

Policy Title: STUDENT COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

The purpose of the policy addressing student complaints is to provide equitable and orderly processes to resolve complaints by students at East Central Community College. A student complaint is defined as a difference or dispute between a student and the College or a student and a College employee related to services rendered. Any student who wishes to make a complaint to East Central Community College about a college program, a course assignment, a classroom practice, a service of the college, an employee of the college, or any other aspect of the college should follow the procedures provided in this policy.

There are distinct student complaints, defined by the College as student grievances, not governed by this policy. Grievances include incidents related to perceived violations of college policies; perceived sexual, racial, and other harassment; and/or perceived discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, and/or disability. In these instances, student should refer to Policy 822.1, STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES. In addition, students should refer to Policy 821, STUDENT DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES AND DUE PROCESS for all matters related to the student disciplinary process.

East Central Community College encourages students to resolve complaints that affect their college experience as informally as possible. Therefore, for all student complaints, the student should first discuss the problem with the faculty member, staff member, or administrator involved prior to initiating formal complaint procedures under this policy. Often, student complaints can be resolved informally, however, if informal efforts are not productive or appropriate in resolving the complaint, the student should follow the procedures enumerated herein.

Non-instructional Matters

Students who wish to complain about non-instructional matters should contact the Vice President for Student Services within ten (10) working days of the occurrence of the incident upon which the complaint is based. The name and contact information of the student filing the complaint, the nature of the complaint, the remedy sought, previous efforts to informally resolve the complaint, and all other pertinent information must be in writing and either be delivered in person or mailed to the Vice President for Student Services, East Central Community College, P. O. Box 129, Decatur, Mississippi 39327; telephone (601) 635-2111, ext. 204 or 205. Failure to give such written notice to the Vice President for Student Services within the timeframe described above shall constitute a waiver by the student to present his/her complaint.

All complaints of a non-instructional nature will be referred by the Vice President for Student Services to an appropriate college official for response. A college official not directly involved in the complaint will review the facts and make the final determination regarding the complaint. A timely response will be given to the student and the Vice President for Student Services by the appropriate college official.

If the student is not satisfied with the resolution of the complaint, the student may appeal the decision in writing to the Vice President for Student Services within three (3) working days of notification of the decision. Failure to give such written notice to the Vice President for Student Services within the timeframe described above shall constitute a waiver by the student of any further consideration of the matter.

Upon receipt of an appeal under the provisions of this complaint policy, the Vice President for Student Services will investigate the complaint. The Vice President for Student Services, in his/her discretion,

may require the submission of additional evidence prior to making a decision on the student's complaint or may schedule a meeting with the student to further discuss the complaint. In any meeting with the student to discuss the complaint, the appropriate college official who presented the initial response shall be in attendance to address questions. A timely response will be given to the student by the Vice President for Student Services. The decision of the Vice President for Student Services shall be deemed final with regard to non-instructional student complaint procedures at East Central Community College.

The above steps shall exhaust full recourse available at the College for all non-instructional student complaints. No adverse action will be taken against a student filing a complaint or an appeal under the provisions of this policy solely on the basis of the complaint filed.

Instructional Matters

Students who wish to complain about instructional matters should contact the Vice President for Instruction within ten (10) working days of the occurrence of the incident upon which the complaint is based. The name and contact information of the student filing the complaint, the nature of the complaint, the remedy sought, previous efforts to informally resolve the complaint, and all other pertinent information must be in writing and either be delivered in person or mailed to the Vice President for Instruction, East Central Community College, P. O. Box 129, Decatur, Mississippi 39327; telephone (601) 635-2111, ext. 203. Failure to give such written notice to the Vice President for Instruction within the timeframe described above shall constitute a waiver by the student to present his/her complaint.

All complaints of an instructional nature will be referred by the Vice President for Instruction to an appropriate college official for response. A college official not directly involved in the complaint will review the facts and make the final determination regarding the complaint. A timely response will be given to the student and the Vice President for Instruction by the appropriate college official.

If the student is not satisfied with the resolution of the complaint, the student may appeal the decision in writing to the Vice President for Instruction within three (3) working days of notification of the decision. Failure to give such written notice to the Vice President for Instruction within the timeframe described above shall constitute a waiver by the student of any further consideration of the matter.

Upon receipt of an appeal under the provisions of this complaint policy, the Vice President for Instruction will investigate the complaint. The Vice President for Instruction, in his/her discretion, may require the submission of additional evidence prior to making a decision on the student's complaint or may schedule a meeting with the student to further discuss the complaint. In any meeting with the student to discuss the complaint, the appropriate college official who presented the initial response shall be in attendance to address questions. A timely response will be given to the student by the Vice President for Instruction.

The only instructional matters that may be appealed by a student through due process procedures are those that relate to charges of academic dishonesty (*refer to Policy 821, STUDENT DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES AND DUE PROCESS*) and perceived errors in the transmittal of grades (*refer to Policy 404.3.1., CONTESTING FINAL GRADES*). Therefore, the decision of the Vice President for Instruction shall be deemed final with regard to instructional student complaint procedures at East Central Community College.

The above steps shall exhaust full recourse available at the College for all instructional student complaints. No adverse action will be taken against a student filing a complaint or an appeal under the provisions of this policy solely on the basis of the complaint filed.

Documentation

East Central Community College shall maintain comprehensive records of all non-instructional and instructional complaints received for a period of five years. The records shall contain aggregate data on complaints and specific data on each complaint. Documentation of all non-instructional and instructional complaints required to support this policy shall be maintained in the Vice President for Student Services' office (non-instructional) and the Vice President for Instruction's office (instructional). Documentation will contain the following:

1. Student Handbook, College Catalog, and Policies and Procedures Manual;
2. a log of complaints; and
3. all individual complaint files.

A log of all non-instructional and instructional complaints will be maintained in the Vice President for Student Services' office (non-instructional) and the Vice President for Instruction's office (instructional). Each log will contain the following:

1. a complaint number assigned to each complaint preceded by the last two digits of the calendar year in which the complaint was filed, e.g., 94-001;
2. the date of receipt of the complaint;
3. the name and address of the complainant;
4. the name of the individual(s) assigned to handle the complaint;
5. the date of response to the complaint;
6. the date of resolution; and
7. the final disposition of the complaint.

An individual file for each non-instructional and instructional complaint will be maintained in the Vice President for Student Services' office (non-instructional) and the Vice President for Instruction's office (instructional). Each individual file will include the following information.

1. the initial complaint;
2. all correspondence related to the complaint; and
3. written documentation of the final determination with the signatures of the party or parties who submitted the complaint and the representative(s) of the institution who made the final determination.

(Revised 8/11/15; Reviewed 3/8/16)