

Student Complaints



Policy identification number: **To Come...**

File: **Ethical & Responsible Conduct Policies > Dispute and Complaint Policies**

Student Complaints

Policy Summary

Fort Lewis College strives to assist students in the resolution of their problems with the institution. This policy formalizes institutional practice in alignment with Colorado Commission on Higher Education policy and Higher Learning Commission assumed practices and policy. Complaints managed through the Student Complaint Policy are resolved in accordance with the [Procedure for Academic Grievance Policy](#) in the Faculty Handbook.

Policy Owner	Approval Date	Effective Date
President	October 8, 2014	October 8, 2014
Search Terms	Scheduled for Review	
president, s, c, student, complaint	Fall 2019	

Policy Statement

1. Students have a right to pursue resolution of the problems they encounter in their dealings with Fort Lewis College.
2. Complaints are defined as problems that arise between an individual in the role of a current, prospective, or former student related to alleged employee violations of Fort Lewis College's Code of Ethics or Conflict of Interest policies; broad institutional practices; the content of, lack of, or failure to follow Fort Lewis College institutional policies and procedures; and failure to comply with statutes, regulations, or accreditation requirements that have not been resolved through existing dispute resolution, appeals, petition, waiver, grievance procedures, and the like.
3. To initiate the Student Academic Appeals Process, students must fill out the [Academic Complaint](#) form.
 - A. The form will require:
 - A. Name
 - B. Student ID number
 - C. Mailing address
 - D. Email address
 - E. Telephone number
 - F. Detailed summary of problem
 - G. Fort Lewis College employees previously contacted about the problem
 - H. Desired resolution of the problem
4. The President or a designee will respond to all student complaints within 30 calendar days.
 - A. Final responses by the President may be appealed to the Colorado Department of Higher Education and the Higher Learning Commission.
5. Retaliatory action by the College related to a student complaint is prohibited.
6. The President will ensure publication of the student complaint procedure on the college website, in the Student Handbook, and in the *Catalog of Courses*.
7. The President will provide an annual summary to the Board of Trustees of student complaints, their dispositions, and implications for institutional improvement.
8. The President's Office will maintain records of student complaints for 10 years.

Reason for Policy

Fort Lewis College strives to assist students in the resolution of their problems with the institution. This policy formalizes institutional practice in alignment with: (1) Colorado Commission on Higher Education Policy Section 1, Part T, "Student Complaint Policy", 1.00, which states "This policy mandates that each public and private institution define and implement complaint and appeals processes to investigate student complaints and appeals in a fair and expeditious manner"; (2) Higher Learning Commission Assumed Practice, A.4., which requires that "The institution provides clear information regarding its procedures for receiving complaints and grievances from students and other constituencies, responds to them in a timely manner, and analyzes them to improve its processes"; and (3) Higher Learning Commission Policy, FDCR.A.10.030, "Institutional Records of Student Complaints," which states that "An institution shall make available an account of the student complaints it has received, its processing of those complaints, and how that processing comports with the institution's policies and procedures on the handling of grievances or complaints."

Responsibilities

For following the policy: All prospective, current, and former students of Fort Lewis College and all employees involved in attempting to resolve student problems

For enforcing the policy: President or designee

For oversight of the policy: President

For notification of the policy: Policy Librarian

For procedures implementing the policy: President or designee

Appendix A: Dispute Resolution, Appeal, Petition, Waiver, and Grievance Procedures

Students are provided dispute resolution, appeals, petition, waiver, and grievance procedures as follows:

1. FORT LEWIS COLLEGE ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

If no appeals, petition, or waiver procedures exist: Students should pursue their disputes about the application of administrative policies for which no formal appeals, petition, or waiver procedures have been established by requesting review of the decision by the next level supervisor. When the student makes a request for a review of a decision, the employee will provide the the name, office location, phone number, and email address of the next-level supervisor. The highest level review is that of the President, whose decision is final.

If an appeals, petition, or waiver procedure exists: Students should follow that procedure. These include:

(a) Application of terms and conditions for institutional tuition merit scholarships. Policy and procedures are published in the Policy Library. Appeals are heard by the Scholarship Appeals Committee. The committee's decisions may be appealed to the President, whose decision is final.

(b) Application of eligibility criteria and terms and conditions for Finish in Four! Graduation Agreement and Scholarship. Policy and procedures are published in the Policy Library. Appeals are heard by the Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management. The Associate Vice President's decision may be appealed to the President, whose decision is final.

(c) Application of Student Conduct Code. Policy and procedures are published in the *Student Handbook*. Decisions of suspension or expulsion made by the Hearing Authority may be appealed to the Vice President for Student Affairs, whose decision is final.

2. FORT LEWIS COLLEGE ACADEMIC POLICIES

(a) Application of "Academic Dishonesty by Students" policy. Policy and procedures are published in the *Faculty Handbook*. Disputes are heard by the Academic Standards Committee. The committee's decisions may be appealed to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs or designee, whose decision is final.

(b) Disputes of grades, disputes of academic decisions considered to be arbitrary or contrary to College policy, and perceived violations of student academic rights established in the *Faculty Handbook* follow the Student Academic Appeals and Grievance Procedures. These procedures are published in the *Faculty Handbook*. After discussion with the faculty member(s) and/or department chair and/or dean, the student can appeal to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs to create a Student Academic Review Committee. The committee's decision is final.

3. STATE STATUTE AND POLICY

(a) Application of C.R.S. 23-7-101 to 107 to the facts of a student's situation to determine eligibility for in-state tuition rates. This statute is applied at Fort Lewis College by the Assistant Director of Admission, who has been appointed as the "Registering Authority." The Tuition Appeals Committee considers petitions of the Registering Authority in accordance with Colorado Commission on Higher Education Policy, Section VI, Part B, "In-State Tuition Classification," 4.08.

(b) Application of C.R.S. 23-18-202(5)(c)(I) to the facts of a student's situation to determine if the student has exceeded the lifetime credit hour limit for the College Opportunity Fund stipend. The statute is applied at Fort Lewis College by the Assistant Controller - A/R. The COF Waiver Committee considers waivers of the lifetime limit in accordance C.R.S. 23-18-202(5)(f).

4. FEDERAL LAW AND REGULATIONS

(a) Application of 34 C.F.R. 668.34 to the facts of a student's situation to determine if a student receiving Title IV federal financial aid has met the requirements for satisfactory academic progress. Policy and procedures are published in the Policy Library. Appeals are heard by the Financial Aid Appeals Committee. The committee's decisions may be appealed to the President, whose decision is final.

5. CIVIL RIGHTS

(a) Allegations that a Fort Lewis College employee or student has violated the Sexual Misconduct, Discriminatory Harassment, or Disability Anti-Discrimination policies. Procedures are specified in that "Discrimination Grievance Procedures" published in the Policy Library. If an informal process is followed, there can be no appeal of the results. If the formal process is followed, an investigator's findings and sanctions can be appealed to a Hearing Panel. Decisions of the Hearing Panel can be appealed to the designated Appeals Authority.