

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 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 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 Registration and Records section in the 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 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 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 Student Handbook](#), on the College's [Title IX](#) webpage, in the College's [Annual Security Report](#), and in the [Notice of Nondiscrimination](#).

Gaston College

Student Complaint Procedures Guide

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 Student Handbook](#).

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 UNC General Administration Office of Post-Secondary Education Complaints (see State Student Complaint Policy below), their state of residence, or with Gaston College's accrediting agency (see SACSCOC Complaint Procedures below).

Complaint Resolution Contacts by State

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

[UNC Board of Governors](#)

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.

State Student Complaint Process

In compliance with state regulations and by rules promulgated by the U.S. Department of Education, the University of North Carolina is committed to implementing 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 System Office, serving as the clearinghouse for complaints concerning post-secondary institutions that are authorized to operate in North Carolina, will act upon those complaints within its purview and forward all other complaints to the appropriate agency.

Complaints against Licensed Institutions, Independent Colleges and Universities, and State Community Colleges

Complaints received against post-secondary institutions licensed in the state of North Carolina, state community colleges, and the 36 statutorily-recognized independent colleges and universities will be forwarded to the appropriate agency for action. Students may utilize the application form provided by the UNC System Office of Post-Secondary Education Complaints to submit these complaints for processing.

Gaston College

Student Complaint Procedures Guide

Student Complaint Process

Step 1. Have you filed a complaint at your institution? If yes, proceed to the next step. If no, please refer to your institution's student complaint process. You must exhaust all opportunities for resolution with the appropriate persons at your institution before filing a complaint with the Office of Post-Secondary Education Complaints.

Step 2. You can submit your complaint electronically by using the [student complaint form](#) or you can mail all relevant information and supporting documentation regarding your complaint to the North Carolina Office of Post-Secondary Education Complaints, C/o Student Complaints, 910 Raleigh Rd., Chapel Hill, NC 27515-2688. If you have questions about this process, please email studentcomplaint@northcarolina.edu.

Step 3. Once received by the Office of Post-Secondary Education Complaints, complaints will be forwarded to the appropriate staff or agency for investigations as follows:

- Complaints against any of the 17 UNC constituent institutions will be forwarded to the Office of Student Affairs at UNC System Office
- Complaints against any of the 58 community colleges will be forwarded to the North Carolina Community College System
- Complaints against any of the 36 independent colleges and universities will be forwarded to North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities
- Complaints against any licensed North Carolina institution will be forwarded to the Licensure Division of UNC System Office. Complaints against out-of-state institutions authorized to operate in the state of North Carolina will be forwarded to the Licensure Division of UNC System Office

Step 4. Students will be notified of the investigation results and/or resolution of the complaint.

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