

PHILLIPS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

Administrative Procedure: 407.01

Subject: Student Complaints and Resolution Procedure

Applicable Board Policy: 407

Date Adopted: 2/14

Revised: 6/19, 6/24

Phillips Community College of the University of Arkansas considers all complaints from students in an expeditiously and fair manner. All students, including those participating in distance education, are encouraged to follow the policy below to resolve any issues with faculty, staff, administrators, policies or procedures.

College policy is to address all complaints informally at the lowest level, if possible, by the institutional officer who is responsible for the area in which the complaint is made. If the student decides to submit a written complaint, PCCUA will record the complaint in a log to meet the requirement on student complaints of The Higher Learning Commission (HLC). Only written complaints filed with the Vice Chancellor of Student Services and Campus Life and Registrar are considered official complaints that will be filed in the log. In the event that the Vice Chancellor of Student Services and Campus Life has a conflict, the Vice Chancellor for Instruction will administer the process. In rare cases, another Vice Chancellor may be assigned by the Chancellor to administer the process to avoid any conflict of interest if that is appropriate.

Written complaints that have not been signed will not be entered into the log, unless a pattern (as determined by the Vice Chancellor for Student Services and Campus Life and Registrar) involving a specific issue, division, department, or policy warrants an investigation.

A log entry on a student complaint will include the following:

1. The date the complaint was first formally submitted,
2. The nature of the complaint,
3. The steps taken by PCCUA to resolve the complaint,
4. The final decision regarding the complaint,
5. Any other external actions initiated by the student to resolve the complaint, if known to PCCUA.

The information in the log of student complaints, which is maintained by the Vice Chancellor for Student Services and Campus Life and Registrar, may be made available for review by the Peer Review Team of the HLC. Steps will be taken to insure the anonymity of any student who files a complaint. The purpose of the review by the evaluation team is to establish that PCCUA processes complaints in a timely manner and in a way that demonstrates fairness and attention to student concerns. More information regarding the HLC may be found at www.hlcommission.org.

PCCUA provides published appeal procedures for appealing a grade or other matters of an academic nature, and also due process steps for appealing a disciplinary action. These procedures include provisions for formally resolving issues that are involved in such appeals. These appeals will not normally be considered as complaints that are to be included in the student complaint log; however, the appropriate Vice Chancellor has the discretion to enter an appeal and its outcome in the student complaint log.

Students filing a written complaint or initiating an informal complaint with an employee of PCCUA will be advised to take the following steps to resolve the issue:

1. Students must first consult with the person(s) or office responsible for the issue in a good faith effort to resolve the problem. Contact should be made as soon as possible.
2. If the problem cannot be resolved at that level, the student should contact the responsible supervisor. If the supervisor determines that the complaint is of an academic or disciplinary nature, the supervisor should refer the student to the appropriate appeal process outlined in PCCUA Administrative Procedures 404.06 and 405.01. If the complaint is not academic or disciplinary in nature, the supervisor shall arrange a meeting with the person(s) responsible and the student in an effort to resolve the problem within five (5) business days.
3. If the problem is still not resolved, the student shall meet with the Vice Chancellor for Student Services and Campus Life and Registrar or the campus Vice Chancellor in Stuttgart or DeWitt. If the informal discussion does not lead to a good faith effort to resolve the complaint, the Vice Chancellor shall inform the student of the formal complaint procedure. The Vice Chancellor may also document the informal complaint process and its resolution, including the reason why the informal procedure failed.
4. Students filing a formal complaint must submit a written request to the Vice Chancellor for Student Services and Campus Life and Registrar. The written complaint must contain the following information:
 - The full name, address, and contact information for the student
 - A detailed description of the steps leading up to the formal complaint, including the names of the person(s) and supervisor(s) involved in the informal complaint process (steps 1 through 3 above)
 - Information about any other organizations that the complaint has been formally filed with
 - The specific remedies sought by the student to resolve the situation

5. Upon receipt of the written document, Vice Chancellor for Student Services and Campus Life and Registrar has 10 days to identify an ad hoc committee and to notify the student and the selected committee members as to the time and place of the formal resolution. This ad hoc committee consists of five (5) faculty and/or professional staff members chosen by the Vice Chancellor, with preference given to those faculty/staff members whose work station is located at the campus on which the complaint originated. The Vice Chancellor serves as the non-voting moderator during the formal resolution process. Formal resolutions are conducted in the following manner:
 - Attendance at the hearing is restricted to the moderator, selected committee members, the student, a non-press student advisor if the student chooses, and the person(s) and/or responsible supervisor(s) involved in the informal complaint process.
 - The moderator reads the written complaint prepared by the student.
 - Up to 15 minutes is allowed for a presentation of the student's position.
 - Up to 15 minutes is allowed for a presentation by the person(s) against whom the complaint was filed.
 - The complaint committee, in reaching a decision, may consider written statements or other documents that supplement or support each side's position. Complaint committee members may ask questions of the participants during the presentations.
 - The complaint committee and moderator shall then go into executive session to consider the decision. The parties may be brought back in to answer further questions or clarify a point for the committee.
 - After discussing the case, the moderator will poll the committee members, count the written ballots, and announce the vote count. Decisions are by majority vote. All discussions and vote counts are to be kept confidential. The moderator will assist the committee in preparing a written finding in the case.
 - The parties and committee will convene in regular session, and the moderator will announce the decision. The decision by the committee is final, and conclusion of the complaint resolution finalizes the process.
 - The Vice Chancellor for Student Services and Campus Life and Registrar will enter information regarding the formal student complaint into the student complaint log.