Student Complaint Process

Whatcom COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Following is a brief summary of the process for submitting a student complaint. This process does **not** apply to the following:

- complaints based upon disciplinary proceedings;
- complaints about policies adopted by the College;
- discrimination or harassment complaints – contact the Human Resources Office;
- complaints related to college support and administrative services should be directed to the appropriate manager of the responsible department;
- complaints regarding dismissals from selective entry programs – contact the Office of Instruction.

Whatcom Community College emphasizes the importance of direct, courteous, and respectful communication to informally resolve student concerns and complaints.

Step 1 Informal resolution

Students who believe a college faculty or staff member has treated them unfairly shall first discuss their concerns directly with that person. If the complaint involves a grade, the student should first discuss the grade, including the reason the student believes the grade has been assigned improperly, arbitrarily or capriciously, with the course instructor. The purpose of this discussion should be to clarify the perceived problem and request specific action. If the student has already talked to the faculty or staff member without resolution, or is apprehensive about talking to the person involved, the student may contact the department chair (listed in chart). **Most misunderstandings related to grades can be resolved at this level.**

Step 2 Formal letter

A student who is not satisfied with the proposed resolution of the complaint and wishes to seek an alternate outcome shall submit **a formal complaint letter to the division chair.** The letter must be submitted within one quarter following the incident that occasioned the complaint, and must include the following information:

- Description of the situation including dates and times;
- Summary of the actions by the student to resolve the complaint up to that point; and
- Proposed solution.

In a grade dispute, the student should submit specific information on performance scores, attendance, and any syllabus or written material on course grading criteria the instructor has provided to the student.

The **division chair** shall forward the student's written formal complaint to the **faculty member**, who must provide a written response within ten instructional days. The **division chair** shall then forward the **faculty member's** response to the student. If the **faculty member's** response does not resolve the complaint to the student's satisfaction, the student may submit a written appeal to the **division chair**, citing the reasons for disagreeing with the **faculty member's** response. The **division chair** shall mail the student a written response providing his or her decision within **seven (7)** instructional days after receipt of the student's appeal.

Step 3 Appeal to the Academic Appeal Committee

If the complaint is not satisfactorily resolved in Step 2, the student may request a hearing by the **Academic Appeal Committee** by submitting a written request to the **division chair** within **ten (10)** instructional days of the postmark on the mailed written decision; the appeal must clearly state errors in fact or additional information to justify the appeal. The complete Student Complaint Procedure is available on the Whatcom website at www.whatcom.ctc.edu.

A hearing will be scheduled within twenty (20) instructional days and the student **must** attend. The Academic Appeal Committee is composed of students, faculty, and administrators. The Committee will make a written recommendation to the Vice President for Instruction. The Vice President will consider the Committee recommendations and provide a written decision. *The decision of the **Vice President** is final.*

Updated 2/20/14

Step 1—Informal Resolution *Talk directly with faculty member involved. If the student is apprehensive about speaking with the faculty involved, or there is no resolution, the student may contact the department chair.*

Step 2—Formal letter *If still unresolved, write a formal letter to the Division Chair.*

Division I—Academic Resources & Health Professions		Department Chair		Division Chair	
Health Professions Department		Margaret Anderson, HPEC 117	383-3500	Meg Delzell, KLY 103B	383-3523
• Health	*HLTH*				
• Medical Assisting	*MA*				
• Massage Therapy	*MT*				
• Nursing	*NURS*				
• Physical Therapist Assistant	*PTA*				
Academic Skills & Resources Department		Leo Hopcroft, CAS 150	383-3524	Meg Delzell, KLY 103B	383-3523
• Adult Basic Education	*ABE*				
• Developmental Education	*ENGL 170 & below 100, MATH below 97*				
• Educational Planning	*EDPL*				
• English as a Second Language	*ESL*				
• Human Development	*HUMDV, PSYCH*				
• Library	*LIBR*				
• Reading & Study Skills					

Division II—Arts and Humanities		Department Chair		Division Chair	
English Composition and Literature Department		Rhonda Daniels, CAS 157	383-3509	Bob Winters, CAS 168	383-3569
• English (Composition & Literature)	*ENGL 100 & above (except 170)*				
• Film	*FILM*				
• Journalism	*JOURN*				
World Languages Department		Courtenay Chadwell-Gatz, CAS 103	383-3507	Bob Winters, CAS 168	383-3569
• American Sign language	*ASL*				
• English as a Second Language—Academic	*ESLA*				
• French	*FRCH*				
• German	*GERM*				
• Japanese	*JAPN*				
• Spanish	*SPAN*				
Visual & Performing Arts Department		Caryn Friedlander, CAS 158	383-3517	Bob Winters, CAS 168	383-3569
• Art	*ART*				
• Art – Graphic Design	*ARTGR*				
• Drama	*DRMA*				
• Humanities	*HUM*				
• Interdisciplinary Studies	*IDS*				
• Music	*MUSC*				
• Dance	*DANCE*				

Step 1—Informal Resolution *Talk directly with faculty member involved. If the student is apprehensive about speaking with the faculty involved, or there is no resolution, the student may contact the department chair.*

Step 2—Formal letter *If still unresolved, write a formal letter to the Division Chair.*

Division III—Science, Technology, Engineering & Math		**Department Chair**		**Division Chair**	
Science Department		Kim Reeves, KUL 114	383-3545	Heidi Ypma, KUL 107A	383-3570
• Astronomy	*ASTR*				
• Biology	*BIOL*				
• Chemistry	*CHEM*				
• Pre-Engineering	*ENGR*				
• Environmental Science	*ENVS*				
• Geology	*GEOL*				
• Nutrition	*NUTR*				
• Oceanography	*OCEA*				
• Physical Education	*PE*				
• Physics	*PHYS*				
• Physical Science	*PHYSC*				
Technology Department		Corrinne Sande, BKR 125	383-3552	Heidi Ypma, KUL 107A	383-3570
• Computer Information Systems	*CIS*				
• Computer Science	*CS*				
Math Department		Lee Singleton, LDC 234	383-3555	Heidi Ypma, KUL 107A	383-3570
• Mathematics	*MATH 97 & above*				

Division IV—Social Sciences and Business		**Department Chair**		**Division Chair**	
Business and Law Department		John Fasler, BKR 121	383-3502	Guy Smith, LDC 132	383-3556
• Accounting	*ACCT*				
• Business	*BUS*				
• Business Administration	*BUSAD*				
• Business Information Systems	*BIS*				
• Criminal Justice	*CJ*				
• Office Administration	*OFFAD*				
• Paralegal Studies	*PLS*				
Social Sciences Department		Anthony Will, CAS 155	383-3567	Guy Smith, LDC 132	383-3556
• Anthropology	*ANTH*	• History	*HIST*		
• Communication Studies	*CMST*	• Learning Contracts	*LC*		
• Cooperative Learning	*CO-OP*	• Parent Education	*PARED*		
• Early Childhood Education	*ECE*	• Philosophy	*PHIL*		
• Economics	*ECON*	• Political Science	*POLS*		
• Education	*EDUC*	• Psychology	*PSYC*		
• Geography	*GEOG*	• Sociology	*SOC*		