



TECHNICAL COLLEGE  
OF THE LOWCOUNTRY

**PROCEDURE: Institutional Complaints**  
**Number: 4.4.1.1**

Responsibility: Student Affairs  
Last Updated: November 1, 2023  
Related Policy: 4.4.1 Grievances and Student Code

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President

**Purpose:**

Directives from the United States Department of Education and accreditation principles require institutions of higher education to establish procedures for resolving institutional complaints. Compliance requires the maintenance of a record of complaints received by the institution, related to all written complaints, a log recording a summary of the complaint, the person or office charged to resolve the complaint, and the resolution or actions taken in response to the complaint.

**Procedure:**

A formal institutional complaint is one that is submitted in writing, signed and sent to the attention of a TCL executive officer (President or Vice President). The College will neither entertain complaints that are not in writing or which are anonymous.

1. When an individual (complainant) has lodged a complaint to a TCL employee, the employee shall do his or her best to address the problem at that level. The resolution may include discussing the problem with his or her immediate supervisor(s), or higher, and always includes a discussion with the individual (complainant). The complainant may accept the resolution or if he or she believes the resolution is insufficient or unacceptable, he or she must register a written complaint on TCL's official Institutional Complaint Form.
2. After the complainant has lodged a formal written complaint, the form is forwarded to the Vice President for Student Affairs for disposition and tracking. The Vice President for Student Affairs, or designee, will determine if the written complaint should be classified as one of the three areas noted above and route the issue accordingly. Once the formal written complaint is submitted, the College will acknowledge it, in writing, in two (2) instructional days after acknowledging receipts of the complaint, the appropriate College personnel will review the complaint and its documentation and determine:

- a. If the complaint falls within the scope of College policies
  - b. If the complainant has provided adequate documentation
  - c. If the complaint identifies issues that may jeopardize the quality of educational programs or the general welfare and integrity of the College
  - d. If the complaint raises significant questions about the College's compliance with College standards.
3. **Institutional Complaint:** The Vice President for Student Services or designee will forward Institutional Complaints to the appropriate department head. Within seven (7) working days, the department head will review the form, determine if any additional action is required and respond in writing to the Vice President for Student Affairs. If additional time is necessary, a request may be made for a reasonable extension as determined by the Vice President of Student Affairs. The Vice President for Student Affairs, or designee, will review the written response for the department head, confer with the Vice President for Academic Affairs if the issue is related to faculty members or academic staff members, and make a decision. The Vice President for Student Affairs will communicate the decision to the complainant in writing, within seven (7) working days after the decision. Once an Institutional Complaint has been reviewed by the Vice President for Student Affairs and a decision has been made, that decision is final, and the issue may not be appealed.
  4. **Student Grievance:** If the issue is classified as a Student Grievance, the due process procedures listed in the TCL Student Handbook, Student Grievance Procedure, Sections I-IV will be followed. These procedures provide specific direction for student grievances and the appeal process used if desired. The student grievance appeal process may escalate to the President, whose decision is final.
  5. **Student Misconduct:** If the Dean of Students determines that a complaint should be classified as Student Misconduct, the due process procedures listed in the Student Handbook, Student Misconduct will be followed. These procedures provide specific direction addressing student misconduct issues and the appeal process if desired. A student misconduct appeal process may escalate to the President whose decision is final.
  6. **Academic Misconduct:** If the issue is determined to be an Academic Misconduct issue, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, or designee, will resolve the issue using the due process procedures outlined in the Academic Affairs policy and procedure for Academic Misconduct.
  7. **Tracking and Notification:** For all written complaints, the office of the Vice President for Student Services tracks, maintains a log of complaints, and manages the process, including notification to the complainant.