

Student Complaint Policy and Procedures

I. Policy

AAC provides accessible, equitable, and timely processes for students to express concerns and resolve formal complaints. AAC maintains a centralized complaint record, protects privacy, provides applicable appeals and external-review options, and uses complaint information for institutional improvement.

1. Scope

This policy applies to currently enrolled students and former students submitting formal complaints. Specialized processes, including Title IX, discrimination/harassment, and accessibility, adhere to specific review processes.

2. Responsibilities and Centralized Tracking

AAC shall maintain a centralized process for receiving, documenting, classifying, assigning, referring, reviewing, resolving, closing, retaining, and analyzing formal complaints. A designated institutional authority oversees the process, coordinates referrals, monitors trends, and maintains compliance evidence.

Complaint records include, as appropriate: date received; category and summary; receiving and responsible offices; applicable policy; referral; status; significant actions; outcome; resolution and closure dates; appeal information; and corrective action. Confidential investigative materials remain in the appropriate secure system.

3. Student Access and Privacy

AAC shall make complaint procedures reasonably accessible and provide information about submission methods, general processes and timelines, appeals, and resources. Complaints may be submitted electronically, in writing, or through other designated mechanisms. AAC protects complaint information as required by law and policy and shares it only with those who have a legitimate need to know or as otherwise permitted by law.

4. Timeliness

When practicable, formal complaints should be acknowledged within five business days, with an initial substantive response or status update within ten business days. Final resolution may take longer based on complexity, investigation, legal requirements, or appeals; students should receive status updates as the process proceeds.

II. Procedures

1. Submission and Intake

- A formal complaint includes the student's contact information, description and date of the concern, individuals involved, supporting documentation, requested resolution when applicable, and signature.
- The responsible authority determines whether the matter is a formal complaint.
- The responsible authority classifies the complaint, identifies the applicable policy and responsible office, determines whether referral or additional information is needed, and addresses immediate concerns.

2. Review and Resolution

The responsible authority reviews the complaint under the applicable policy, communicates with the student, conduct interviews, review documentation, consult appropriate offices, and conducts other reasonable fact-finding. Reviewers shall act objectively and address actual or apparent conflicts of interest.

The complaint record shall be updated when significant actions occur. At conclusion, the responsible authority documents the outcome and, when appropriate and legally permitted, provides written notice of completion, general outcome, applicable action/remedy, appeal information, and closes the complaint record. Confidential information about other students or employees shall not be disclosed.

3. Guardian and Records

As AAC transitions to Guardian, implementation shall address user access, categories, statuses/workflows, intake and referral, timeliness, historical records, open cases, confidentiality, retention, institutional review, and aggregate reporting. AAC shall maintain continuity and sufficient historical records during the transition.

4. Annual Review and Institutional Improvement

At least annually, AAC shall review aggregate complaint information. When recurring or systemic concerns are identified, AAC shall evaluate corrective or preventive action, which may include policy or procedure changes, training, improved communication, administrative or academic changes, student-service improvements, or additional oversight.

5. Compliance and Evidence

AAC shall maintain evidence demonstrating implementation of this policy and compliance with applicable HLC and federal requirements, including HLC FDCR.A.10.030 and 34 CFR 602.16(a)(1)(ix).

6. Related Policies

This policy should be read with applicable AAC policies governing student and institutional complaint processes.