

**If the complaint is of a nature that it cannot be reasonably discussed directly with the faculty or staff member, the student may move immediately to step two of the informal complaint resolution process.**

**Step 1:**

Any time there is a concern related to classroom situations, college services, or administrative actions, the student should contact the faculty or staff member(s) with whom he/she has a concern. It may be possible to resolve the concern without need for formal institutional action. Direct contact will be established by completing the [Student Complaint form](#).

Faculty will be notified of a student complaint filing within two business days per Master Agreement.

The faculty member or staff member must contact the student and arrange a mutually agreeable meeting date and time upon receiving the student complaint form.

A mutually agreed upon meeting date and time will be scheduled to discuss the concern. The student may be accompanied by a support person or student advocate during the mutually agreeable meeting time.

If the complaint is not resolved during a discussion between the student and the faculty or staff member, the student may move to step two (2).

**Step 2:**

If the complaint is not resolved from Step 1 or **the complaint is of a nature that it cannot be reasonably discussed directly with the faculty or staff member**, the student should contact the department chairperson (or instructional office designee), for academic issues, or department director, for non-academic issues.

Within three working days, the supervisor (or designee) must contact the student and arrange a mutually agreeable meeting date and time upon receiving the student complaint form. The process may include meetings with relevant employee and/or the student. Where meetings are held, the parties may be accompanied by a support person or a student advocate during the mutually agreeable meeting time.

The student must maintain a file of all documentation in relation to the consideration of the complaint and obtain required signatures.

If the complaint is not resolved, the student may move to step three of the complaint resolution process.

**Step 3:**

If the complaint is not resolved from Step 1 and Step 2, the administrator (or designee) will contact the Executive Director of Student Services to discuss meeting with the [Student Affairs Council](#).

The student must maintain a file of all documentation in relation to the consideration of the complaint and obtain required signatures.

If the complaint is not resolved, the student may move to step four of the complaint process.

**Step 4:**

If the complaint is not satisfactorily resolved in the previous steps, the student should file an additional complaint with supporting evidence, using Cowley College's TELL IT TO THE PRESIDENT [form](#). The student will be contacted by the Office of the President within five (5) business days of reception of all materials.

The student must maintain a file of all documentation in relation to the consideration of the complaint and obtain required signatures.

If the complaint is not resolved, the student may move to step five of the complaint process.

**Step 5:**

If the complaint remains unresolved, the student may submit a complaint through the College's Clerk of the Board to the attention of the Cowley College Board of Trustees. Based on the nature of the complaint, the Board of Trustees will normally review the submitted materials at the regular upcoming monthly meeting. Based on the findings of the Board, the Board may render a decision or request additional information in order to respond to the complaint. To submit an unresolved complaint to the Board of Trustees, complete the [Complaint Process Form](#) and mail the form and attachments to the Board of Trustees.

**IV. Resolution of complaints**

The administrator overseeing the formal complaint must make a decision in relation to the complaint and must communicate his or her decision to the parties, in writing, within 28 calendar days of receiving the complaint.

If the complaint involves a college policy or procedure and if, in the opinion of the administrator, the complaint has substance, the administrator must arrange for the relevant policy or procedure to be reviewed, with a view to preventing a recurrence and ensuring continued improvement.

If the resolution of the complaint involves potential disciplinary action for an employee, the administrator must follow the appropriate disciplinary procedures for employees. If the administrator does not have authority over the employee, then they may forward a recommendation for disciplinary action to the appropriate supervisor.


## V. Confidentiality

All student related information will be considered confidential and protected under [FERPA \(Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act\)](#). Records relating to employees and other records that do not include student information are not confidential.

## Effective Date(s)

This procedure first became effective: September 10, 2024

## Signature and Title

This procedure is implemented by:  \_\_\_\_\_

Title: Executive Director of Student Services