

Gaston College Student Complaint Procedures Guide

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 Non-Academic Complaint

Student non-academic complaints are those matters involving concerns about a College employee or process outside of the classroom/lab setting that may adversely affect the status, rights, or privileges of the student. This process does not cover matters where there is an established and defined appeal process or policy such as appeals regarding final grades, refunds, Student Code of Conduct, Title IX, accessibility/disability, and financial aid. The Student Non-Academic Complaint Procedure can be found in [Appendix J](#) of the Catalog and Student Handbook.

Student Academic Complaint

Academic complaints are defined as complaints regarding course design and content, teaching performance, and instructor conduct in the classroom/lab setting, excluding final grade complaints. No retaliation or adverse action will be taken against the student for filing the complaint. Student Academic Complaint procedures and the Academic Complaint by Student Form can be found in [Appendix H](#) and [Appendix I](#) of the Catalog and 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 Records and Registration](#) section of the Catalog and Student Handbook.

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 Catalog and Student Handbook.

Title IX and Sexual Harassment

It is the policy of Gaston College to provide an inclusive, safe, and welcoming working and learning environment for all members of the College community. In accordance with applicable federal and state laws, administrative regulations, and College policy, the College prohibits discrimination in its education programs and activities based on sex. This Policy applies to

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conduct that occurs in a College Education Program or Activity located within the United States. Under Title IX, discrimination on the basis of sex includes quid pro quo harassment; sexual harassment; and sexual assault, stalking, dating and domestic violence (collectively referred to as "sexual harassment"). More information is available in [Appendix F](#) of the Catalog and Student Handbook, on the College's [Title IX](#) webpage, in the College's [Annual Security Report](#), and in the [Notice of Nondiscrimination](#).

Unlawful Discrimination and Harassment

It is the policy of Gaston College to provide a working and learning environment that is free from unlawful discrimination and harassment. In accordance with federal and state laws, administrative regulations, and College policy, the College prohibits and does not practice or condone discrimination and harassment in its activities, services and programs based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or expression, pregnancy, disability, genetic information, age, or veterans' status. More information is available in [Appendix N](#) of the Catalog and Student Handbook.

State Student Complaint Process

The State Authorization Unit of the University of North Carolina System Office serves as the official state entity and acts as the clearinghouse to receive complaints concerning post-secondary institutions that are authorized to operate in North Carolina. If students are unable to resolve a complaint through the institution's grievance procedures, they can review the [Student Complaint Policy](#) and submit their complaint using the [Student Complaint Form](#). For more information review the [North Carolina Post-Secondary Education Complaint Website](#).

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, students may choose to file a complaint with the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements – North Carolina (SARA-NC), their state of residence, or with Gaston College's accrediting agency SACSCOC. Please see contact information below.

[SARA-NC Website](#)

[Student Complaint Process](#)

[Student Complaint Form](#)

[State Portal Entity Contacts](#)

SACSCOC Complaint Procedures

Gaston College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) 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.

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 in the [Complaints Policy Statement](#) on the [SACSCOC website](#).