



Policy	Student Complaints Policy
Approved By	Board of Governors
Last Update	Approved on April 18, 2022
Applies To	Students, Faculty, Staff, Board

1. Introduction¹

- 1.1 The Presbyterian College is committed to providing students with meaningful and high-quality experiences in terms of teaching, learning, and student services. The College is also committed to addressing student concerns in a timely manner, and in a way that is responsive and constructive.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide students with an opportunity to raise concerns about programs, policies, or experiences, where a College policy or procedure (specific to the concern) is not already in place. A list of College policies and procedures is found on the website of the College, under About Us. Ideally, resolution of student complaints can be reached through collaborative problem solving and on a relatively informal basis where applicable.
- 2.2 Where no other written policy or procedure exists, the present policy should be followed.

3. Policy statements

- 3.1 The Presbyterian College is committed to addressing any concerns students have about their experiences in terms of teaching, learning, or student services.
- 3.2 Students have the right to raise their concern and to expect a timely response from the college.
- 3.3 Complaints raised by students about teaching, learning, or services of the college will be addressed in a way that respects the rights of all parties and with the goal of finding a resolution that is amenable to all parties.
- 3.4 All employees of the college who respond or deal with a student complaint shall respect the student's right to confidentiality.

¹ This policy is adapted from the Complaints Policy of Durham College, Oshawa, Ontario.

- 3.5 A complaint must be made within 15 business days of the incident that gives rise to the complaint except in circumstances that, in the opinion of the College, would justify an extension of the complaint period.
- 3.6 If there is a conflict between the provisions of this policy and procedure and those of another that is more appropriate to the complaint, the latter policy or procedure will prevail, as determined by the College.
- 3.7 Students who submit complaints deemed to be false, frivolous, vexatious, or made in bad faith, will be required to meet with the Principal to determine if their actions are in contravention of the MST policies concerning “Academic Integrity and the Ethics of Preparation for Ministry,” which applies to students of The Presbyterian College.

4. Procedure

- 4.1 The student may first approach the staff member responsible for the matter in relation to which they have a complaint.
 - 4.1.1 The staff member shall listen to the concern of the student and seek clarification where needed.
 - 4.1.2 The staff member and student may then seek a way to resolve the concern together.
 - 4.1.3 The staff member shall create a written record of any resolution and maintain this on file.
 - 4.1.4 If the student and staff member are unable to resolve the matter complained about, the student shall proceed as indicated in 4.2 below.
- 4.2 If unwilling or unable to approach the staff member responsible for the matter in relation to which they have a complaint, the student may contact the Principal of the College directly with the complaint and shall do so within 15 days of the incident(s) that give rise to the complaint. In the event that the complaint pertains to actions or inaction on the part of the Principal, the complainant may direct her or his complaint to the Chair of the Board of Governors, who will follow the procedures outlined below.
 - 4.2.1 It should be noted that it is not the responsibility of student representatives to the Board of Governors, the Academic Committee of the Board, or the Faculty Committee to bring student complaints or concerns to these bodies. Rather, student representatives participate in the activities and deliberations of those bodies by bringing a student’s perspective to the diverse subject-areas discussed and explored there.
- 4.3 Complaints may be submitted in person or in writing. It is preferable that complaints be in written form, but in either case should be stated clearly. If in writing, the complainant should retain a copy of his or her complaint.
- 4.4 The complainant will provide the following information:
 - 4.4.1 Description of the action or policy that is complained about, including date and time if relevant.

- 4.4.2 The name of any employee involved, if relevant.
 - 4.4.3 Names of witnesses, if any.
 - 4.4.4 Actions taken to date.
 - 4.4.5 Resolution sought.
- 4.5 The Principal will review the complaint and seek clarification about the complaint as this is necessary.
 - 4.6 Within seven (7) business days of reviewing the complaint, the Principal will investigate the merits of the complaint or may designate another faculty or staff member to do so. This may include discussions with those persons relevant to the complaint. The investigation will follow any method deemed appropriate to the Principal or the one designated to investigate.
 - 4.7 If the complaint is deemed to have merit, the Principal will identify a resolution and advise the student(s) and other relevant individuals, verbally or in writing as deemed appropriate by the Principal.
 - 4.8 If the complaint involved an employee of the college, the Principal will, as necessary and appropriate, bring the employee and student together to discuss the situation, clarify the complaint, and develop a strategy to resolve the complaint.
 - 4.9 If the complaint lacks merit, the Principal will inform the student(s), and employee (as relevant) in writing and provide reasons no further action will be taken.
 - 4.10 If the complaint is deemed to be false, frivolous, vexatious, or made in bad faith, the complainant will be required to meet with the Principal to determine if their actions are in contravention of the policy “Academic Integrity and the Ethics of Preparation for Ministry.”
 - 4.11 If the complainant is not satisfied with the response or resolution provided by the Principal, he or she may submit an appeal, in writing, to the Chair of the Board of Governors of The Presbyterian College within 5 business days. The Chair shall consult with the Executive Committee of the Board and offer his or her written response to the student complaint within fifteen (15) business days (with a copy to the Principal).
 - 4.12 Reprisals, retaliation or threats of reprisals against anyone pursuing their rights under this policy and procedure; those having participated, co-operated in or for having been associated with someone who has pursued rights or participated in the procedures; or someone in any other role or capacity under this policy, are prohibited and may be subject to sanctions under the relevant College policies and procedures.
 - 4.13 When the complaint has been resolved by action of the Principal or delegate, or by the Chair of the Board, a log of the complaint and its resolution shall be maintained within the confidential records of the college, and shall be reported to the Executive Committee.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- 5.1 The Principal of The Presbyterian College is responsible for ensuring that this policy and procedure is adhered to and fully implemented.
- 5.2 College employees have a responsibility to respond to student concerns in a professional, confidential and timely manner.
- 5.3 It is the responsibility of the student to initiate each stage of the student complaint procedure in accordance with stated timelines.
- 5.4 It is the responsibility of the Principal (or Chair of the Board, as relevant) to issue a written decision at the end of the investigation, and within the stated timelines.
- 5.5 Non-compliance reduces the likelihood of resolving the student(s) concern and does not align with the College's mission and values.
 - 5.5.1 The College acknowledges that reputation may be negatively impacted when complaints are not resolved.
- 5.6 All new or revised policies will be posted on the College website in a timely fashion.