

BERKELEY COLLEGE

Student Complaint Policy

Purpose

The College aims to resolve student complaints promptly and fairly. This policy prescribes the requirements for receiving, tracking and handling student complaints received by the College.

Scope

This Policy applies to all Berkeley College faculty and staff who receive complaints from current or former students.

Definitions

“Complaint” – Any written or oral expression of dissatisfaction from a student who alleges wrongdoing by the College (including an associate) which either (1) is accompanied by a request for resolution, change, or other action; or (2) raises a policy issue or reflects a pattern of activity that, by its nature, would be in Berkeley’s best interests to address. A complaint does not include, (a) general requests for information or questions; (b) minor misunderstandings that can be resolved by explanation; (c) “venting” or expressions of frustration not accompanied by some request for resolution, change, or other action; and (d) any matter that is not related to Berkeley College services, property, faculty or staff. If a student includes a complaint in an anonymous response to a survey, the College is not obligated to attempt to identify the student and/or begin an investigation based on such information.

“Complaints Coordinator” – One associate appointed by the Department head who shall be responsible for tracking and handling student complaints. Department heads shall appoint one additional alternate Complaints Coordinator.

I. Departmental Procedures

All College departments (including Schools) and COOs shall create and implement procedures for receiving, tracking and handling student complaints received by or referred to the department. Procedures must include the following:

- Definition of a Complaint (in accordance with this Policy)
- Appointment of one primary Complaints Coordinator and one alternate principally responsible for handling complaints assigned to that department
- Identification of any associate, other than the department head, who has authority to approve the resolution of complaints of a specified nature
- Description of the workflow and/or process for handling student complaints from start to finish, including any specific procedures for determining whether to refer a complaint to another department and an escalation process for serious matters

- Commitment to making a reasonable effort to resolve complaints in a prompt and fair manner, which may vary, depending upon the circumstances. If a complaint is reported anonymously, circumstances may prevent or limit the College's ability to investigate or respond. Appropriate action may be taken in response to an anonymous complaint to the extent that critical information is available or other circumstances (such as a high volume of similar complaints) validate the need for action.
- Description of how and where (for example, a shared drive, ImageNow drawer, etc.) the department (or COO) shall maintain appropriate complaint records/documentation on behalf of the College, which shall include copies of all departmental student complaint procedures; all significant correspondence, reports and memoranda (including email messages) concerning a complaint; and other pertinent records (Note: In appropriate instances, such records may be subject to the Student Records (FERPA) Policy.)

II. Responsibility for Handling Particular Complaints

A. Complaints Handled by the Departments That Receive Them First

Except as set forth below, the department that receives a complaint first shall presumptively be responsible for handling it and maintaining appropriate records. (For example, if the Financial Aid department receives a complaint related to financial aid, that department is responsible for handling the matter and maintaining the appropriate records.)

B. Multi Department / Shared Complaints (Referral)

Some complaints may require input from multiple departments or could be handled better by a more appropriate department. In such instances, the department that receives the complaint first may refer it to a more appropriate department for handling. (For example, if a complaint about a federal student loan comes in through Enrollment Services via the 800-line, Enrollment Services would refer that complaint directly to Financial Aid and (upon its acceptance of the referral) Financial Aid would assume responsibility for tracking and handling the complaint.)

If the department to which a complaint is referred agrees to handle the complaint, then the accepting department shall assume responsibility for handling that complaint. Otherwise, the department that originally received the complaint shall remain responsible for handling it.

At all times, one specific department shall have primary responsibility for each open student complaint. The head of the administrative department (or, where applicable, a COO or designated academic official, respectively) that has primary responsibility for handling and documenting a complaint shall be responsible for compliance with this Policy.

C. Exclusions – Automatic Referrals

Certain types of complaints are subject to existing procedures that specify how and by which department they are handled. The following complaint types must be referred to and handled by the responsible persons or departments identified below. After referral of a complaint to the person or department identified below, the person or department accepting the referral shall assume responsibility for timely handling, tracking and record keeping with respect to that complaint.

Complaint Type	Responsible Person(s) or Department
Title IX & VAWA (sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, or sexual exploitation)	Title IX Coordinator or Deputy Title IX Coordinator
ADA (disability accommodations)	Director of Accessibility Services or ADA Coordinator
Technology, network, software, hardware	Information Systems (HelpDesk procedures or project request)
SAP Appeals	SAP Review Committee (with guidance from Academic Advisor)
Grade Appeals	Faculty-Chair/Director-Dean/Associate Provost (in accordance with Grade Appeals procedures)
Discrimination and Harassment based on protected class	Equal Opportunity Coordinators (designated in the Equal Opportunity Policy)

III. Assessment: Modifications and Improvements

A. Departments

If a department identifies a persistent or severe problem with its processes or procedures as a result of information obtained from one or more student complaints, the Department head or the executive to whom the Department head reports may modify such processes or procedures as necessary, depending on the subject matter and circumstances.

B. Institutional

If a persistent or severe problem is identified in connection with a College policy or departmental operating procedure as a result of information obtained from one or more student complaints, appropriate consideration should be given to modifying such policy or departmental procedure to address the issue. Any change in College policy or procedure shall be subject to approval from the President, or, if academic in nature, the Provost. Department heads (or COOs) shall be responsible for formulating and maintaining departmental operating procedures.

C. Periodic Review of Policy

The Vice President, Student Development and Campus Life shall review this Policy at least annually; assess its continued effectiveness; and recommend any appropriate modifications of this policy to Executive Management for consideration.

IV. Student Complaint Process

The College has implemented a Student Complaint Process to help students navigate the filing of a complaint. <https://berkeleycollege.edu/student-life/student-complaint-process/index.html>

V. Compliance

Serious or repeated non-compliance with this Policy (or procedures relating to it) may be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.