

# Procedure: 6.5.3p. (V.P.)

## Student Grievances

**Revised:** July 13, 2012; and May 10, 2007.

**Last Reviewed:** October 5, 2022; October 6, 2020; December 6, 2019; and October 30, 2017.

**Adopted:** May 10, 2007.



### I. PURPOSE:

It is the policy of the Technical College System of Georgia to maintain a grievance process available to all students that provides an open and meaningful forum for their grievances, the resolution of these grievances, and is subject to clear guidelines. This procedure does not address grievances related to unlawful harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation for reporting harassment/discrimination against students. Those complaints are handled by the Unlawful Harassment and Discrimination of Students Procedure.

### II. RELATED AUTHORITY:

O.C.G.A. § 20-4-11 – Powers of Board.

O.C.G.A. § 20-4-14 – TCSG Established; Powers and Duties.

TCSG Procedure 6.1.1p. – Unlawful Harassment and Discrimination of Students

### III. APPLICABILITY:

All Technical Colleges are associated with the Technical College System of Georgia.

### IV. DEFINITIONS:

**A. Grievable issues:** Issues arising from applying a policy/procedure to the student's specific case are always grievable. Specifically grievable are issues related to student advisement, improper disclosure of grades, unfair testing procedures, and poor treatment of students; this is a representative list and is not meant to be exhaustive.

**B. Non-grievable issues:** Issues with a separate process for resolution (i.e., disciplinary sanctions, FERPA, financial aid, academic grades, discrimination, harassment, etc.) are not grievable, and a student must take advantage of the process in place.

**C. Business days:** Weekdays when the college administrative offices are open.

**D. Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA):** The staff member in charge of the student services division at the college.

**E. Retaliation:** Unfavorable action taken, a condition created, or other action taken by a student/employee for intimidation directed toward a student because the student initiated a grievance or participated in an investigation of a grievance.

**F. Grievant:** the student who is making the complaint.

**V. ATTACHMENTS:** N/A

**VI. PROCEDURE:**

A. For all timelines established herein, if a student will need additional time, an extension may be granted at the Vice President for Student Affairs discretion.

B. Informal Grievance Procedure: Students with grievable issues should resolve those issues, if possible, on an informal basis without filing a formal grievance.

1. A student has ten business days from the date of the incident being grieved to resolve the matter informally by approaching their instructor, department chair, or any other staff or faculty member directly involved in the grieved incident.

2. Where this process does not resolve the grievable issue, the student may proceed to the formal grievance procedure below.

C. Formal Grievance Procedure: If students cannot resolve their grievance informally, they may use this formal grievance procedure.

1. Within 15 business days of the incident being grieved, the student must file a formal grievance in the office of the Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA) or the Technical College president's designee with the following information:

- a) Name,
- b) Date,
- c) Brief description of an incident being grieved,
- d) Remedy requested
- e) Signed, and
- f) Informal remedy attempted by student and outcome

2. If the grievance is against the VPSA, the student shall file the grievance with the Technical College president.

3. The VPSA, or the Technical College president's designee, will investigate the matter and supply a written response to the student within 15 business days.

4. Suppose the grieved incident involves possible unlawful harassment, discrimination, or retaliation for reporting unlawful harassment/discrimination. In that case, the investigation will be handled according to the Procedure: Unlawful Harassment and Discrimination of Students.

5. Suppose the grieved incident is closely related to an incident processed through harassment/discrimination or disciplinary procedures. In that case, the proceedings under the Unlawful Harassment and Discrimination of Student procedure will take precedence, then the disciplinary procedure and the student's grievance will be addressed. The grievance will not be processed until after the other procedures have run their course.

6. The VPSA, or the Technical College president's designee, shall be granted an additional 15 business days to investigate the grievance upon notice to the grieving student.

D. Appeal: The student may appeal the decision from the VPSA or the Technical College president's designee to the Technical College president. Only the student has the right to appeal.

1. A student shall file a written appeal to the Technical College president within five business days of receiving the response referenced in VI.B.3. above.

2. The appeal will be decided based entirely on documents provided by the student and the administration; therefore, the student must ensure that he or she has provided all relevant documents with his or her appeal.

3. At the sole discretion of the Technical College president, grievance appeals at their institution may be held in one of the following two ways:

a) The Technical College president may review the information provided by the student and administration and make the final decision; or

b) The Technical College president may appoint a cross-functional committee to make the final decision.

c) The decision of either the Technical College president or the cross-functional committee shall be made within ten business days of receipt of the appeal.

4. Whichever process is chosen by the Technical College president, the decision of the grievance appeal is final.

D. Retaliation against a student for filing a grievance is strictly prohibited.

**VII. RECORD RETENTION:**

Documents relating to formal grievances, including investigations, dispositions, and the grievance itself, shall be held for five years after the student's graduation or the date of the student's last attendance.