

# Student Concerns Process

## General Information

It is the policy of Clover Park Technical College to provide students with an opportunity to resolve any alleged violation of college academic policy, procedure or regulation, or to resolve any alleged case of inequitable treatment. The college encourages informal resolution of disputes whenever possible, and also maintains fair and equitable procedures for formally expressing and resolving concerns. Student rights are protected in the concern/appeal process and the college must ensure that a student will not suffer repercussions because they chose to file a concern/appeal in good faith.

This section protects enumerated rights outlined in WAC 495-121-040 guaranteed to each student within the limitations of statutory law and college policy which are deemed necessary to achieve the educational goals of the college:

These academic freedoms include:

1. Students are guaranteed the rights of free inquiry, expression, and assembly upon and within college facilities that are generally open and available to the public.
2. Students are free to pursue appropriate educational objectives from among the college's curricula, programs, and services, subject to the limitations of RCW 28B.50.090 (3)(b).
3. Students shall be protected from academic evaluation which is arbitrary, prejudiced, or capricious, but are responsible for meeting the standards of academic performance established by each of their instructors.
4. Students have the right to a learning environment which is free from unlawful discrimination, inappropriate and disrespectful conduct, and any and all harassment, including sexual harassment.

## Types of concerns excluded from this section

- A student may not use the provisions of this section as the basis for filing a complaint based upon the outcome of disciplinary proceedings described in the Code of Student Conduct.
- Students shall report sexual harassment, sexual assault, or sexual misconduct to the College's Title IX Coordinator.
- Federal and state laws, rules and regulations, in addition to policies, regulations and procedures adopted by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) or the Board of Trustees for Clover Park Technical College shall not be grievable matters. Students shall use chapter 495C-300 and 495C-310 WAC for grievances pertaining to sexual discrimination or equal opportunity discrimination based upon disability.
- Employment and personnel decisions. College personnel actions are considered confidential. Results may not be made available for review.
- Quality of instruction is not generally grievable under this process. Students are encouraged to give feedback through the course evaluation process.

## Academic Concern Procedure

The following steps are to be taken in the event a student has an unresolved academic concern, such as a grade appeal, inequitable treatment, or violation of academic policy/procedure and is interested in resolving the issue:

**Step 1** –Before a student can file an official concern or appeal, they should try to resolve the problem informally. The college expects the student to address their concern by first meeting and/or discussing the concern with the college employee(s) whose actions resulted in the concern and documenting the discussion with notes. If not resolved, the student may proceed to the next step:

**Step 2** - If, within 5 instructional days following the informal resolution attempt, the student feels a satisfactory resolution has not been achieved, the student may file a formal concern on-line through the ["A Better CPTC"](#) web portal. The concern will then be routed to the employee's immediate supervisor or designee. The concern or appeal must be in writing, utilizing the appropriate form, and include the documentation from Step 1 as well as any other supporting documentation as an attachment.

**Step 3** – Within 5 instructional days after receiving the concern or appeal in writing, the supervisor (or designee) will be responsible to investigate the concern. The supervisor or designee will provide the employee with a copy of the written concern or appeal; the employee will have 5 instructional days in which to provide a written response to their supervisor.

**Step 4** - The supervisor, or designee, will convene a meeting to hear the complaint and attempt to resolve the issue. It shall be at the discretion of the supervisor to determine whether they will meet with both parties separately or in a joint meeting. In the event that one or both parties do not agree to meet, the supervisor or designee will investigate and render a decision based on the written statements and testimony of the parties. The supervisor or designee will impart this decision in writing to both parties within 5 instructional days. If either party feels a satisfactory resolution has not been achieved, they may proceed to the next step.

**Step 5** – Within 5 instructional days after Step 4, the party appealing the decision in step 4 will notify the Vice-President for Instruction, in writing, to request a hearing before the Appeal Review Committee. The Committee will be chaired by the Vice President for Instruction (or designee) and will also include the Vice President for Student Success (or designee), two student representatives appointed by the Student Council, and two faculty members appointed by the Faculty Union.

**Step 6** – Within 10 instructional days, the Appeal Review Committee will meet with the student, instructor, and director, department chair or supervisor to hear the points at issue in the appeal. The Committee will provide its written decision to all parties within 5 instructional days following the hearing. The decision is final and may not be reviewed.

*Important Notes:*

- *Academic Appeal must be made within fifteen (15) instructional days following the issuance of the grade or decision.*
- *The process above is used for filing a concern in which a resolution has been requested that is specific to the student filing. If a student wishes to file an official complaint that has no personal resolution, or wishes to remain anonymous, that complaint will not follow the above steps.*

## **Non-Instructional Concern Procedure**

The following steps are to be taken in the event a student has an unresolved non-instructional concern and is interested in resolving the issue:

**Step 1:** The student will meet with the appropriate Department Head to discuss the issue in an attempt to arrive at a resolution. In the event that the student is unable to informally resolve the issue with the Department Head, they may proceed to Step 2.

**Step 2:** If the matter is not resolved at Step 1, the student will complete an online-based concern form through the “A Better CPTC” web portal which will be routed to the appropriate divisional representative who will follow-up with the individual who submitted the concern form within four (4) business days.

**Step 3:** If the matter is not resolved at the meeting with the divisional representative, the student may file a written appeal notice with the appropriate executive-level administrator or designee within (5) business days of the initial decision from Step 2. The notice must include a brief statement explaining why they are seeking a review.

**Step 4:** The executive-level administrator or designee shall meet with the student within ten (10) days of receiving the written notice and should render a final decision regarding the matter within five (5) business days. This proceeding is considered a final action and is not subject to appeal.