

## ROCKINGHAM COMMUNITY COLLEGE

# STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

### ***What is the Student Grievance Procedure?***

The Student Grievance Procedure is made available to all students who seek to resolve various academic and/or non-academic written grievances or complaints against College faculty, staff, other students, or other employees. On occasion, a student's complaint is such that it may be resolved informally without the use of the procedure. However, if resolution cannot be achieved informally, and a student seeks a formal resolution, the procedure requires the student to confirm the complaint or grievance in writing as a means of seeking resolution. Formal complaints or grievance require that the issue be addressed in writing.

### ***Where Is Information Located About the Student Grievance Procedure?***

The procedure is provided in detail in the *RCC Catalog & Student Handbook*, which is published online on the RCC web site. The document you are now reading is available in printed form in the Student Development Division offices in the Whitcomb Student Center and on the RCC web site.

### ***What If I'm Not Sure About Using the Procedure?***

Students are welcomed and invited to seek assistance regarding the procedure by speaking with the Vice President for Student Development or a member of the Counseling Services staff. These persons will be happy to review the procedure with you and help you determine the best approach for seeking a resolution to your issue.

### ***What Does This Document Include?***

This document explains in detail the procedure to be followed for academic and non-academic grievances (or complaints). There is also included a form that is to be completed for each type of grievance. Be sure that you complete the form that is most appropriate for the type of issue you seek to address. This form, and a letter that must be attached to it, are to be submitted to the Vice President for Student Development, whose office initiates the administrative process for your concern to be reviewed.

You will note that the procedures for academic and non-academic grievances each have a set of increasing levels of review, depending upon your desire to move the process to higher levels based upon the outcome of a lower level of appeal and review. Each procedure also has a specified time period within which you must initiate an appeal if you seek to have a complaint or grievance formally reviewed.

Please review the procedures carefully and ask questions as needed to be sure you understand the process.

**ROCKINGHAM COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
**STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

The purpose of the Student Grievance Procedure is to provide a means by which students may seek to resolve academic and non-academic complaints against College faculty, staff, or other employees.

**Procedure for Academic Grievances**

An academic grievance is a dispute related to an academic matter within a learning activity, course, or program of study pertaining to both credit and non-credit courses or programs. For example, an academic grievance may pertain to procedures such as penalties for violations of course policies or requirements as contained in the faculty's course syllabus, a dispute of academic dishonesty, faculty's requirements, and academic requirements of specific programs of study.

The academic grievance procedure is based on the premise that informal resolution initiated by the student is the preferred outcome. If such resolution cannot be attained or if the student feels that an initial informal meeting with the faculty is not possible due to the nature of the concern, then the procedure will begin at Step 1 of the appeal procedure with the appropriate Department Chair/Program Director.

***Academic Grievance Procedure***

A student seeking to appeal an academic matter related to a program of study begins the process with at Step 1 of the appeal procedure.

In the case of a grievance related to a course, the student must contact the faculty of record who made the decision and request a face-to-face meeting to discuss the concern. The student will initiate the contact in person, by telephone, or through the College email system within three business days of 1) the date on which the alleged issue occurred or 2) the date the student was notified of the issue by the faculty.

The faculty must arrange a meeting with the student to be held within three business days of the receipt of the student's request. The faculty will listen to the entirety of the student's concern and consider if a change of decision is warranted.

Within three business days of reaching a decision, the faculty will communicate the decision to the student in writing and provide a copy to the faculty's Department Chair/Program Director.

If there is no resolution of the grievance with the faculty, the student may initiate the appeal procedure at Step 1.

## ***Appeal Procedure***

### **Step 1 – Appeal to the Department Chair/Program Director**

If the concern was not resolved by the faculty of record and the student seeks to pursue the matter further, the student must appeal the matter to the Department Chair/Program Director of the department in which the course is taught.

The student will complete the Student Grievance Appeal Form available from the Office of Student Development, attaching a letter that clearly addresses:

- the student's specific concerns,
- the date on which the student met with the faculty to seek resolution of the issue,
- the result of the discussion with the faculty, and
- the outcome that the student seeks.

The student must submit the original Student Grievance Appeal Form and letter to the Office of Student Development within three business days of the date on which the student learned of the faculty's decision. The form and letter will be processed and delivered to the appropriate Department Chair/Program Director.

The Department Chair/Program Director will contact the student to schedule a meeting, to be held not later than three business days after contacting the student. At this meeting, the Department Chair/Program Director will discuss the appeal with the student.

The Department Chair/Program Director will communicate a decision to the student, in writing, within three business days of the date of the meeting. A copy of the communication will be provided to the faculty, the Dean, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

### **Step 2 – Appeal to the Division Dean**

If the concern was not resolved by the Department Chair/Program Director, and the student seeks to pursue the matter further, the student must appeal to the Dean of the division. The student will submit a letter to the Dean which clearly addresses:

- the student's specific concerns,
- the date on which the student met with the faculty to seek resolution of the issue and the date the student met with the Department Chair/Program Director,
- the result of the discussion with the faculty and with the Department Chair/Program Director, and
- the outcome that the student seeks.

The student must submit the letter to the Office of Student Development within three business days of the date on which the student learned of the Department Chair/Program Director's decision. The form and letter will be processed and delivered to the respective division Dean.

The Dean will contact the student to schedule a meeting with the student, to be held not later than three business days after contacting the student. At this meeting, the Dean will discuss the appeal with the student.

The Dean will communicate a decision to the student, in writing, within three business days of the meeting. A copy of the communication will be provided to the faculty, the Department Chair/Program Director, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Step 3 – Appeal to the College Appeals Committee

If the concern was not resolved by the Dean of the division, and the student seeks to pursue the matter further, the student may appeal to the College Appeals Committee. The student must submit a copy of the original Student Grievance Appeal Form and letter, along with a cover letter describing the process that has occurred to date, within three business days of the date on which the student learned of the Dean's decision. The form and letter must be submitted to the Office of Student Development. The documents will be delivered to the Vice President for Student Development, who will notify the Chairperson of the College Appeals Committee to schedule a date for the student to meet with the Committee.

The Chairperson of the College Appeals Committee will contact the student not later than three business days after receiving the notice of the student's written intention to appeal to the Committee. The Chairperson will arrange a date for the student to meet with the Committee, usually within three to five business days of the date on which the Chairperson contacts the student.

The Appeals Committee will be comprised of seven members appointed annually by the President of the College, consisting of one division Dean, four faculty members, and two staff members. Any member of the Appeals Committee who has a conflict of interest in the student's appeal, or is unable to participate for any reason in a hearing, will be excused and a substitute appointed by the President.

On the designated date, the student will appear before the College Appeals Committee to discuss the appeal. The Chairperson of the Committee will notify the student, in writing, of the Committee's decision, no later than three business days from the date when the student appeared before the Committee.

The decision of the College Appeals Committee is final.

**ROCKINGHAM COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
**STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**  
**STUDENT GRIEVANCE / APPEAL FORM**  
**ACADEMIC GRIEVANCE**

Rockingham Community College, P.O. Box 38, Wentworth, NC 27375-0038  
(336) 342.4261

Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_ Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID Number \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

**It is expected that you have read and understand the *Student Grievance Procedure* and will follow all requirements outlined in the procedure. (If you seek to appeal a grade, please use the Grade Appeal Process in the current *RCC Catalog & Student Handbook*.)**

1. Have you attempted to resolve your concern with the faculty member? If so, how?

2. Check the level of the appeal process for your situation:

\_\_\_\_\_ (1) If your concern was not resolved with the faculty member, you must follow STEP 1 – APPEAL TO THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR/PROGRAM DIRECTOR. You must attach to this form a letter that explains **in detail**:

- your specific concerns,
- the date on which you met with the faculty member, and the results of that meeting, and
- the outcome that you seek.

If you did not meet with the faculty member, you must explain in your letter why a meeting did not occur.

\_\_\_\_\_ (2) If your concern was not resolved with the Department Chair/Program Director, you must follow STEP 2 – APPEAL TO THE DIVISION DEAN. You must attach to this form a letter that explains **in detail**:

- your specific concerns,
- the date(s) on which you met with the faculty member and Department Chair, and the results of the meetings with the faculty and Department Chair, and
- the outcome that you seek.

\_\_\_\_\_ (3) If your concern was not resolved with the Division Dean, you must follow STEP 3– APPEAL TO THE COLLEGE APPEALS COMMITTEE. You must attach to this form a letter that explains **in detail**:

- your specific concerns,
- the date(s) on which you met with the faculty member, Department Chair, and Division Dean, and the results of the meetings, and
- the outcome that you seek.

**Return this form\* and your attached letter to the  
Office of the Vice President for Student Development, Whitcomb Student Center.**

*By signing below, the student confirms that he or she has properly followed the Student Grievance Procedure and is providing all information that is required in this form and the attached letter.*

**Student:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Acknowledgment:**

**VP Student Development:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
*(or designee)*

\*Original form retained in Student Development Office.

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**(For Office Use Only)**

Date receipt stamp

Forwarded to:

- Department Chair
- Division Dean
- Chair, College Appeals Committee

Received by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date : \_\_\_\_\_

**ROCKINGHAM COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
**STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

The purpose of the Student Grievance Procedure is to provide a means by which students may seek to resolve academic and non-academic complaints against College faculty, staff, or other employees.

**Procedures for Non-Academic Grievances**

A non-academic grievance is one that normally does not specifically pertain to academic issues. Examples of non-academic grievances include complaints by students that they have been treated unfairly in violation of students' rights that are listed in the *RCC Catalog & Student Handbook*; discrimination on the basis of age, sex, race, ethnicity, religious belief, national origin, disability, or other conditions or preferences; claims of sexual harassment by another student or College employee; or claims that a sanction or decision imposed as a result of a disciplinary infraction is unreasonable, unfair, excessive, or not in keeping with the sanctions prescribed in the Code of Conduct.

Similar to the procedure for academic grievances, the procedure for non-academic grievances is based on the premise that informal resolution of a grievance initiated by the student is the preferred outcome. If such resolution cannot be attained in this way, or if the student feels that an initial informal meeting with the person against whom the grievance is filed is not possible due to the nature of the concern, then student will follow the Grievance Procedure that follows.

A student seeking to appeal a sanction or similar decision related to a disciplinary matter begins the process at Step 1 of the appeal procedure for non-academic grievances.

If the grievance pertains to a claim of sexual harassment, the student may first contact the Vice President for Student Development, rather than the offending person, to begin the Grievance Procedure.

***Non-Academic Grievance Procedure***

In the case of a non-academic grievance toward another student or College employee, if the matter cannot be resolved informally as initiated by the student, the student filing the grievance must contact the Vice President for Student Development within three business days of the date on which the alleged issue occurred that resulted in the student's concern. This contact may be initiated in person, by telephone, or through the College email system. The student will then complete the Student Grievance Appeal Form, available from the Office of Student Development office, attaching a letter that clearly addresses:

- the student's specific concerns and date on which the incident prompting the grievance occurred,
- the date on which the student sought to resolve the issue (if the student did not meet with the offending student or College employee, the student must explain the circumstances in the letter), and
- the outcome that the student seeks.

The Student Grievance Appeal Form and letter must be submitted to the Vice President for Student Development within the time period noted above.

The Vice President for Student Development will arrange a meeting with the student to be held within five business days of the receipt of the student's grievance appeal form. The Vice President will listen to the entirety of the student's concern and determine the course of action to be taken in resolving the matter. In seeking a satisfactory resolution of the grievance, the Vice President for Student Development may include in this meeting the individual against whom the grievance was filed. Within three business days of this meeting, the Vice President for Student Development will communicate a decision to the student in writing.

### ***Appeal Procedure***

#### **Step 1 – Appeal to the College Appeals Committee**

##### ***A. For a Concern Not Resolved in the Grievance Procedure***

If the concern was not resolved by the Vice President for Student Development and the student seeks to pursue the matter further, the student may request a hearing before the College Appeals Committee.

The student must submit a copy of the original Student Grievance Appeal Form, along with a letter that describes the process that has occurred to date and that clearly addresses:

- The student's specific concerns related to the decision, and
- The outcome that the student seeks.

The student must submit the Student Grievance Appeal Form and letter to the Vice President for Student Development within three business days of the date on which the student learned of the Vice President's decision.

##### ***B. For an Appeal of a Sanction or Decision Related to a Disciplinary Matter***

A student seeking to appeal a sanction or similar decision related to a disciplinary matter may request a hearing before the College Appeals Committee.

The student must complete the Student Grievance Appeal Form available from the Office of Student Development office, attaching a letter that clearly addresses:

- The student's specific concerns related to the disciplinary sanction or decision, and
- The outcome that the student seeks.

The student must submit the original Student Grievance Appeal Form and letter to the Vice President for Student Development within three business class days of the date on which the sanction or decision was imposed upon the student.

(For either A or B above: The student's appeal is submitted to the Vice President for Student Development, who forwards the appeal to the Appeals Committee for its consideration.)

The Chairperson of the College Appeals Committee will contact the student no later than three business days after receiving the notice of the student's written intention to appeal to the Committee. The Chairperson will arrange a date for the student to meet with the Committee, usually within three to five business days of the date on which the Chairperson contacts the student.

The Appeals Committee will be comprised of seven members appointed annually by the President of the College, consisting of one division Dean, four faculty members, and two staff members. Any member of the Appeals Committee who has a conflict of interest in the student's appeal, or is unable to participate for any reason in a hearing, will be excused and a substitute appointed by the President.

On the designated date, the student will appear before the College Appeals Committee to discuss the appeal. The Chairperson of the Committee will notify the student, in writing, of the Committee's decision, not later than three business days from the date when the student appeared before the Committee. A copy of the Committee's decision will also be provided to the Vice President for Student Development.

### Step 2 –Appeal to the President of the College

The student may appeal the decision of the College Appeals Committee to the President of the College. The student must submit a copy of the original Student Grievance Appeal Form, along with a letter describing the process that has occurred to date, and that clearly addresses:

- the student's specific concerns related to the disciplinary sanction or decision,
- the student's reason for appealing the College Appeals Committee decision, and
- the outcome that the student seeks.

This letter must be delivered to the President's office within three business days of the date on which the student learned of the Appeals Committee's decision.

The President will endeavor to review the student's grievance letter and all information pertinent to this matter within five business days of receipt of the student's letter. The President will have access to the information related to all prior levels of review and appeal.

The President, at his or her, discretion may execute either of the following actions:

- *Hold a hearing with the student*, and may invite other persons who participated in the prior review process to attend the hearing. If the President elects to hold a hearing, the President's office will contact the student and others to be involved in the hearing no later than three business days from the date of decision to hold the hearing. The hearing must be held within five business class days of notification to the various parties.
- *Remand the case to the College Appeals Committee for review and/or re-hearing* if the President determined that procedural errors occurred at any level of previous review so as to affect the process of review; or if information deemed pertinent to the case was erroneously or incorrectly excluded from consideration; or if new information not available at prior levels of review is now available so as to merit consideration. If the case is remanded to the College Appeals Committee, the Committee shall schedule another review and hearing as quickly as possible after notification by the President, and shall render a decision based upon the factors leading to remand of the case to the Committee. An appeal of the Committee's decision in a second hearing or review may be appealed to the President following the procedure for appeal of an Appeals Committee decision

After a complete review of the matter (with or without a hearing), the President may uphold or overturn the decision of the College Appeals Committee. The President will communicate a decision to the student, in writing, within five business days of the President's completion of review. A copy of the communication will be provided to the Vice President for Student Development and chairperson of the College Appeals Committee.

The appeal process concludes at the President's level (unless the President remands the case to the Appeals Committee and the Committee renders a subsequent decision).

**ROCKINGHAM COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
**STUDENT GRIEVANCE / APPEAL FORM**  
**NON-ACADEMIC GRIEVANCE**

Rockingham Community College, P.O. Box 38, Wentworth, NC 27375-0038  
(336) 342.4261

Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_ Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID Number \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

**It is expected that you have read and understand the *Student Grievance Procedure* and will follow all requirements outlined in the procedure.**

1. Have you attempted to resolve your concern with the individual toward whom you have a grievance? If so, how? If this grievance is to seek relief from a sanction imposed as a result of a disciplinary sanction, please specify.

2. Check the level of the appeal process for your situation:

\_\_\_\_\_ (1) If your concern was not resolved with the individual toward whom you have a grievance, you must follow STEP 1 – APPEAL TO THE COLLEGE APPEALS COMMITTEE. You must attach to this form a letter that explains **in detail**:

- your specific concerns,
- the date on which you met with the Vice President for Student Development to resolve the issue, and the results of that meeting, and
- the outcome that you seek

\_\_\_\_\_ (2) If you are appealing a disciplinary decision rendered by the Vice President for Student Development, use this form in following STEP 1 of the appeal procedure.

\_\_\_\_\_ (3) If you are appealing a decision of the College Appeals Committee, you must follow STEP 2 – APPEAL TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE COLLEGE. You must attach to this form a letter that explains **in detail**:

- your specific concerns,
- the date on which you met with the College Appeals Committee and the results of that meeting, and
- the outcome that you seek.

**Return this form\* and your attached letter to the  
Office of the Vice President for Student Development, Whitcomb Student Center.**

*By signing below, the student confirms that he or she has properly followed the Non-Academic Grievance / Appeal Procedure and is providing all information that is required in this form and the attached letter.*

**Student:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Acknowledgement:**

**VP Student Development:** \_\_\_\_\_  
*(or designee)*

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

\*Original form retained in Student Development Office.

08/17

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(For Office Use Only)

Date receipt stamp

Forwarded to:

- VP Stu Dev
- Appeals Comm
- President

Received by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date : \_\_\_\_\_