



<b>Administrative Policy:</b> 5530		Student Complaints		<b>Policy Number:</b>	5500
<b>Applicable regulations - Federal/State/Board/College</b>		NWCCU Standards 2.C.2, 2.C.3, 2D.2, 2.G.2			
<b>Accountable Administrator:</b>		Registrar	<b>Position responsible for updates:</b>		Registrar
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## AP 5530 Student Complaints

### References:

NWCCU Standards 2.C.2, 2.C.3, 2D.2, 2.G.2

### Purpose

When there is a difference of opinion regarding the implementation of college procedures, policies, decisions, or unprofessional interactions between students and employees, the parties are encouraged to follow the Informal Complaint Resolution Process. If this does not result in a satisfactory resolution, or the student does not believe the employee is approachable, a complaint can immediately move to the Formal Complaint Process. The goal of the process is for the parties to gain clarity and adjust expectations in accordance with a mutually agreed-upon solution or abide by the resolution of the OCCC Student Complaint Committee.

Any staff member approached by a student with a complaint about how they have been treated by an employee or the application of a college policy or procedure should assist with finding and following this procedure.

**The Student Complaint Process does not apply in cases of alleged sexual harassment, sexual misconduct or discrimination.** In these cases, the student should contact the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs (Title IX Coordinator) or Director of Human Resources for guidance.

### Outcomes

The outcome of the process is to decide if a policy or procedure was correctly applied in a particular instance, and/or if the interaction with an employee is aligned with professional expectations. If it is determined that there was an error or mistreatment, the resolution may include, but not be limited to, limiting any negative impact on the student, educating students and/or staff about acceptable implementation of particular policies and procedures, changes to policies or procedures to better guide future actions, and/or show a need for additional employee training. When a complaint is found to be an egregious application of policy or procedure, the chair of the committee may report the matter to the employee's supervisor to be addressed as a personnel concern.

## **Student Complaint Resolution Procedure (Informal and Formal)**

Complaints and perceived problems should be resolved in a timely manner. To ensure this, time restrictions are a part of each step. If a student complainant misses a deadline, the process is terminated. Failure by the responsible college official to meet a deadline does not prejudice the complaint but is grounds for a complaint against that official. Timelines can be extended by mutual agreement between the parties involved at any time and may be necessary based on any approved student accessibility accommodations. Timelines start when Student Complaint Form is received by the Chair of the Student Complaint Committee.

The Student Complaint Committee is chaired by the Dean of Academic Foundations and Student Success. Two additional staff members are included on a rotating basis.

### **Step 1: Informal Complaint Resolution**

The parties involved are encouraged to first seek a common understanding and/or resolution of the matter of concern to the student. We encourage an Informal Complaint Resolution process to be initiated with the individual the conflict exists with, or their supervisor.

1. The student is encouraged to discuss the problem with the faculty or staff member directly involved within ten (10) working days of the event's occurrence.
2. If the student chooses not to discuss the issue with the employee, or the problem is not resolved after the discussion, the student may begin the Formal Complaint Resolution process.

### **Step 2: Formal Complaint Resolution**

1. To initiate the Formal Complaint Resolution process, the student is to submit the Student Complaint Form. **Student Complaint Forms are available [online](#) or at OCCC Student Affairs counter and all other OCCC centers.** A complete form must be submitted to Chair of Student Complaint Committee within ten (10) working days of meeting with the faculty/staff/student or the event's occurrence.
2. Within ten (10) working days of receiving the complaint form, the committee Chair will contact all parties involved to collect information about the complaint.
3. The Student Complaint Committee shall issue a written decision to all parties involved within fourteen (14) working days after receipt of the complaint form.

### **Step 3: Appeal of the Student Complaint Committee's Decision**

1. If the student has reason and evidence to believe the decision of the Student Complaint Committee was made in error, the student may submit a written appeal via email to the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs within five (5) working days of receipt of the decision of the Student Complaint Committee.

The written appeal should explain why the decision of the Student Complaint Committee is in error. This could be based on the above process not being followed, evidence of a bias in the decision, or a flawed application of the policy in question. The appeal may include a recommendation of a remedy for the situation.

2. Within seven (7) working days of receipt of the appeal from the student, the Vice President shall meet with the student regarding the student's grievance.

#### **Step 4: Final Decision**

The Vice President shall issue a written decision on the complaint to all parties involved within seven (7) working days of the meeting with the student. The decision of the Vice President of Academic & Student Affairs is final and not subject to further appeal.

A student, after exhausting college complaint procedures, may file a written complaint with the Higher Education Coordinating Commission pursuant to rules outlined in, including but not limited to, Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) 715-011-0075 and OAR 715-011-0080. File a complaint at: <https://www.oregon.gov/highered/access/Pages/student-complaints.aspx> A complaint may be filed with the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), OCCC's accreditor, for policy violations related to accreditation: <https://nwccu.org/complaints/>.

**Approved**