Piedmont Virginia Community College

Section II – General Administrative Policies

II – 3.0 Student Complaint Policy

Effective Date: January 2008

Last Revised: July 2026

Responsible Dept.: Vice President of Student Affairs

1. Purpose

This policy establishes standards and procedures for student complaints.

2. Policy Statement

This policy outlines the steps to address student concerns or complaints that a college policy or procedure has been incorrectly or unfairly applied in their case or to bring a complaint or grievance for improper treatment. The policy addresses complaints that are not already covered by another PVCC policy.

This policy is in accordance with VCCS Policy 6.5.0.1 Student Grievance and SACSCOC Standard 12.4 Student Complaints. This policy does not apply to the following appeals or grievances. Policies and procedures for these are contained in other policy statements.

a) Student grade appeal (academic grievance).
b) All Human Resources policies.
c) All appeal and grievance policies and procedures explicitly described in the *VCCS Policy Manual.*
d) Any formal appeal or grievance covered by another PVCC policy (e.g., student code of conduct, admissions, financial aid, satisfactory academic progress, etc.).

3. Definitions

Informal Complaint: Verbal, email, and other electronic complaints are considered informal, and the Procedure for Informal Student Complaints is to be followed.

Formal Complaint: Written complaints submitted through the online Student Complaint

PVCC does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities. View the full nondiscrimination statement and find contacts at pvcc.edu/nondiscrimination.

Form are considered formal and the Procedure for Formal Student Complaints is to be followed. Students without access to the online form (ex. students in prison facilities) may submit a hard copy of the Student Complaint Form. These complaints are considered formal, and the Procedure for Formal Student Complaints is to be followed.

4. Applicability

This policy applies to all students at PVCC.

5. Responsibilities

The Vice President of Student Affairs is responsible for the implementation of this policy.

6. Procedures for Implementation

6.1 Procedure for Informal Student Complaints

Informal complaints by students are to be addressed in communication between the complainant and the college administrator responsible for supervising the area. The complainant should initiate the informal resolution of the student complaint process within ten (10) business days from when the complainant knew or should have known of the action or inaction. If, through this process, a mutually satisfactory resolution of the complainant cannot be reached, the complainant may move to the procedure on formal complaints (see below). If the complainant does not continue with the formal complaint process, the complainant will be considered inactive.

6.2 Procedure for Formal Student Complaints

e) If the complainant does not wish to attempt an informal resolution or if a satisfactory resolution cannot be reached, the complainant must initiate the formal phase of the student complaint process. Formal complaints should be submitted using the PVCC Online Student Complaint Form (https://forms.office.com/r/9izjBkduMY). If it is not possible for a student to access the online form, a hard copy may be submitted to the Vice President of Student Affairs. The formal resolution should be filed within ten (10) business days of the action or inaction or within ten business days of the conclusion or termination of the informal process. Students may request an accommodation as it relates to completing this process at any point during this process.

f) Formal complaints are to be addressed by the college administrator responsible for supervising an area.
The appropriate college administrator or designated college representative will review all relevant information provided by any party, conduct any necessary interviews, as

well as evaluate applicable college policies and procedures in rendering a decision. If a party chooses to not participate in the process, a decision will be rendered without their participation.

g) A written response (hard copy or email) will be sent to the complainant. A copy of the written response is to be sent to the Vice President of Student Affairs so that the log can be updated.
h) If the student complainant is not satisfied with the response, they may appeal within thirty (30) days of receipt of the response to the formal complaint. The appeal must identify one of the following grounds: (1) a claim that the investigation was not conducted fairly, (2) a claim that the decision reached by the appropriate college representative was not supported by substantial evidence, or (3) a claim that new evidence should be considered. The student complainant may file the written appeal with the college President. In such cases, the President will gather information and provide a final written response to the complainant with a copy to the Vice President of Student Affairs.
i) The Vice President of Student Affairs will maintain a file of all formal complaints and responses.
j) If, after exhausting the college student complaint process, the complaint has not been resolved to the student's satisfaction, the student complainant may file a complaint with the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SHEV): https://www.schev.edu/students/resources/student-complaints and/or the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. PVCC accepts SCHEV oversight in resolving complaints from students in other states who take distance education under the aegis of the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement.

7. Sanctions for Violation of Policy

N/A

8. Other General Information

N/A