PURPOSE
To establish procedures so that students, without fear of reprisal, can raise concerns about the teaching/learning experience or the services received.

SCOPE
Full-time and part-time students currently registered at the College and former students registered at the time the incident occurred which is giving rise to the complaint.

DEFINITIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word/Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>Program Chair or Academic Manager responsible for the program or course, or a Manager or Director of a service department</td>
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<tr>
<td>Complaint</td>
<td>The expression, either oral or written, of the student’s dissatisfaction with the learning/teaching experience, the College services or its employees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employees</td>
<td>Full-time and part-time persons employed by the College</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senior administrator</td>
<td>Includes the Dean of a School, Faculty or the Vice President responsible for the service department</td>
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POLICY

1. Algonquin College places a strong emphasis on providing students with teaching/learning experiences of a high quality. The College will address any concerns students have about their educational experience or the services they receive in a responsive and timely manner.

2. Complaints about the teaching/learning experience raised by students shall be addressed in a way which respects the rights of all parties and which leads to the rapid resolution of the disputes.

3. Students have the right to raise their concerns and to expect a timely response from the College.
4. All employees of the College who deal with a complaint shall respect the student’s right to confidentiality.

5. A complaint must be made within thirty (30) days of the incident(s) giving rise to the complaint except in extenuating circumstances which, in the opinion of the College, would justify an extension.

6. Where a complaint is against an individual, it is the right of the student to seek an informal resolution through the various levels of supervision in the department involved.

7. Where a number of students in the same class of a postsecondary program have the same concern, the matter should be raised at Program Council before proceeding with a formal complaint. In exceptional circumstances, the concern could be brought to the attention of the appropriate administrator, in lieu of Program Council, before proceeding with a formal complaint.

8. A group of students may delegate one or more of its members to voice a complaint on its behalf. However, no one shall initiate a complaint on behalf of another person or persons without the permission of the person(s). The decision whether to hear from other members of the group or to deal only with the delegate rests with the administrator(s) to whom the complaint is addressed. For a formal complaint, permission to initiate a complaint on behalf of another person or persons must be in writing.

9. The College has a number of policies dealing with specific types of complaints. These are listed at the end of this policy. If students are unsure under which policy they should launch a complaint or if they require help to initiate the process, they can consult with any one of the following: Ombudsman; Counselling Services; Director, Student Support Services, or Students’ Association.

10. Complaints can be addressed using an informal and/or a formal procedure. Students are encouraged to try to resolve their complaint informally before proceeding with the formal complaint procedure.

**PROCEDURE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Informal Complaint Procedure</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1 Set up meeting with employee to review complaint.</td>
<td>Student(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 At meeting, state complaint clearly, preferably in writing. If complaint is put in writing, retain a copy.</td>
<td>Student(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Listen to the concerns of the students and seek clarification, if needed.</td>
<td>Employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Explore ways to resolve the concerns.</td>
<td>Student(s) and employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Agree on a way to resolve the concerns and write down the solution for reference and for action/distribution as appropriate.</td>
<td>Student(s) and employee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.6 If unable to resolve the issue, proceed to Formal Complaint Procedure.  

2. **Formal Complaint Procedure**

2.1 If unable or unwilling to approach the employee, or if concerns have not been resolved informally with the employee as described in Section 1 above, meet with the appropriate administrator.  

2.2 At the meeting, present a signed written complaint to the administrator providing the following information:  
   - Description of the complaint, including time and date  
   - Staff involved  
   - Names of witnesses, if any  
   - Action taken to date  
   - Solution sought  

2.3 Hear the student(s)’s complaints and ask points of clarification.  

2.4 Within five (5) working days of meeting with the student(s), investigate the merits of the complaint, which can include a detailed, in-depth discussion with the employee or the student(s), and any other investigation method deemed appropriate by the administrator.  

2.5 Give the employee or student the opportunity to respond in writing to the specific concerns raised by the student(s) within three (3) working days.  

2.6 If the complaint has merit, work out a resolution with the employee and advise the student(s) in writing.  

2.7 If necessary, bring the employee and students together to discuss the situation, clarify the complaint, and develop a strategy to resolve the complaint.  

2.8 If the complaint lacks merit (e.g., if student(s) have not regularly attended class or completed assignments, or cannot identify a specific area of concern), inform the student(s) in writing and provide reasons why no further action will be taken.  

3. **Appeal of Decision**

3.1 Within five (5) working days of receiving the decision of the administrator, if the student believes the complaint has not been dealt with fairly or if a written response has not been received from the administrator, appeal the decision in writing to the next level of management within that area (e.g., Dean or Director).  

Student(s)
3.2 Review all documents provided at the Formal Complaint Procedure, meet with appropriate persons knowledgeable about the complaint, and make inquiries as needed.

3.3 Decide if the complaint has merit and on the manner in which the complaint is to be resolved.

3.4 Inform the student(s) of the decision within ten (10) working days of receiving the appeal and indicate that the matter is now closed.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION
None

RELATED POLICIES
AA03 Program Council
AA19 Academic Appeal
AA18 Academic Discipline
HR22 Harassment and Discrimination
SA07 Student Conduct
AA37 Review of a Grade
SA02 Ombudsman
SA 16 Sexual Assault

RELATED MATERIALS
None