
**Complaint Policy and Procedures
for Employees**

BOT Approved: 10/21/2015
 Revised: 8/4/2016
 Revised: 7/1/2017
 Revised: 6/4/2018
 Revised: 7/1/2019
 Revised: 7/1/2020
 Revised: 7/1/2021

Table of Contents

I. Philosophy and Scope..... 1

II. Definitions for the Purpose of this Policy and Procedures 1

III. Responsible Senior Leader and Responsible Office..... 2

IV. Entities Affected by this Policy and Procedures..... 2

V. Informal Resolution..... 2

VI. Formal Complaint Procedures..... 2

VII. Formal Complaint Procedures for Complaints Against a Senior Leader..... 3

VIII. Formal Complaint Procedures for Complaints Against the President 4

IX. Extensions..... 4

X. Records..... 5

XI. Confidentiality 5

XII. Related Policies and Procedures 5

Complaint Policy and Procedures for Employees

I. Philosophy and Scope

Frederick Community College (“FCC” or the “College”) faculty, staff, and administration strive to create and maintain a work environment where effective communication enhances integrity, justice, and civility. The purpose of this Complaint Policy and Procedures for Employees is to provide a method of recourse to employees who wish to address a particular action on the part of a College employee(s) or office.

The Office of Human Resources is available as a resource for policy interpretation, application, and consultation throughout the process.

Employees are expected to first attempt to resolve issues covered under this Policy and Procedures informally by communicating directly with their supervisor and/or the employee with whom the issue originated. If informal resolution is not possible, employees have the right to make a formal complaint using this Complaint Policy and Procedures for Employees.

This Policy and Procedures is applicable to all employees of the College for complaints **other** than those relating to acts of misconduct, discrimination, sexual misconduct, separation from employment, or related to performance appraisals. In accordance with the FCC’s Non-Discrimination Policy and Procedures, the College prohibits any person from engaging in retaliation against any person who exercises in good faith, their own rights under College policy or other law. Employees who believe they have been retaliated against should contact the VP for Human Resources.

Employees wishing to file a complaint alleging any act of discrimination or sexual misconduct should refer to the College [Non-Discrimination Policy and Procedures](#) or the [Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures](#) available on the College website.

Employees wishing to appeal decisions made related to separation from employment should refer to the [Separation from Employment Policy and Appeal Procedure for Involuntary Separation from Employment](#) available on the College website.

Employees have the opportunity to respond to performance appraisals through Section 4B on the Performance Appraisal form.

II. Definitions for the Purpose of this Policy and Procedures

- A. **“College Support Person”** refers to an employee of the College chosen to accompany and assist a complainant during the appeal process with the Senior Leader. The College Support Person cannot be a fact witness or provide statements in the proceedings. The College Support Person is a non-participant who is present to assist an employee by taking notes or providing emotional support and reassurance.
- B. **“Designee”** refers to an individual appointed in consultation with the VP for Human Resources to receive, investigate and respond to a complaint due to unavailability or a potential conflict of interest within the chain of command. Designees may be College employees or independent investigators retained by the College.

Complaint Policy and Procedures for Employees

- C. **“Formal complaint”** refers to a process whereby an employee, who believes that attempts at informal resolution have been unsuccessful, may initiate a formal complaint by following the steps outlined in this Policy and Procedures.
- D. **“Informal resolution”** refers to initial meetings between the parties directly involved in an issue where there is good faith effort to resolve the issue so that initiation of a formal complaint is not necessary.
- E. **“Senior Leader”** refers to a member of the President’s Senior Leadership Team which includes the President; Provost/Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, Continuing Education, and Workforce Development; the VP for Finance; the VP for Human Resources; the VP for Learning Support; the Chief of Operations; the Chief Information Officer; and the Special Assistant to the President for Institutional Effectiveness.
- F. **“Workdays”** refers to Monday through Friday and does not include weekends, holidays, scheduled breaks, or other days the College is closed.

III. Responsible Senior Leader and Responsible Office

Vice President for Human Resources
Office of Human Resources

IV. Entities Affected by this Policy and Procedures

All employees

V. Informal Resolution

Employees are expected to first attempt to resolve issues covered under this Policy and Procedures informally by communicating directly with their supervisor and/or the employee with whom the issue originated.

The employee should notify their direct supervisor regarding the issue. The supervisor should provide guidance and/or meet with the parties involved within ten (10) workdays to discuss the issue and discuss potential solutions.

If the complaint is between the employee and the direct supervisor, then the employee has the option to informally resolve the complaint with the next level supervisor.

Once an employee has attempted to informally resolve the complaint and the complaint has not been resolved, the employee will follow the procedure for a formal complaint.

VI. Formal Complaint Procedures

All formal complaints, **other** than those related to misconduct, discrimination, sexual misconduct, separation from employment, or performance appraisals, shall follow these procedures.

Complaint Policy and Procedures for Employees

- A. If an employee believes that the informal resolution with their direct supervisor did not resolve the issue, the employee must submit in writing their complaint to the next level supervisor and copy the VP for Human Resources.
- B. The next level supervisor, in consultation with the VP for Human Resources, will determine if they will investigate the complaint or appoint a designee to act on their behalf.
- C. The next level supervisor or designee will:
 - 1. Review records related to the informal complaint resolution process and the written complaint document;
 - 2. Share the complaint with parties named in the complaint;
 - 3. Interview all parties involved;
 - 4. Conduct an assessment using all the information collected; and
 - 5. Respond in writing with their findings and recommendations to the employee, other named parties, and the VP for Human Resources within ten (10) workdays following the receipt of the written complaint.
- D. If the next level supervisor did not resolve the issue, the employee may appeal to the supervising Senior Leader and copy the VP for Human Resources within ten (10) workdays following the receipt of the written response from the next level supervisor or designee. The appeal shall be in writing and detail the rationale for the complaint, the rationale for the appeal, and the remedy sought.
- E. The Senior Leader, in consultation with the VP for Human Resources, will determine if they will investigate the complaint or appoint a designee to act on their behalf.
- F. The Senior Leader or designee will:
 - 1. Convene a meeting with the employee regarding the written appeal within ten (10) workdays following receipt. The employee may have a College Support Person of their choice present for the meeting.
 - 2. Submit a decision on the appeal in writing to the employee and the VP for Human Resources within five (5) workdays following the meeting. The decision of the Senior Leader or designee is considered final.

VII. Formal Complaint Procedures for Complaints Against a Senior Leader

All formal complaints, **other** than those related to misconduct, discrimination, sexual misconduct, separation from employment, or performance appraisals, shall follow these procedures.

- A. If an employee believes that informal resolution did not resolve the issue, the employee must submit their complaint in writing to the President with a copy to the VP for Human Resources. If the complaint is against the VP for Human Resources, the complaint must be submitted to the President with a copy to the VP for Finance.

Complaint Policy and Procedures for Employees

- B. The President, in consultation with the VP for Human Resources (or the VP for Finance if the complaint is against the VP for Human Resources), will determine if they will investigate the complaint or appoint a designee to act on their behalf.
- C. The President or designee will:
 - 1. Review records related to the informal complaint resolution process and the written complaint document;
 - 2. Share the complaint with parties named in the complaint;
 - 3. Interview all parties involved;
 - 4. Conduct an assessment using all the information collected; and
 - 5. Respond in writing with their findings and recommendations to the employee, other named parties, and the VP for Human Resources within ten (10) workdays following the receipt of the written complaint. The decision of the President or designee is considered final.

VIII. Formal Complaint Procedures for Complaints Against the President

All formal complaints, **other** than those related to misconduct, discrimination, sexual misconduct, separation from employment, or performance appraisals, shall follow these procedures.

- A. If an employee believes that informal resolution did not resolve the issue, the employee must submit their complaint in writing to the Chair of the Board of Trustees with a copy to the VP for Human Resources.
- B. The Chair of the Board of Trustees, in consultation with the VP for Human Resources, College Legal Counsel, and other Trustees, will determine who will investigate the complaint.
- C. The Investigator will:
 - 1. Review records related to the informal complaint resolution process and the written complaint document;
 - 2. Share the complaint with parties named in the complaint;
 - 3. Interview all parties involved;
 - 4. Conduct an assessment using all the information collected; and
 - 5. Respond in writing with their findings and recommendations to the employee, other named parties, the Chair of the Board of Trustees, and the VP for Human Resources within ten (10) workdays following the receipt of the written complaint. The decision of the Board of Trustees or designee is considered final.

IX. Extensions

Every effort should be made to adhere to the timelines prescribed in this Policy and Procedures. Should extenuating circumstances exist that require additional time for

Complaint Policy and Procedures for Employees

complaint submissions or responses, extensions will be granted upon notification to all parties.

X. Records

All formal complaint, response, and appeal documents will be retained by the VP for Human Resources.

XI. Confidentiality

All parties and staff will keep the complaint, fact-finding process, meetings, and documentation confidential, except to the extent that it is necessary to investigate and process the complaint.

XII. Related Policies and Procedures

[Employee Misconduct](#)

[Non-Discrimination](#)

[Separation from Employment Policy and Appeal Procedure for Involuntary Separation from Employment](#)

[Title IX Sexual Harassment](#)