

# Policies and Procedures

## Chapter S3 – Educational Policies

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### S3.24 Complaint / Grievance Policy

Responsible Administrator: Vice President of Student Affairs

#### Authority

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Policy 3.8; Procedure 3.8.1

#### General Statement of Policy

St. Cloud Technical & Community College, in order to provide quality instruction and service, encourages student access to college faculty, staff and administration to resolve questions, concerns, or complaints regarding SCTCC policies, procedures, or other actions or inactions of the College.

Students are encouraged to use available informal means to have decisions reconsidered before submitting a complaint or filing a grievance. The ultimate objective of this policy and procedure is to reach a mutually agreed upon resolution to the issue as quickly and efficiently as possible. No retaliation of any kind shall be taken against a student for participating in the complaint or grievance process. These procedures shall also protect data privacy rights. The College maintains a record of all complaints, and grievances filed and are collected and archived in the Administrative Affairs Division.

This policy does not apply to academic grade disputes. Grade appeals are handled under SCTCC Policy S3.21 Assigning and Changing Grades. Student complaints regarding discrimination or harassment are subject to SCTCC Policy S4.6 Nondiscrimination and Harassment and Minnesota State Board Policy 1B.1, Procedure 1B.1.1.

#### Definitions

**Appeal:** A request for reconsideration of a grievance decision.

**Complaint:** An oral or written claim by a student alleging improper, unfair, or arbitrary treatment.

**Grievance:** A written claim raised by a student, alleging improper, unfair, or arbitrary action by an employee involving the application of a specific provision of a college rule/regulation or a board policy or procedure. This policy does not apply to those college rules or regulations or to board policies or procedures that include an appeal or grievance process.

**Retaliation:** Retribution of any kind taken against a student for participating or not participating in a complaint or grievance.

**Student:** An individual student, a group of students, or the campus student government.

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College President:



Date: 3-11-2025

Date of Adoption: 2/1/12

Date of Implementation: 2/1/12

Date repealed or replaced: 3/11/25

### **S3.24.1 College Policies and Procedures Process**

#### **Complaint Procedure**

The goal of the complaint procedure is to quickly address a student's question/concern about a college decision, action or inaction and come to a resolution agreeable to the student and the college as soon as possible.

Submitted verbally or in writing, the student may bring the complaint directly to any SCTCC employee. Students should submit complaint within twenty (20) business days from the date of the identified dispute. In cases where college personnel cannot resolve the complaint immediately, they will render a response to the complainant either personally and/or in writing within ten (10) working days upon receipt of the complaint.

#### **Grievance Procedure**

Student(s) not satisfied with the outcome of a complaint - and/or if the complaint involves the application of a college policy – may file a written grievance with the supervisor (director, dean or vice president) of the employee or department whose action gave rise to the grievance.

The grievance should be filed within twenty (20) business days from the complaint decision or from the date of the grieved incident.

Information and forms to file a Grievance are available from the Assistant to the Vice President of Administration. A form may also be submitted through the SCTCC website.

To file a written Grievance, the grievant must provide the following information:

- name of the student(s) filing the grievance,
- name of the employee(s) whose action(s) is being grieved,
- statement of facts and nature of the grievance, including specific policy violation, if known,
- any documentation or evidence,
- date(s) of the incident(s), and
- resolution being sought by the grievant

Written grievances must be submitted to the Administrative Assistant to the Vice President of Administration. The Administrative Assistant will forward the grievance to the appropriate academic or administrative officer. General faculty, classroom and other academic issues will be directed to Academic Affairs. Financial issues such as billings, tuition payments, financial aid, bookstore, food service, parking and facilities will be directed to Administrative/Business Services. Issues involving admissions, assessment, records and registration, student support and student life will be forwarded to Student Affairs. The academic or administrative officer will have ten (10) business days from the receipt of the written grievance to render a solution or refer to the appropriate decision maker(s).

A written statement of the resolved issue or notification of referral will be returned to the student(s) and copies forwarded to the Vice President of the division as well as the Administrative Assistant to the Vice President of Administration. In cases where the grievance involves a Vice President, it will be referred to the college President or designee.

#### **Appeals**

A student may appeal a grievance decision based on the application of a specific College rule, regulation, policy or procedure. The same written material submitted in the original decision will be presented for

appeal to the appropriate divisional Vice President. If the Vice President made the initial decision or is the subject of the grievance, the materials will be forwarded to the College President or designee.

The Vice President or President shall, within ten (10) business days after receipt of the appeal, render a final decision. Final settlement will be based on facts presented in the original grievance, as well as any additional information arising during the appeal investigation. A written decision will be delivered to the grievant. The decision of the Vice President or President is final and binding.

If the grievance involves a board policy, the actions of the College President, an issue of institutional or program quality such as an institution's compliance with the standards of an accrediting or licensing agency, or a claim of consumer fraud or deceptive trade practice, a student may further appeal the College decision to the Office of the Chancellor. The decision of the chancellor is final and binding. To contact the Chancellor's Office: Academic and Student Affairs, Office of the Chancellor, Wells Fargo Place, 30 7<sup>th</sup> Street E., Suite 350, St. Paul, MN 55101-7804.

St. Cloud Technical & Community College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. In cases that involve SCTCC's compliance with the standards of the College's accrediting agency, questions or concerns may be directed to: Higher Learning Commission, 230 Lasalle St., Suite 7-500, Chicago, IL 60604-1413.

#### **Time limits**

If the college staff or administrator does not address the complaint or grievance within the established time frame, the student may appeal the complaint or grievance to the next step.

#### **Dissemination**

This policy/procedure will be made available at least annually to students and SCTCC employees via the College's General Catalog, Student Handbook and SCTCC Web site. Written materials will be located as referenced in this policy. Supervisory personnel are responsible for communicating this policy to affected staff upon official review and approval.

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