

## **Board of Trustees**

### **Vice President of Academic Affairs**

**Approval Feb. 2016**

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## **STUDENT COMPLAINT AND APPEALS POLICY**

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACSCOC) requires its accredited institutions to have in place student complaint policies and procedures that are reasonable, fairly administered, and well-publicized.

Students who believe they have been treated unfairly have the right to submit a complaint or concern about their experience. A student is any person enrolled full-time or part-time in credit or non-credit courses at the college. The objective of this policy is to resolve concerns as quickly and efficiently as possible at the level closest to the student. If at all possible, complaints should be resolved without initiating the Formal Written Complaint procedure.

### **There are four main categories of complaints:**

- **Academic complaints**, related to grades, academic dishonesty, instructors, advisors, or disability accommodations
- **Non-academic complaints related to** athletics, housing, student conduct, or staff
- **Business operations complaints related to** financial accounts, staff
- **Sexual Harassment and Assault**

### **Informal Complaints**

Students are encouraged to speak with appropriate faculty, staff or administrators in order to seek **a resolution prior to filing a Formal Written Complaint.** A student who is uncertain about how to seek an informal resolution is encouraged to seek advice from the Academic Dean or the Dean of Students.

### **Formal Written Complaints:**

If a concern cannot be resolved informally, a student may make a Formal Written Complaint. A Formal Written Complaint should be filed during the semester of occurrence but no later than two weeks after the beginning of the next regular academic session.

### **Procedures for Formal Written Complaints:**

1. Formal Written Complaints maybe submitted via regular mail, fax, email or hand delivery to the appropriate reporting official the Academic Dean, Vice President of Admissions and Financial Aid, Associate Dean of Students, Vice President of Finance, Athletic Director, Title IX Coordinator, or to the Office of the President who will direct it to the appropriate reporting official or office that deals with the issue. The procedures for submitting Formal Written Complaints are the same for students in both the residential and online (distance) programs.

2. Formal Written Complaints must be submitted on the Student Complaint Form (Academic, Non-Academic and Business Operations Complaints) or the Title IX Complaint Form (sexual harassment and assault). Both forms may be found on the College web site and require a written narrative of the facts of the complaint. Be sure to attach relevant documentation to allow the complaint to be reviewed, e.g. emails, syllabi, information from the Academic Bulletin or Student Handbook, assignments, doctor's/hospital statements, external scholarship agency, letters from minister/pastor/priest/work supervisor, etc.
3. The reporting official will initiate the resolution process within 10 business days (does not include holidays and weekends). As the complaint is being reviewed additional documentation and personal visits with students, faculty, and staff may be requested.
4. Students will be issued a response in writing within 20 business days after receiving the complaint. If the circumstances require a longer period to investigate the complaint the College has the right to extend the process a reasonable time period to allow for the review to be completed. In these cases, the student will be issued a written notification of the time extension within 20 business days.
5. If the student is not satisfied with the outcome they may request further reviews as described for each area:
  - Academic complaints (Academic Bulletin)
  - Non-Academic complaints (Student Handbook)
  - Business Operation complaints (Student Financial Account charges, payments and financial aid items should be reviewed in detail with the KWC Cashier or Controller (270-852-3108) prior to submitting a Formal Written Complaint)
  - Title IX Appeals (Student Handbook)

### **Student Appeals of Administrative Decisions**

Students may directly appeal the following Administrative decisions:

- Academic Suspension (Academic Dean)
- Financial Aid Suspension (Director of Financial Aid)

### **Procedures for Appealing an Administrative Decision**

1. Administrative Decision Appeals may be submitted via regular mail, fax, email or hand delivered to the appropriate reporting official the Academic Dean, Director of Financial Aid, or to the Office of the President who will direct it to the appropriate reporting official or office that deals with the issue. The procedures for submitting Administrative Decision Appeals are the same for students in both the residential and online programs.
2. Appeal forms exist for Academic Suspension, Financial Aid Suspension, and Loss of Athletic Scholarships and may be found on the Registrar's page of the College website. These forms provide information on what types of information should accompany the appeal.
3. Decisions concerning the appeal will be conveyed to the student within two (2) business days of receiving all required materials.

### **Records of Student Complaints:**

SACSCOC and federal regulations require that each institution maintain a record (log) of complaints and appeals received by the institution. Records associated with the written complaints and appeals along with information included in the log that contain personally identifiable information about students may be subject to the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 and should be protected against improper disclosure. The record and logs of complaints may be reviewed and evaluated by the United States Department of Education and SACSCOC as part of the institution's decennial evaluation or when other SACSCOC Committees are on campus.

Kentucky Wesleyan has a decentralized structure for maintaining its record of student formal written complaints and appeals and currently stores this information both electronically and in hard copy formats within the offices where the complaint or appeal originates.

The following information will be kept on record for a minimum of three years, unless required by law to be maintained for a longer time period:

- A copy of the student's complaint or appeal.
- The date the complaint or appeal was initially received by the reporting official.
- The type of the complaint or appeal.
- A decision from the Reporting Official regarding the complaint.
- The College's final decision regarding the complaint or appeal, should a second review/appeal occur.

## STUDENT COMPLAINT FORM

(Please use the Title IX Complaint form for sexual harassment and assault complaints)

Kentucky Wesleyan College considers student feedback essential to achieving our mission. Please review the Student Complaint and Appeals Policy to understand your options before completing this form.

Name:

Date:

Phone number:

Student preferred email:

Mailing Address:

I am writing to make a formal complaint about (**Whom or a brief description of what your complaint is about**). I have already taken the initial steps to resolve this by speaking to (**Name of the person you spoke to informally**). However up to this point, the issue has not been resolved and so I am taking this opportunity to raise my concerns to you. Below I have outlined my complaint and have provided this description and documentation to support my case.

In the Next Section it is important to CLEARLY EXPLAIN:

- **What your complaint is about, i.e. What occurred? Who was involved? Dates and times if possible. If the issue concerns financial accounts be sure to include the posting date, academic term and dollar amount of the specific item(s) of concern and why you have a complaint or request for adjustment of the item.**
- **How this affected you? Academically and/or personally**
- **What steps you have taken to resolve the problem?**
- **What outcome would you like to see? What do you feel needs to occur for the problem to be resolved?**

I have attached the following document as evidence of my complaint;

**List documents. These could include emails, exams, grades, sections from the academic bulletin or student handbook, doctor's/hospital statements, letter from counselor, external scholarship agency, letters from minister/pastors/priest/work supervisor, that will support your concern or request.**

Thank you for considering my concern.

Sincerely,

**Your signature**