

Gaston College Student Complaint Procedures

Gaston College strives to resolve student complaints, grievances, and concerns in a prompt, fair, and cordial manner. The following information provides students with options for filing complaints within the College as well as external resources for recourse.

Student Complaint

A complaint is a College-related problem or condition, which a student believes is unfair, inequitable, or a hindrance to his or her participation in the College learning experience. Complaints are often due to misunderstandings about College practices and expected standards. Communications between the individuals involved usually clear misunderstandings. Students are required to follow these guidelines to resolve problems. It is the responsibility of the faculty member, staff member, and administrator to fulfill his or her role in accordance with these procedures. The Student Complaint Procedure can be found in [Appendix J of the Student Handbook](#).

Academic Complaint

Most academic matters generally will be left to the discretion of the faculty member. Instructors have the academic freedom to cover the material on the departmentally approved syllabus in a variety of ways. Some instructors may have primarily lecture formats while others may have class discussion/participation driven formats. Some classes, by nature of the course, cover controversial topics. This does not mean the instructor personally espouses a particular point of view (lifestyle, religious affiliation, ethnic view, etc.).

Academic complaints are defined as complaints regarding course design and content, teaching performance, and instructor conduct. No retaliation or adverse action will be taken against the student for filing the complaint. Academic Complaint procedures and the Academic Complaint Form can be found in [Appendix H and I of the Student Handbook](#).

Final Grade Appeal

Questions and concerns about final grades are often the result of misunderstandings about grading practices and expected standards. Direct communication between the instructor and the student usually clears up these misunderstandings. It is the responsibility of every student to follow the guidelines to resolve the problem. It is the responsibility of each faculty member and administrator to fulfill his or her role in accordance with these procedures. Students wishing to appeal a grade must initiate the process before mid-term of the semester following the semester in which the final grade was received, excluding summer semester. It is the purpose of the grade appeal policy to outline appropriate steps the student should take to clarify any questions about final grades or grading practices. The Final Grade Appeal Procedure can be found in the [Student Handbook](#).

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Disability Grievance Procedure

If any student believes that he/she has been discriminated against because of a disability by any Gaston College employee, he/she has the right to seek review of such concerns. Students have the option of pursuing either an informal complaint or a formal grievance. If a student opts to pursue an informal complaint, he/she may later pursue a formal grievance if not satisfied with the resolution of the informal process. The Disability Grievance Procedure can be found in [Appendix K of the Student Handbook](#).

Sexual and Other Unlawful Harassment or Misconduct

In accordance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and the Clery Act and Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), it is the policy of Gaston College to provide a working and learning environment free from sexual and other unlawful harassment or misconduct. Sexual and other unlawful harassment and misconduct are illegal, strictly prohibited, and will not be tolerated. Individuals who violate this policy are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion or dismissal, and in some cases, criminal charges.

Employees and students are encouraged to report matters related to sexual and other unlawful harassment or misconduct to a supervisor, instructor, or other College official or administrator, so that a prompt, fair, and impartial investigation into the circumstances of the alleged incident may be conducted.

More information is available in [Appendix F of the Student Handbook](#), on the College's [Title IX](#) webpage, in the College's [Annual Security Report](#), and in the [Notice of Nondiscrimination](#).

Out-of-State Online Grievance

Gaston College students residing outside the state of North Carolina who desire to resolve a grievance are encouraged to first follow the applicable complaint procedure outlined above. If an issue cannot be resolved internally, a complaint may be filed with the appropriate state agency for handling complaints or with Gaston College's accrediting agency.

Complaint Resolution Contacts by State.

Students can find student grievance information for North Carolina using the links below.

[North Carolina Community College System Proprietary Schools](#)
[UNC Board of Governors](#)

SACSCOC Complaint Procedures

Gaston College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award associate degrees. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of Gaston College.

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The Commission on Colleges should be contacted only on matters related to the accreditation status of Gaston College and not for general College information. Information regarding the SACSCOC complaint process can be found at the [SACSCOC website](#) under [Complaint Procedures](#).

State Student Complaint Policy

In compliance with state regulations and by rules promulgated by the U.S. Department of Education, the University of North Carolina is committed to a student complaint process that is fair, timely, and effective. This policy establishes a process by which students can initiate complaints against a post-secondary institution offering programs in the state of North Carolina when all other forums at the institutional level have been exhausted. The University of North Carolina General Administration, acting as the clearinghouse for complaints concerning post-secondary institutions that have been duly authorized to operate within the State of North Carolina, will act upon those complaints within its purview and forward those that are not to the appropriate agency.

Complaints Against UNC Constituent Institutions

The North Carolina General Assembly established the University of North Carolina Board of Governors as the body responsible for the oversight of the University of North Carolina, its constituent institutions, and other post-secondary institutions licensed within the state of North Carolina.

The Board of Governors has formal and informal involvement with, and control over, the complaints and appeals that arise at its constituent institutions. In addition to direct involvement, the Board of Governors has also delegated authority to the constituent institutions and President to receive complaints and act on them accordingly.

Student complaints are routinely resolved at the institutional level. If there is no specific policy to appeal to the University of North Carolina Board of Governors, the President's staff at UNC General Administration maintains an open student complaint process "to review and appropriately act on complaints concerning the institution". Students from all constituent institutions may utilize the application form provided by the UNC General Administration Office of Post-Secondary Education Complaints to submit these complaints.

Complaints against Licensed Institutions, 36 Privates and Community Colleges

Complaints received against post-secondary institutions licensed within the state of North Carolina, state community colleges, and the 36 privately held institutions will be forwarded to the appropriate agency for action. Students may utilize the application form provided by the UNC General Administration Office of Post-Secondary Education Complaints to submit these complaints for processing.

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Student Complaint Process

- Step 1. Have you filed a complaint at your institution? If yes, proceed to the next step. If no, please refer back to your institution's grievance process. You must exhaust all opportunities for resolution with the appropriate persons at your institution before filing a complaint with the University of North Carolina General Administration.
- Step 2. Using the [State Student Complaint Form](#), submit all relevant information and supporting documentation regarding your complaint to the University of North Carolina General Administration 910 Raleigh Rd, Chapel Hill, NC 27515 or email to studentcomplaint@northcarolina.edu.
- Step 3. Once received by the UNC General Administration office, complaints will be forwarded to the appropriate area for action:
- a. Complaints against any of the 17 constituent institutions will be forwarded to the Office of Student Affairs at UNC General Administration.
 - b. Complaints against any of the 58 community colleges will be forwarded to the North Carolina Community College System.
 - c. Complaints against any of the 36 privately held institutions will be forwarded to North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities.
 - d. Complaints against any licensed institution will be forwarded to the Licensure Division of UNC General Administration.
 - e. Complaints against out-of-state institutions duly authorized to operate within the state of North Carolina will be forwarded to the Licensure Division of UNC General Administration.
- Step 4. Student will be notified of resolution.