

## Student Complaint Process

The U.S. Department of Education's "Program Integrity" regulations require that each state has a student complaint procedure in order for public and private higher education institutions to be eligible for Title IV funds. The West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education (Council) and West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (Commission) are responsible for monitoring all written and signed student complaints against degree granting institutions authorized to operate in West Virginia.

All West Virginia institutions of higher education must establish, publish and adhere to a procedure for handling student grievances. It is the institution's responsibility to respond to student complaints and grievances in accordance with the college's student grievance policy. The complaint should be brought to the attention of the institution in an informal fashion. Many issues can be handled quickly and informally once the institution is aware of the concern or issue. If the problem cannot be resolved informally, the complainant should follow the formal complaint or grievance process of the institution. It is important to keep records and documentation that provide evidence of the problem and the complainant's efforts to solve it through the institution's internal process.

If, after exhausting internal grievance procedures, the institution of higher education has not responded to the complainant's satisfaction or a satisfactory remedy has not been found, the complainant may contact the Council/Commission for further investigation into the issue.

In order for Council/Commission to initiate an investigation, the following must be true:

- The student must have exhausted all available grievance procedures established by the institution of higher education.
- The student must complete the "Student Complaint Form" ([DOWNLOAD HERE](#)) and submit the form to the Council/Commission. The student's complaint must contain a detailed description of the claim, including dates, times and full names of all involved, as well as the actions taken by both the student and the institution to attempt to resolve the matter. The Student Complaint Form must be signed, attesting to the truth and accuracy of the complaint, and notarized, verifying the identity of the individual filing the complaint.
- The student must sign and submit the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Consent and Release Form ([DOWNLOAD HERE](#)).
- The student must understand that the Council/Commission will not investigate anonymous complaints. By signing and submitting the Student Complaint Form, the student acknowledges that the Council/Commission may share the information provided with the school, other relevant organizations, and individuals, in order to help resolve the matter in dispute. The Council/

Commission does not guarantee a student-acceptable remedy or resolution resulting from this submission or its investigation into the allegation.

- The student understands and agrees that the decision rendered by the Chancellor of the Council/Commission is final.

Upon receipt of the completed and signed Student Complaint Form and the FERPA Form, the Council/Commission will open an investigation if the matter being disputed falls within its jurisdiction. As appropriate, the Council/Commission will conduct the investigation or refer the issue to another agency that is authorized to address the issue.

All complaints will be handled as expeditiously as possible, and shall not exceed two (2) years from time of submission.