

Student Complaint and Resolution Policy

Concordia College takes student complaints seriously and has processes in place to ensure that complaints are addressed appropriately. The first step to resolving most issues is for the student to address the concern directly with the people or offices involved. We encourage students to address any concerns or issues they encounter as soon as possible. The student should voice their concern directly to the people or offices involved, either in person or in writing, expressing their concern. If this does not resolve the concern, or if this method is inappropriate, the following procedures may be used.

Students initiate the complaint process when they believe any of the following have occurred:

- The college has failed to operate its policies and procedures in good faith
- The college has failed to address persistent life-safety risks
- The college has misrepresented its academic and/or other programs
- The college is violating law(s)

Complaints fall under two categories: academic and non-academic. This policy does not include complaints regarding college employment, student conduct procedures under the Student Handbook, academic progress or grades or admission decisions.

This policy does not limit the College's right to change policies, regulations, or practices related to the provision of academic or non-academic services and education.

Definitions

Academic Complaints:

Academic complaints include issues brought by students regarding the institutions' delivery of their education and academic services. Academic complaints in this policy do not include disputes on academic misconduct or grade appeals.

The procedures for grade appeals and the academic misconduct policy can be found [here](#).

Non-Academic Complaints:

Non-academic complaints include those issues brought by students regarding the institutions' delivery of non-academic services. This policy does not include disputes related to admissions and financial aid decisions, residence life issues related to housing assignments and roommate concerns, sexual misconduct, or harassment, bias, and discrimination. The procedure for these complaints can be found in the online student handbook located [here](#).

Procedure

Concordia College is committed to treating all students with fairness and respect. The rights, freedoms, responsibilities and policies that apply to students are published in the [Concordia College Student Handbook](#) and available on our website. In an instance of a grievance, a student may file a complaint against the College. This policy provides two levels for pursuing a complaint: an informal resolution and a formal resolution. Students are encouraged to start with the informal resolution process, whenever possible.

Informal Resolution for Student Complaints:

The first step of any resolution should usually occur between the student and the appropriate parties within the department, office, or site involved in the complaint. A third party (e.g., other faculty, the department chair, staff member, hall director, etc.) may be appropriate when holding these conversations. The College encourages this process to be done as soon as possible.

Students completing online course work are urged to speak by phone or e-mail or other electronic messaging portals with the relevant supportive offices or they can follow the steps above. Students attending the college as distance education students, regardless of their state of residence, may contact the [State Portal Agent](#) at the Minnesota Office of Higher Education. Students may also contact the [Minnesota Office of Higher Education](#) or the College's accrediting agency, the [Higher Learning Commission](#), if their complaint is not resolved through the Concordia College complaint processes.

If no informal resolution is reached within the office, department, or site involved in the complaint, or if seeking informal resolution directly with the parties involved was not appropriate for the issue at hand, a student may also seek informal resolution by talking with staff in Academic Affairs (if an academic complaint) or Student Development and Campus Life (if a non-academic complaint).

Formal Resolution for Student Complaints:

If the complaint is not resolved following informal procedures, or if an informal resolution is inappropriate, a student may choose to officially document the complaint to seek formal resolution. Students may file both academic and non-academic complaints through this process as defined by this policy.

1. Students must submit a written explanation of the complaint including 1) a full description of the concern (including who was involved and when and where it occurred), 2) a description of the informal procedure or previous steps to attempt resolution, and 3) a statement of requested resolution. Students will be asked to provide their contact information for further discussion. Copies of relevant evidence or material should be included.
2. Students can report the complaint to the following people or offices:

- Office of Academic Affairs
 - Office of Advancement
 - Office of Communications and Marketing Office of Enrollment
 - Office of Finance
 - Office of the President
 - Office of Student Development and Campus Life
3. The appropriate officer receiving the complaint will complete or designate someone to complete an investigation of the matter. It is the responsibility of the investigator to inform all parties involved of the formal complaint. Please note, any personal/medical information will remain confidential. The investigator may request a consultation with the parties involved or external parties to collect relevant information. All parties will have the opportunity to provide the investigator with information or evidence relevant to the complaint.
 4. Upon completion of the investigation, a resolution will be decided by the appropriate officer. Decisions made by the institutional officers are final and may not be appealed. This policy allows no retaliation. The investigator should be notified immediately should retaliation occur. If retaliation is implied or occurs, the institutions will take appropriate action if an employee is found to have retaliated. Students will be held accountable for retaliation through the Student Handbook and related disciplinary procedures.

Institutional Records and Management of Student Complaints:

In compliance with U.S. Department of Education policy and consistent with The Higher Learning Commission guidelines, Concordia College maintains a record of serious, written and signed complaints filed by students. This record includes:

1. The date complaint was submitted
2. A brief explanation of the nature of the complaint
3. Any other known actions initiated by the student to resolve the complaint
4. Steps taken by Concordia College to address the complaint, including referrals

Each record will be kept on a Student Complaint Documentation Form and will be retained in the administrative office in which it was filed.