

Student Complaint Procedure

Policy:

Erie Community College (ECC) will systematically address student complaints received from enrolled and registered students. ECC recognizes the right of a student to lodge a complaint with the relevant academic and or student affairs department.

Purpose:

This document serves the following purposes:

- to present a uniform process for addressing informal and formal student complaints;
- to outline the procedures for filing complaints;
- to address how student complaints are reviewed and resolved in a timely manner;
- to explain our mechanism for tracking and aggregating student complaint information.

The procedures described below provide an outline of the formal filing process and list other types of complaint procedures. Although the process is confidential, a student's identity cannot be withheld from faculty or staff who are identified as respondent(s).

Divisions:

Academics and Students Affairs

Primary Contact:

Department Chair or Head by Campus
Dean of Academics by appropriate Division
Dean of Students by Campus

Responsible Executive:

Richard Washousky, Provost and Executive Vice President

Formal Complaint Process:

The formal complaint process is invoked when a student having difficulties with faculty or staff has been unable to achieve resolution through the informal complaint process.

In the informal and formal process, students may opt to involve other staff to request that an issue be investigated with the goal of achieving a fair and equitable outcome. The Student Complaint Procedure offers both complainant and respondent the opportunity for mediation and resolution by following a systematic process.

The Student Complaint Procedure is intended to resolve the complaints of students experiencing dissatisfaction. However, before filing a formal complaint, the student must have attempted to resolve the issue through the informal process following all of the steps outlined.

Informal Complaint Process:

Procedure

1. Prior to filing a formal complaint, the student must first have attempted to resolve the issue with the instructor of the course. If the concern pertains to a final grade, the request for review must be made no later than three weeks after the final grade for the course is submitted. If a resolution is not reached with the instructor, the student must next attempt resolution with the Department Chair or Head of the department involved.
2. If a resolution cannot be reached with the Department Chair or Head, the student may contact the Dean of Academics over the department to consider the student's request and attempt to negotiate an equitable resolution between the student and instructor at this point in the process.
3. At the last level of appeal, a petition may be made to the Vice Provost of Liberal Arts or the Vice Provost of Health Sciences responsible for the academic unit. The decision reached at this level in collaboration with the faculty or staff member is final, as long as the student was afforded due process.

Academic Matters:

Grading Concerns

In specific instances when a disagreement arises between a faculty member and a student over matters of academics and or grades pertaining to a course, the student's complaint may be reviewed (by the Dean of Academics, Vice Provost of Health Sciences or Vice Provost of Liberal Arts) to determine if a change in status is warranted.

Other circumstances that impact the relationship between a faculty member and a student enrolled in a course may also arise, such as academic dishonesty, matters of course attendance, and the grading of an individual assignment (e.g., test, paper, project, mid-term, or final exam).

Ideally, such matters should be dealt with between the faculty member and the student, except in case of an allegation of academic dishonesty with the potential consequence of disciplinary suspension and or dismissal. In this instance, students are entitled to due process. Due process is defined as an established course or process for judicial proceedings designed to safeguard the legal rights of the student. Please see the section below on this topic.

Academic Dishonesty and Disciplinary Dismissal:

In instances of alleged violations of academic dishonesty with a potential consequence of disciplinary suspension and or dismissal, ECC follows The State University of New York (SUNY) standard and law regarding due process. Due process is defined as an established course or process for judicial proceedings designed to safeguard the legal rights of the student i.e., that includes: (1) notice of the disciplinary process; (2) notice of the charge; (3) the arrangement of a meeting or hearing; and (4) a written explanation of the decision. In addition, all decisions are subject to substantive due process review.

Faculty are encouraged to request a conference with the Dean of Students before taking any action regarding academic dishonesty in order to ensure that the student receives due process.

For the full procedure regarding academic dishonesty and disciplinary dismissal, please contact the Dean of Students.

Complaints Regarding Faculty Employees (Non-Grading Concerns):

Please note that complaints regarding faculty members regarding matters other than grades cannot be pursued through the process outlined here. Student complaints concerning faculty members are subject to the grievance process outlined in the FFECC Bargaining Contract. Student complaints regarding faculty members shall be made to the Department Chair or Head, the Dean of Academics, Vice Provost of Liberal Arts or the Vice Provost of Health Sciences.

Student Affairs Matters:

Students may lodge a complaint involving matters outside of the classroom experience, involving a service or an interpretation of a policy or procedure or treatment by a staff person. The complaint may be reviewed (by the supervisor, director or a vice president over the area) to determine if the complainant received the optimal student experience.

Student Rights and Responsibilities:

Incoming new and transfer students are informed of their rights and responsibilities and appropriate student behavior during the mandatory new student orientation program called Support, Through Advisement, Registration, and Transition (START).

With the aim of addressing inappropriate student behavior, SUNY requires that all campuses confirm that students have been informed of their rights and responsibilities as an enrolled student, received a copy of the campus Student Code of Conduct and that students be made aware of guidelines for appropriate behavior and other expectations contained therein.

Title IX Complaints:

Discrimination, Harassment, Disabilities Complaints:

The provisions of Title IX and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complaint procedure pertaining to discrimination, harassment, or disabilities concerns are designed to provide all members of the college community with a process to report incidents as well as to provide for prompt and effective resolution of any reports of such violations.

For more information on Title IX or specific complaints relative to this process, contact the Equity and Diversity Office (716) 851-1118.

Timelines:

The formal complaint procedure is set up to take no more than thirty business days once a complaint has been filed. To obtain a remedy under the Student Complaint Procedure, complainants must be a current enrolled and registered student. A complaint must be filed no more than ninety days after the incident or complaint. Complaints older than ninety days will not be heard. Matters involving grades must be filed no more than three weeks after final grades are submitted.

Advocates:

Students may select their own advocate or ask for assistance in obtaining one on their behalf by contacting the Dean of Students, the Student Support Service Center or the Student Success Center.

An advocate may assist the student with the informal or formal complaint process and or serve as a liaison during any meeting, discussion and or hearing.

Record Keeping:

All records of the informal and formal complaint process, including reports and other disposition documents, are the property of the college and will be tracked by the receiving academic and or student office for reporting purposes. No names or demographic data will be contained in the final aggregate Student Complaint Report.

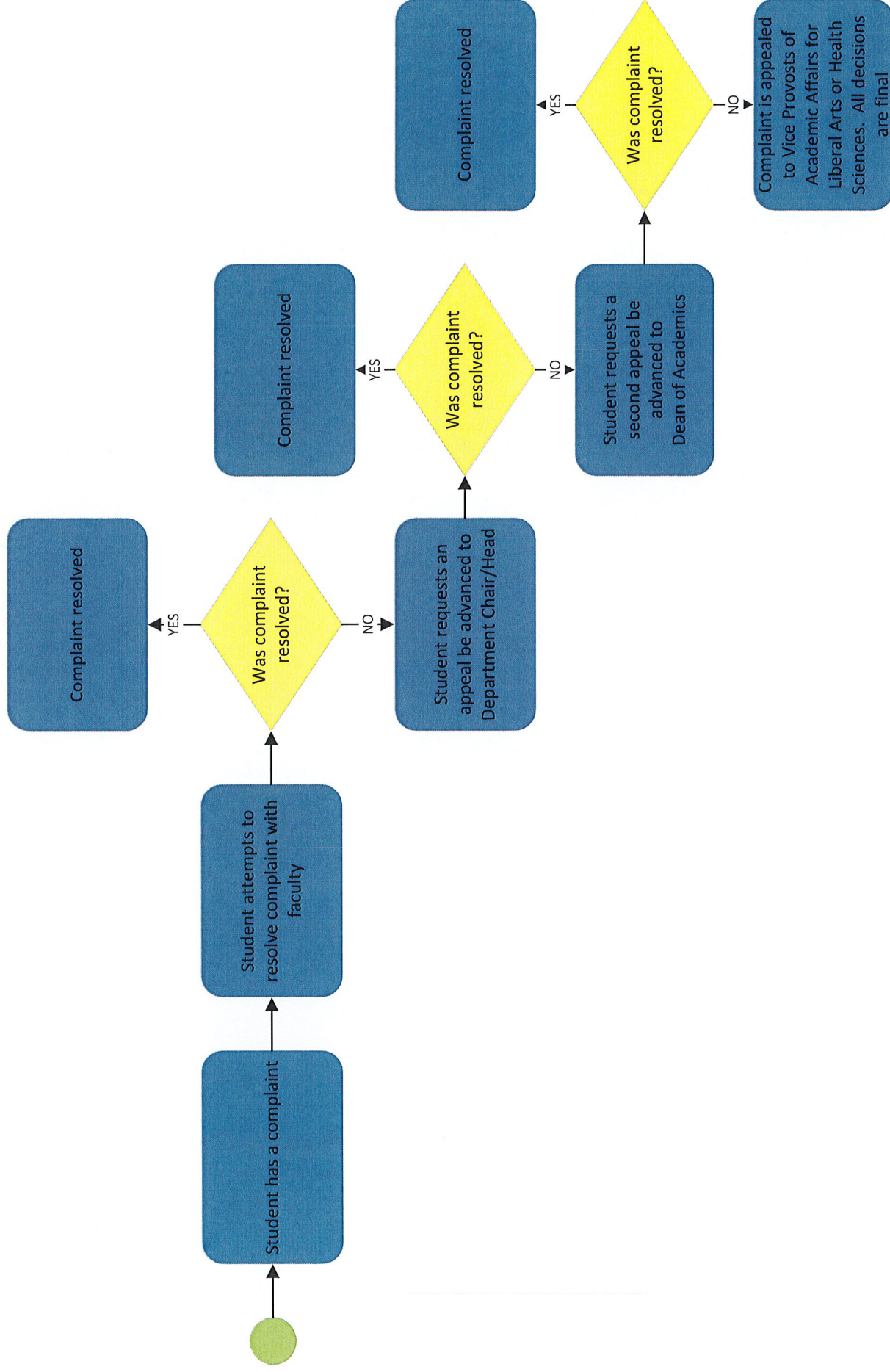
Assessment of the Complaint Process:

The college has developed a Student Complaint Committee that meets once each term to evaluate the overall assessment plan for student complaints.

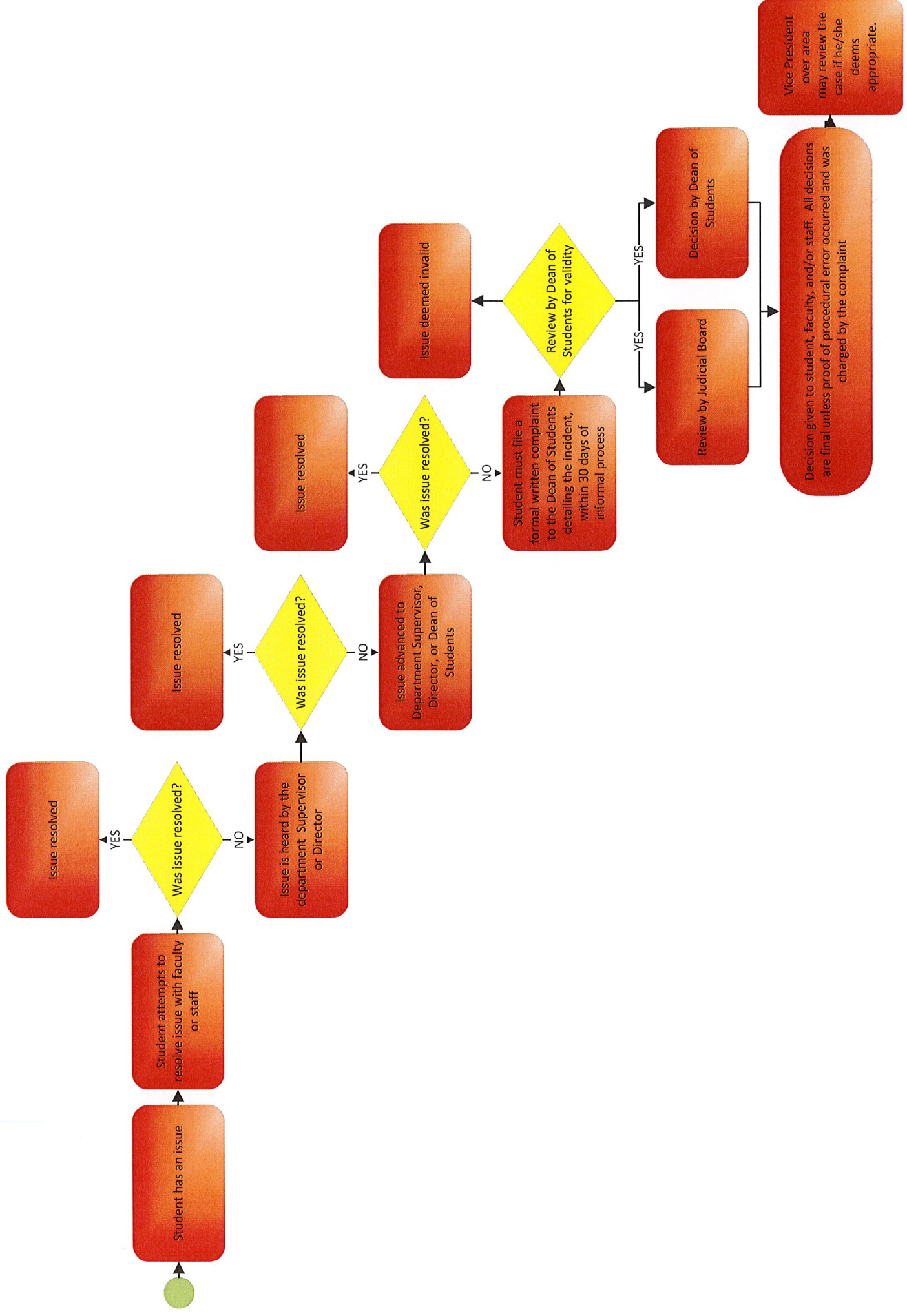
The plan also assesses the goals, objectives, and achievement of the overall plan to ensure continuous improvement.

No information identifying complainants and respondents is included in the final report to the Vice Provost for Institutional Research, Assessment, Accreditation, and Planning; only the resolution is provided.

Academic Complaint Procedure



Student Affairs Complaint Procedure



Student Complaint Procedure: How to File a Complaint:

Type of Complaint	Explanation	How to file a complaint	How to appeal a complaint outcome
Academic: Grading and other academic appeals	A student may lodge a complaint regarding specific grades, degree requirements	Follow all steps of the Informal Complaint Process before filing a formal complaint	Request an appeal in writing after receiving a written decision. Appeal should be directed to the same administrator the decision was obtained
Student Code of Conduct Violations	A student may appeal a disciplinary suspension or expulsion	Follow the appeal instructions on the disciplinary decision letter	Appeals may be directed to the Dean of Students
Sexual Assault And Sexual Violence	A student that has been sexually violated and or assaulted on or off campus	Contact College Safety and Security and or the Dean of Students at South Campus	N/A
Discrimination, Harassment and or Disabilities	A student may lodge a complaint with the Office of Equity and Diversity concerning a specific Title IX matter	Contact the Equity and Diversity Office. Make an appointment to meet with the Associate Vice President & Chief Diversity Officer to be advised of how to file a complaint	Request an appeal in writing after receiving a written decision. Appeal should be directed to the same administrator the decision was obtained.
Student Affairs	A student may lodge a complaint with the office where the complaint was initiated	Document the complaint in writing	Request an appeal in writing after receiving a written decision. Appeal should be directed to the supervisor, director or vice president over the area in the stated order.
General or other non-academic service areas	A student may lodge a complaint with the office where the service occurred	Document the complaint in writing	Contact the supervisor, director or vice president over the area in the stated order. Students may contact the Dean of Students if they are unsure of the area responsible.
College Safety and Security	Members of the college community may file a Security report if there is a potential or actual concern for the safety and security of one's self or the college community	Contact the College Safety and Security Office on the City, North or South Campus	N/A