



College Guideline: CCD- SA-1
Title: Student Complaint

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Date: 11/3/2025

Approved by:

Purpose

This guideline supports the student complaint process under SP 4-31a by clarifying roles, pathways (informal vs. formal), and appeals. It ensures students understand how to initiate a complaint, navigate support, and seek resolution.

If the Basis of the claim is discrimination and/or harassment based on federal or state civil rights Grievance and Investigation Process. ([Human Resources- Civil Right grievance and Investigation \(Community College of Denver\)](#))

Applicability

These guidelines apply to all Community College of Denver (College or CCD) students.

Guideline

SCOPE OF STUDENT COMPLAINT

An objectionable offense that may be included in a student complaint is any alleged action which violates or inequitably applies Board Policies, System Procedures and/or College Guidelines/Processes.

The following matters are not subject to review under this procedure:

- Matters over which the College is without authority to act.
- Grades and other academic decisions unless there are an allegation that the decision was motivated by discrimination and/or harassment which should be filed under the appropriate Civil Rights and Sexual Misconduct Resolution Process.

FILING A COMPLAINT

Students must submit all complaints in writing using the [online reporting form](#). The student issuing the complaint should describe alleged incident(s) and the Board Policies, System Procedures and/or College Guidelines/Processes violated, when and where it occurred, any previous efforts to resolve the issue(s) with a description of the discussion and the manner of communication made in the



College Guideline: CCD- SA-1
Title: Student Complaint

course of each effort, the desired remedy sought, and include any supporting documents. The supporting documents should be referenced within the body of the complaint.

The complaint must contain the name and all contact information of the student issuing the complaint. All complaints shall be made as promptly as possible after the occurrence, so that the SSAO or designee can more effectively address the reported concerns. A delay in reporting may result in the loss of relevant evidence and witness testimony and may affect the ability of the SSAO or designee to substantiate the allegations.

False reporting could lead to referral under SP 4-30a.

STUDENT COMPLAINT PROCESS

The college's SSAO has designated the Student Ombuds role to receive complaints (see Section 5).

The Ombuds will log the receipt of the complaint (date/time, student name, summary of issue, whether informal resolution is requested).

The Ombuds will review with the student whether the complaint may fall under a different procedure (e.g., discrimination/harassment under [BP 19-60](#), or behavioral expectations under [SP 4-30a](#)) and direct accordingly.

When a student expresses concern or wishes to file a complaint under [SP 4-31a](#), the Ombuds will

- Explain the complaint procedure and options (informal resolution vs. formal investigation).
- Assist the student to understand the steps, required documentation, and potential outcomes.
- Facilitate an informal discussion if chosen by the student (see Section 8).
- Ensure the student knows the formal route (see Section 8) and appeals process (see Section 9).

The Student Ombuds does not conduct the formal investigation or issue the decision; that remains the responsibility of the SSAO's designee, which is the Dean of Student Programming, Activities, and Resource Center.

INFORMAL RESOLUTION OPTION

After the complaint is filed with the Ombuds, if the student expresses a desire to pursue an informal resolution, the Ombuds will:

- Discuss the nature of the concern and identify possible informal pathways (e.g., facilitated meeting with the responding party).



College Guideline: CCD- SA-1
Title: Student Complaint

- Liaise with the responding party or relevant parties to arrange for a meeting or dialogue, if appropriate and agreeable to the student.
- Inform student on helpful ways to prepare for the meeting (documenting the issue, desired remedy, proposed resolution).
- Follow up with the student and, if appropriate, the responding party to check on progress and document the outcome.

If the matter is resolved informally to the student's satisfaction, the Ombuds will document the outcome (date of resolution, parties involved, remedy achieved) and note the case as closed.

If the matter is *not* resolved informally, or if the student prefers to bypass informal resolution, then the formal investigation route will begin.

FORMAL INVESTIGATION PROCESS

If the student chooses formal investigation (or informal resolution is unsuccessful), the Ombuds will refer the matter to the SSAO's designee, the Dean of Student Programming, Activities, and Resource Center (SPARC), or equivalent to initiate the formal process in accordance with SP 4-31a.

The SSAO's designee (Dean of SPARC or equivalent) will:

- Send written notice of the complaint to both the student and the responding party, using the college's authorized and preferred platform, such as Maxient.
- The SSAO's designee will request meetings with each of the parties involved. If the complaint is against the SSAO's designee, the SSAO will designate someone to perform the duties under this part of the procedure.
 - The meetings will be requested with each party (student and responding party), and will allow each to present documentation, witnesses, etc.
 - Both parties will be given the opportunity to discuss the allegations of the complaint and may offer any documentation, witnesses, or other materials in support of the complaint. If any party is not cooperative or responsive, the SSAO designee may make a determination based on the information available.
 - The parties are responsible for presenting their own information.
 - The parties have the opportunity to be advised by an individual of their choice, at their expense, at any stage of the process and to be accompanied by that individual at any meeting. An individual



College Guideline: CCD- SA-1
Title: Student Complaint

- who chooses to advise a party may only consult and advise the party they are working with; they may not speak for the student being represented at any meeting.
- The SSAO designee may remove or dismiss an individual who chooses to advise a party and becomes disruptive or who does not abide by the restrictions on their participation.
 - Investigate the matter (including relevant staff, students or other stakeholders) and gather appropriate evidence.
 - Issue a written decision to both parties, using the college's authorized and preferred platform, such as Maxient.
 - Based on the preponderance of evidence, the SSAO designee shall issue a written decision to both the parties and make recommendation(s) to resolve the issue(s) in accordance with Board Policies and System Procedures. The parties shall be advised of their right to appeal the decision, subject to the grounds below, by filing an appeal with the SSAO within ten (10) business days of the decision.
 - The decision document will include:
 - Summary of the complaint and investigation process.
 - Findings of fact.
 - Decision (whether the complaint is substantiated or not).
 - Recommended remedy or next steps (if any).
 - Notice of the student's right to appeal (see Section 9) and the deadline for filing.

APPEALS

In the event of an appeal, the SSAO is typically the appeals officer, they may designate an alternate or a committee. The appeals officer shall give written notice to both parties via email, using the college's authorized and preferred platform, such as Maxient.

The party responding to the appeal shall be given five (5) business days to submit a response in writing unless additional time is needed per the consent of the SSAO.

All appeals and any responses to the appeal are to be forwarded to the appeals officer for initial review to determine if the appeal meets the limited grounds and was timely filed within ten (10) business days.

The original decision will stand if the appeal is not timely filed or does not meet the appealable grounds as described below, and the decision is final.

The original decision is presumed to have been decided reasonably and appropriately. The ONLY grounds for appeal are as follows:



College Guideline: CCD- SA-1
Title: Student Complaint

- A procedural error occurred that significantly impacted the outcome of the decision (e.g., substantiated bias, conflict of interest, or material deviation from established procedures). The written appeal shall specify the procedural error and how it impacted the outcome of the decision.
- The findings are not supported by substantial evidence in the investigation report, or the report does not articulate a rational connection between the facts found and the decision made. The written appeal shall specify the finding(s) not supported by substantial evidence or for which the report does not articulate a rational connection between the facts found and the decision made; or
- To consider new evidence, unavailable during the original investigation, that could substantially impact the original finding(s). Any new evidence and its impact must be included in the written appeal.

If the appeals officer determines a procedural error occurred that significantly impacted the outcome of the decision, the appeals officer shall return the complaint to the SSAO if a designee was assigned, with instructions to convene a new investigation or the SSAO shall otherwise cure the procedural error.

In rare cases, where the procedural error cannot be cured by the SSAO or the designee, or in cases of bias, the appeals officer or committee may order a new investigation by a different individual acting in the place of the designated Investigator. The results of a reconvened investigation cannot be appealed. The results of a new investigation can be appealed once, on the applicable grounds for appeals.

If the appeals officer determines the findings were not supported by substantial evidence in the investigation report, the report does not articulate a rational connection between the facts found and the decision made, or new evidence substantially impacts the original finding(s), the appeals officer shall conduct or request appropriate additional steps (such as requesting the SSAO to reconsider in light of new evidence only) and/or modify the findings accordingly.

Written notice of the outcome of the appeal shall be provided simultaneously to the parties, using the college's authorized and preferred platform, such as Maxient.

RETALIATION

It is a violation of this procedure to engage in retaliation, such as taking educational action, against any person who makes a complaint or because of the person's participation, or perceived participation, in any aspect of this procedure. Retaliation includes acts to intimidate, threaten, coerce, or



College Guideline: CCD- SA-1
Title: Student Complaint

discriminate against any individual for the purposes of interfering with any right or privilege provided by this procedure.

SPECIAL PROVISIONS

If the student is under the age of eighteen (18) or incapacitated, notification to the SSAO must occur, as the processes may need to be adjusted.

If a student has a disability and would like to request accommodation to assist them through the complaint process, they may do so by informing the SSAO or their designee. The SSAO or designee will then work with CCD's Accessibility Office to accommodate the request

REVISITING THIS GUIDELINE

The Colorado Community College System and/or Community College of Denver reserves the right to change any provision or requirement of the relevant procedures or guidelines at any time, and the change shall become effective immediately.

Violations of the College Guideline

Violations of the guideline will be investigated by the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, Vice-President of Student Services, Chief Financial Officer and Vice President of Administration, or the Vice-President of Human Resources as applicable to the area of oversight.

Violations of the guideline may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination or expulsion from the college, as applicable