# TRI-COUNTY TECHNICAL COLLEGE

# PROCEDURE

**PROCEDURE NUMBER:** 3-2-1060.1



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**TITLE:** Academic Concern and Complaint Procedure

**RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:** 3-2-106.1 The Student Code for the South Carolina Technical College System
3-2-106.3 The Student Grievance Procedure for the South Carolina Technical College System

**ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY:** Chief Academic Officer

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**DATE APPROVED BY PRESIDENT:** June 16, 2025

**DATE LAST REVIEW:**

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I. PURPOSE

The purpose of the academic concern and complaint procedure is to provide a system to channel and resolve student concerns and complaints regarding decisions or actions related to learning experiences in a class, academic programs, or similar items of an academic nature.

This procedure may not be used for any grievance issues that are under the purview of other grievance, complaint, or appeal procedures, including but not limited to the Student Code for the South Carolina Technical College System (3-2-106.1), Student Code Procedures for Addressing Alleged Acts of Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment (3-2-106.2), and the Student Grievance Procedure for the South Carolina Technical College System (3-2-106.3).

The student filing the concern or complaint grievance must meet the definition of a "student" at the time of the alleged decision or action and must be the victim of the alleged mistreatment. A grievance cannot be filed on behalf of another person.

II. DEFINITIONS

When used in this document, unless the context requires other meaning,

A. "College" means Tri-County Technical College.

B. "Administrative Officer" means anyone designated at the College as being on the administrative staff, such as the President, Vice President, Chief Student Services Officer, Chief Academic Officer, Dean of Instruction or Dean of Students, Business Manager, or Hearing Officer.

C. "Chief Academic Officer" means the Administrative Officer at the College who has overall management responsibility for academic programs and services, or their designee. At TCTC this is the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Workforce Development, or their designee.

D. "Academic Dean" means the Administrative Officer at the College who has overall management responsibility for an identified academic division, or their designee.

E. "Student" means an individual currently enrolled in a program or registered for the current or upcoming academic term.

F. "Instructor" means any person employed by the College to conduct classes.

G. "Instructional Days" means any weekday (M-F) in which classes are in session.

H. "Close of Business" means the time that the administrative offices of the College close on that specific workday.

I. "Approved Method of Notification" means any communication from College personnel through a communication channel to which the student has consented, or which confirms receipt of the communication by the student, such as a hand-delivered letter, restricted mail delivery services, or e-mail. A student who communicates with the College via e-mail or otherwise provides an e-mail address in connection with communications relating to a grievance thereby consents to the service of documents and all other correspondence associated with the grievance by e-mail, and the date and time of such e-mail(s) shall be deemed the date and time of service.

III. Complaint Process

Complaints are resolved informally with the course instructor or formally through the filing of a complaint with the leadership of the academic division in which the course is housed, including escalation point up to the Chief Academic Officer. Generally, most complaints can be resolved informally with the instructor and students must start with this method.

The levels of review include, in progressive order, the course instructor, next level of academic leadership (e.g. department head, or assistant dean), the academic division dean, and the Chief Academic Officer. Every effort should be made to resolve complaints at the at the lowest possible level of review. Complaints must be filed within 15 instructional days of the decision or action precipitating the complaint.

If a student does not receive a response within three (3) instructional days after making a good faith effort to engage in informal resolution, they may proceed to the next level. The student may escalate to the next level of review if:

1. After attempting to resolve the issue with the current level of review, the student believes the issue has not been resolved appropriately or timely, or
2. There are existing circumstances that would make attempting resolution with the employee in the current level of review unproductive, including but not limited to conflict of interest, lack of response, refusal to engage in informal resolution, etc.

A. Attempt to resolve informally with the instructor

Before filing a complaint with academic leadership, the student must attempt to resolve the situation with the individual class instructor. Concerns and complaints can generally be resolved by communicating directly with the class instructor. The instructor must meet with the student to discuss the issue and render a decision. That decision must be communicated to the student by an approved method of communication.

B. Filing a formal complaint with the next level of academic leadership (e.g. department head, or assistant dean).

To file a formal complaint, the student must complete the Academic Concern and Complaint form, available in each academic division office. This form may be a physical, digital, or online form. This form must collect, at minimum,

1. Identification information for the student, instructor, and course,
2. Information about the attempt to informally resolve the situation with the instructor, including the meeting date and the instructor's response and/or decision,
3. A statement describing the details of the issue and accompanying situation, and
4. A statement describing the student's desired outcome for the issue.

The academic leader will meet with the student to discuss the complaint and associated details. The academic leader will investigate and render a decision in a timely manner, typically within three (3) instructional days. However, some decisions may take longer than this timeframe. The decision must be communicated to the student by an approved method of communication.

C. Appeal to the academic dean

The student may appeal the decision of the academic leader (department head or assistant dean) to the academic dean by contacting the academic division office. The dean may require the student to complete an updated academic concern and complaint form that includes additional information about the department head's decision. The academic dean will meet with the student to discuss the complaint and any associated details. The academic dean will investigate and render a decision in a timely manner, typically within three (3) instructional days. However, some decisions may take longer than this timeframe. The decision must be communicated to the student by an approved method of communication.

D. Appeal to the Chief Academic Officer

Before appeal to the Chief Academic Officer, the student must contact the Dean of Students. The purpose of the meeting with the Dean of Students is to ensure due process has been followed appropriately, assist the student as needed in preparing the appeal information, and connect the student with any appropriate student supportive services. At this point, if another complaint or grievance procedure is appropriate, the complaint may be transferred to the appropriate procedure.

The student may appeal the decision of the academic dean to the Chief Academic Officer by contacting the Academic Affairs Office and submitting the following information:

1. Identification information for the student, instructor, and course,
2. Information about the attempts to resolve the complaint, including the meeting dates, persons involved, and the resulting decisions.
3. A statement describing the details of the issue and accompanying situation, and
4. A statement describing the student's desired outcome for the issue.

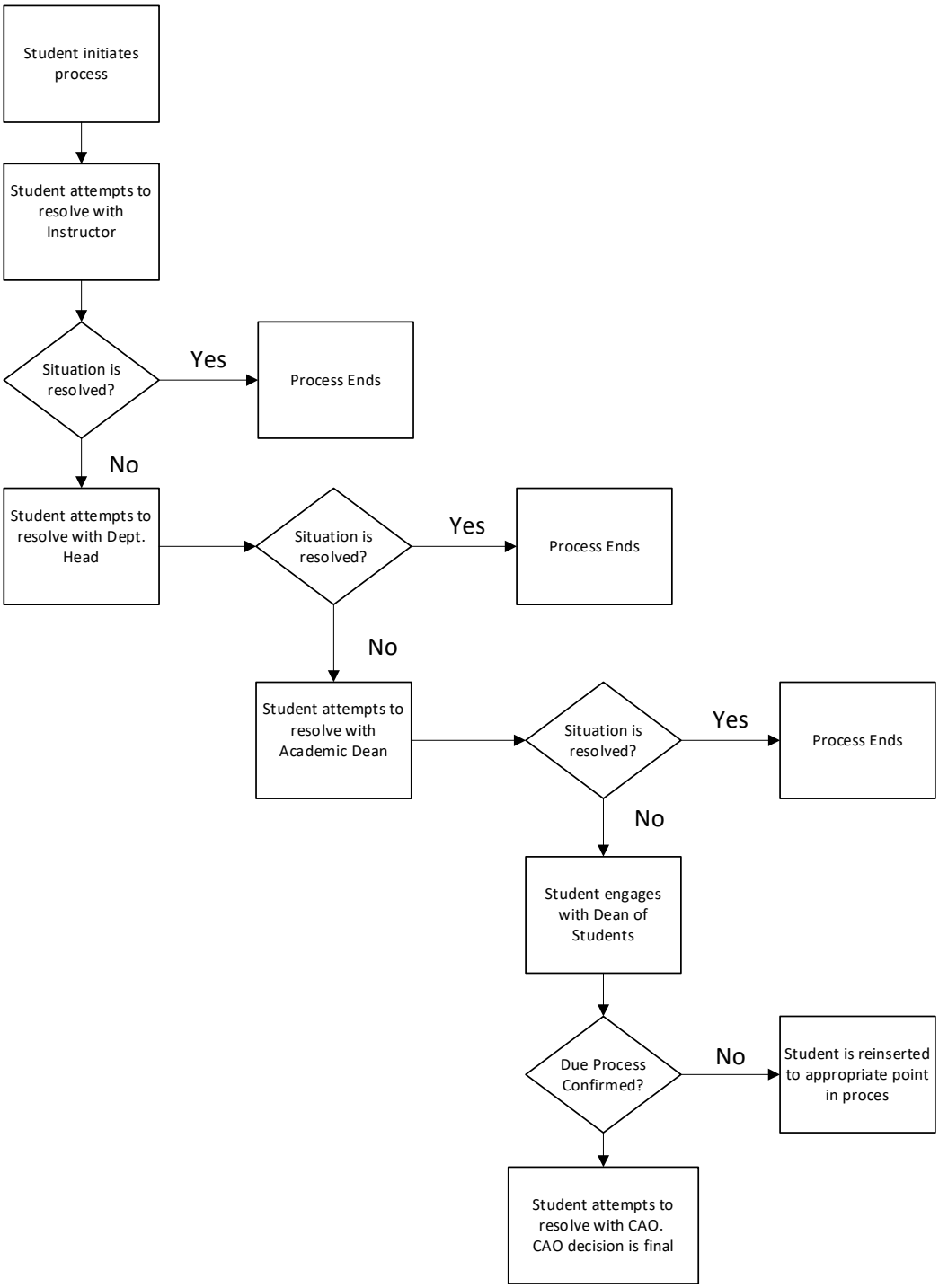
The Chief Academic Officer will review the submitted information, conduct an investigation, and render a decision in a timely manner, typically within three (3) instructional days. However, some decisions may take longer than this timeframe. The decision must be communicated to the student by an approved method of communication.

The decision made by the Chief Academic Officer is final and not appealable.

IV. Student support person

Students may choose to have an individual of their choice accompany them in a support role. This support person is not required, and many complaints can be resolved by the student without involving a support person. The support person's role in this process is not to speak or act on behalf of the person, but to provide support to the student, which might include but is not limited to moral support, helping them remember talking points, helping rephrase items, providing a calming presence, etc. Any Student Affairs employee can serve in this role if the student would like a College employee to accompany them. In some instances, multiple support persons may be present to accommodate for accessibility concerns.

V. Flow Chart


Student initiates process
Student attempts to resolve with Instructor
Situation is resolved?
Yes
Process Ends
No
Student attempts to resolve with Dept. Head
Situation is resolved?
Yes
Process Ends
No
Student attempts to resolve with Academic Dean
Situation is resolved?
Yes
Process Ends
No
Student engages with Dean of Students
Due Process Confirmed?
No
Student is reinserted to appropriate point in proces
Student attempts to resolve with CAO. CAO decision is final