

**SOUTHWEST TENNESSEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE****SUBJECT: Student Complaints****EFFECTIVE DATE: July 14, 2010; October 28, 2013; April 28, 2023; Revised Feb. 15, 2024****Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide students with guidance for how to submit complaints to Southwest Tennessee Community College (“Southwest” or “the College”).

**Policy and Procedures****I. Student Complaints**

Students are encouraged to seek informal resolutions directly with involved individuals, if possible. For matters where a resolution is not feasible, a student may submit a [Student Complain Form](#). Complaints should be submitted immediately or within ten (10) days of the incident. A student can expect resolution of the complaint within thirty (30) business days after submission.

**Submitting a Student Complaint**

Students who believe that their rights have been denied may seek resolution in the following manner:

- A. A student may submit a completed [Student Complaint Form](#) to the Dean of Students or online at <https://www.southwest.tn.edu/advising/student-complaint.php>.
- B. Student Affairs will log the complaint, send an email to the student to acknowledge receipt, and forward the complaint to the appropriate administrator within five (5) business days of receipt.
- C. Upon receipt of the complaint, the appropriate administrator will review it and determine what additional information is necessary to resolve the problem, if any.
- D. After considering the complaint and related information, the administrator will make a decision as to the merits of the student’s complaint and notify the student of the resolution by email within thirty (30) days of the filing of the complaint.
- E. Students who feel that another review is necessary must respond to the email within five (5) business days requesting that the complaint be forwarded to a higher level administrator. The complaint and supporting documentation will be forwarded to an appropriate higher

level administrator within five (5) business days. That higher level administrator will review the complaint and inform the student of a decision by email within five (5) business days.

### Tracking Student Complaints

The College recognizes that student complaints provide valuable feedback and are an opportunity to improve services and the educational experience. By tracking and analyzing the complaints, recommendations can be developed and continuous improvement actions implemented.

#### A. Location of Documentation

A copy of complaints and resolutions will be sent to all parties. Paper or electronic files and supporting documentation will be maintained in either a Dean's office, Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, or the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs at least three (3) years.

1. Completed complaint files regarding academic affairs and the learning experience will be housed in the office of the appropriate Dean or the Vice President of Academic Affairs.
2. Completed complaint files regarding student support services (i.e., advising, testing, records) will be housed in the Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs.

#### B. Institutional Review

1. At the end of the academic year, the Deans and the Vice Presidents will compile an Institutional Record of Student Complaints summarizing the complaints housed in their areas. The report will not include the names of complainants or involved parties.
2. Tracking information will contain, but is not limited to, the following:
  - a. The total number of complaints received;
  - b. The nature of complaints received by category;
  - c. A summary record of each complaint and the action taken; and
  - d. Recommendation for corrective actions, if warranted.
3. The reports will initially be shared with the President's Senior Staff members.
  - a. The President may work with a team to analyze the data to discover if there are systemic problems that require improvement. If improvement is warranted, this will be communicated to the proper parties to develop recommendations and/or additional corrective actions to ensure on-going quality service to students.
  - b. The recommendations will be forwarded to the appropriate unit to be included in their subsequent Institutional Effectiveness Plan.

- c. When data is collected again the following year, the analysis will include reviewing the previous year’s improvement processes to assess institutional effectiveness. This will enable the College to identify and monitor any systemic issues and provide opportunities for ongoing improvement.

II. Resources

Southwest recognizes that students encounter a variety of situations that they believe should be addressed by the College. As a result, processes have been created to assist students. The College’s [website](#) is a useful tool for identifying resources for various situations.

Students are encouraged to seek informal resolutions as often as possible. The College’s Office of Student Advocacy and Support is available to assist with informal resolutions. If an informal resolution is not possible, students may use other resources provided below.

For matters regarding coursework, syllabi, and other academic matters, students are encouraged to consult the instructor of the course. If they are unable to reach a resolution, the instructor’s Chairperson should be contacted. An instructor’s chain of supervision is Chairperson, Dean, and next the Vice President of Academic Affairs.

If a matter involves a grade appeal, the student should review Southwest policy [2:03:01:01/11](#), Academic Appeals. This policy is comprehensive and provides the information students need to pursue grade appeals.

For matters related to student support services such as Advising, students may submit a complaint [online](#) to the Student Affairs department.

If a matter is related to discrimination based on a protected class such as race, age, or gender, a student may file an [online](#) complaint with the College’s Chief of Staff.

The [Bursar’s Office](#) is available to assist with financial concerns such as charges and refunds. Note that the Financial Aid department is a part of the Office of Student Affairs and, as such, is not a function of the Bursar’s Office.

If the situation is related to traffic citations or safety concerns, the College’s [Office of Police Services/Public Safety](#) is available to assist.

Technology concerns should be submitted to the College’s [Help Desk](#).

**Responsible**

**Source of Policy:**     N/A    

**Administrator:**     VP of Student Affairs    

**Related Policy:** \_\_\_\_\_

**TBR Policy Reference:**     N/A    

  
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**Date:**     February 15, 2024    

**President**