



Student Complaint Policy

Student Complaint Policy

Approved by and date:

Board of Trustees 09/18/2017

Executive Leadership Team 08/24/2017

Policy:

Kilgore College is committed to resolving student concerns or complaints in the most expeditious and informal manner possible. For situations that cannot be resolved in an informal manner, students have the right to submit a written complaint.

Procedures:

Approved by and date:

Executive Leadership Team 06/14/2021

To ensure that the process for considering written complaints is well publicized, reasonable, and fairly administered, the vice president of student services' office shall coordinate the student complaint process for the entire institution.

So that student complaints are addressed and responded to expeditiously, specific timeframes and deadlines have been established and incorporated into the processes listed below. A student's failure to meet specified deadlines ceases the complaint review process and the most recent determination will be considered as final. The vice president of student service's office shall monitor the deadlines listed and may extend the listed deadlines under exceptional situations. Examples of exceptional situations include: medical emergencies, holiday breaks when the college is closed, weather emergencies, etc.

Definitions

An academic complaint is any concern or dissatisfaction related to the instructional processes of the institution. Such complaints may be related to grading, instructional activities within the classroom, admissions decisions related to specific educational programs, etc.

A non-academic complaint is any concern or dissatisfaction with the institution that does not fall under the academic complaint definition. Such complaints may be related to customer service, student services, business services, food services, etc.

A valid student complaint is one that meets following criteria:

- a. The individual filing the complaint is an enrolled student of Kilgore College.
- b. The student has first taken the problem or question to the instructor, staff member or office in which they experienced dissatisfaction in an attempt to resolve the situation informally.

- c. The student completes a standard, online written complaint form. Partial, incomplete, or anonymously submitted Student Complaint Forms will not be accepted as valid.

Exclusions to the Complaint Process

The following issues are excluded from the complaint process and are handled by specific departments to ensure compliance with local, state and federal laws:

- a. Claims of discrimination, harassment or sexual misconduct. These should be addressed through the Student Grievance Procedures that are coordinated by the College's Title IX Administrator.
- b. Financial Aid Appeals. An appropriate appeals process is available through the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships.
- c. Residency Appeals. An appropriate appeals process is available through the Office of Admissions and Registrar.

Academic Complaint Procedures

Step 1. Students must first take problems or questions to the instructor with whom they are experiencing the concern, as most problems can be resolved in an informal manner. To ensure a reasonable and prompt response to a student concern, this should occur within one week after the occurrence of the event or situation giving rise to the complaint.

Step 2. If the student and the instructor are unable to find a solution to the problem, the student must make an appointment to visit with the appropriate department chair/program director within three working days of meeting with the instructor in an attempt to informally resolve the situation.

- Note: Students who do not address their concerns within the time limits stated above retain their rights to proceed through the complaint process. However, it must be noted that unreasonable delays will have an impact on the decision making process, as information, memories, and other pertinent details deteriorate over time.

Step 3. If the student and the department chair/program director are unable to resolve the situation informally, the student may file a formal written complaint by completing the online Student Complaint Form, provided on the Kilgore College website, within three working days of meeting with the department chair/program director.

The student will complete the online Student Complaint form, including the student's electronic signature, and attach any appropriate written documentation to the form. Partial, incomplete, or anonymously submitted Student Complaint Forms will not be accepted.

- Note: At any point in steps 1 - 3, the appropriate instructional division dean may intervene in order to expedite the process for the benefit of the student.

Step 4. Upon receipt of a valid, written student complaint, the vice president of student service's will log the complaint and forward it to the appropriate instructional division dean. The instructional division dean will investigate the situation and will then communicate the decision to the student via email to the student's official Kilgore College email address.

If the instructional division dean determines it is in the best interest of the student to conceal the

student's identity from the instructor on whom the complaint is filed, the dean will write a redacted account of the complaint on a separate document and present it to the instructor. The instructor may write a follow-up document, which will become part of the written complaint record.

Step 5. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the instructional division dean, the student will notify the vice president of instruction via email of his/her desire for a review of the process. This request must be submitted within three working days of receiving a formal response from the dean. The vice president of instruction will review the issue with regard to proper policy and procedure adherence.

Step 6. The vice president of instruction will communicate the decision via email to the student's official Kilgore College email address. The decision of the vice president is final and concludes the academic complaint process.

Non-Academic Complaint Procedures

Step 1. Students must first take problems or questions to the staff member with whom they are experiencing the concern, as most problems can be resolved in an informal manner. To ensure a reasonable and prompt response to a student concern, this should occur within one week after the occurrence of the event or situation giving rise to the complaint.

Step 2. If the student and the staff member are unable to find a solution to the problem, the student must make an appointment to visit with the appropriate department supervisor within three working days of meeting with the initial staff member in an attempt to informally resolve the situation.

- Note: Students who do not address their concerns within the time limits stated above retain their rights to proceed through the complaint process. However, it must be noted that unreasonable delays will have an impact on the decision making process, as information, memories, and other pertinent details deteriorate over time.

If a student organization or another student is involved, the appointment should be made with the organization's sponsor or other appropriate authority. The vice president of student service's office will assist in identifying the appropriate authority to which complaints shall be directed.

- Note: At any point in steps 1 or 2, the vice president of student services may intervene in order to expedite the process for the benefit of the student.

Step 3. If the student and the department supervisor are unable to resolve the situation informally, the student may file a formal written complaint by completing an online Student Complaint Form within three working days of meeting with the department supervisor.

The student will complete the online Student Complaint form, including the student's electronic signature, and attach any appropriate written documentation to the form. Partial, incomplete or anonymously submitted Student Complaint Forms will not be accepted

Step 4. Upon receipt of a valid, written student complaint, the vice president of student services will log the complaint and will ~~either~~ review the issue with regard to proper policy and procedure.

If the vice president of student services determines it is in the best interest of the student to conceal the student's identity from the staff member on whom the complaint is filed, the vice president will write a redacted account of the complaint on a separate document and present it to the staff member. The staff member may write a follow-up document, which will become part of the written complaint record.

- Note: In the event that the vice president of student services is the subject of the complaint, the dispute will proceed to the vice president of instruction, following the procedures above.

Step 5. The vice president of student services will communicate the decision via email to the student's official Kilgore College email address. The decision of the vice president is final and concludes the non-academic complaint process.

Accommodations for Distance and Off-Site Students

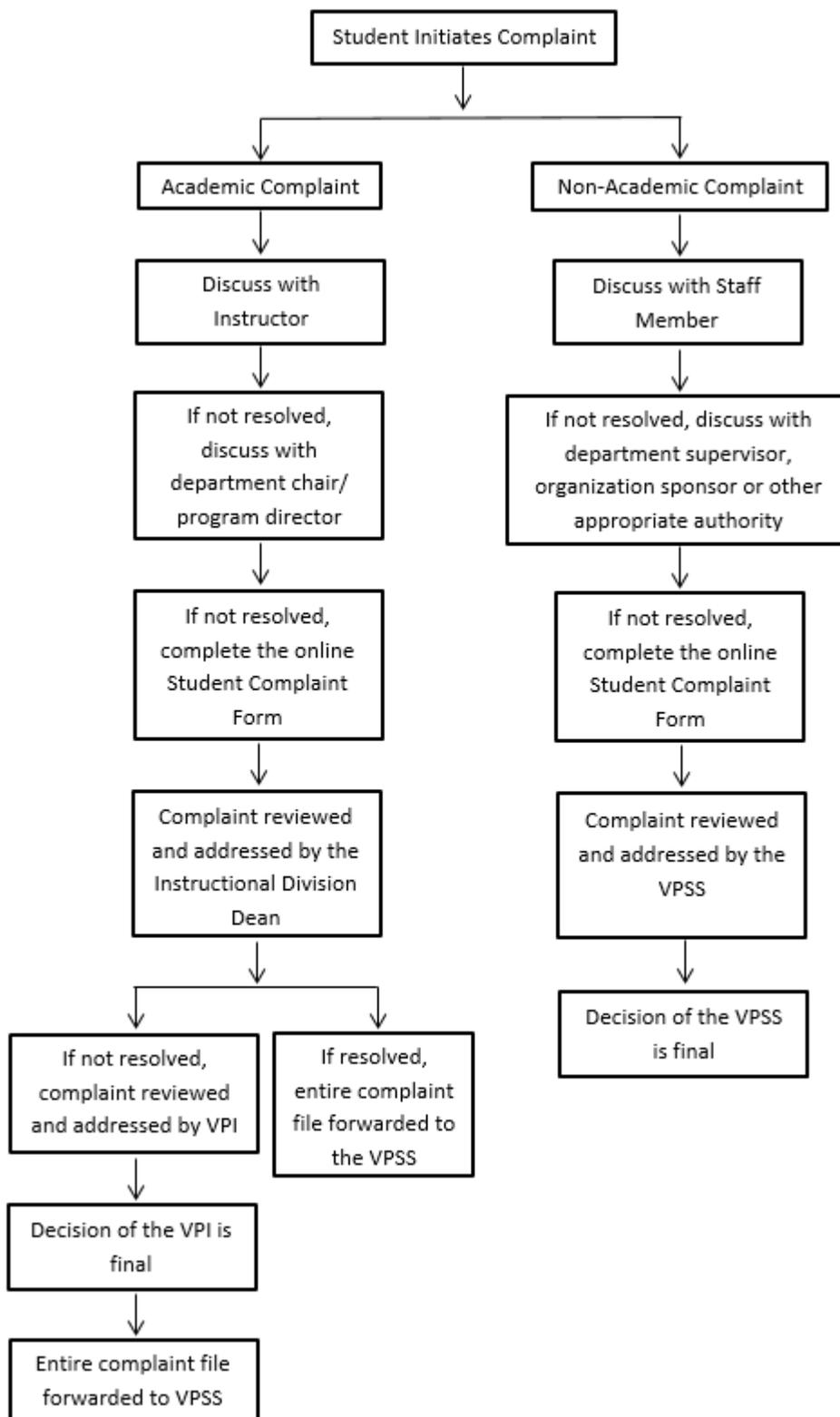
To ensure that distance and off-site learners have the same opportunity to have complaints addressed and responded to in an expeditious manner, the above described procedural steps may be completed via telephone or email conversations.

Record Keeping and Records Retention

Upon conclusion of each student complaint process, the complaint file, including all information and correspondence related to the review and resolution of issue, will be forwarded to the office of the VPSD for retention for a period of two years after final resolution of the complaint.

Visual Depiction of the Complaint Process

A flow chart depicting the above student complaint procedures follows.



Complaints Against the Institution

If the student is not satisfied after exhausting the College's complaint process, the student may initiate a complaint with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). To file a complaint with the THECB, one must complete the Student Complaint and Release Forms and the Authorization to Disclose Medical Record Information (required if a disability is alleged). These forms must be sent either by electronic mail to studentcomplaints@theccb.state.tx.us or by mail to: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, Office of General Counsel, PO Box 12788, Austin, Texas 78711-2788. Facsimile transmissions of the forms are not accepted. More information is available on the THECB's website at: <http://www.theccb.state.tx.us/studentcomplaints>.

Individuals may also file a complaint with Kilgore College's regional accrediting agency, The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. To file a complaint with SACSCOC, one must complete the Commission's Complaint Form (available at <http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/complaint%20form.pdf>) and send two print copies to: President, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, GA 30033-4097. In most cases, the SACSCOC complaint procedures require the student to exhaust all institutional complaint avenues before a complaint can be filed at the accrediting agency level.