

ALGONQUIN COLLEGE DIRECTIVE	NO. OF PAGES 4	DIRECTIVE NO. E23
	ORIGINATOR Director, Student Services	
	APPROVED BY VP, Student Life & Human Resources	
TITLE STUDENT COMPLAINTS	EFFECTIVE DATE 2001.07.01	REPLACES 1995.01.01

PREAMBLE

Algonquin College is an educational institution which strives to meet the needs and to respect the rights of individual students. In doing so, the College recognizes its responsibility to provide an appropriate learning environment.

During a student's stay at the College, difficulties may be encountered with College policy, procedures, services, or during interaction with a professor, staff, or other students. This directive identifies a policy and a procedure for handling a variety of complaints.

POLICY

1. It is in the interest of all members of the College community that complaints raised by students be dealt with in a way which respects the rights of all parties and which leads to the rapid resolution of disputes.
2. Students have the right to raise and expect recognition of their complaints.
3. In the event of difficulty or conflict, students are encouraged to attempt to resolve the difficulty themselves with the individuals directly involved.
4. The College recognizes that in some instances students may need assistance in initiating a resolution of the problem. This assistance can be sought from a departmental Chair, Counselling, Ombudsperson or Director, Student Services.
5. Where a complaint is against an individual, this directive recognizes the right of the student to seek an informal resolution through the various levels of supervision in the department involved.

PROCEDURES, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Before proceeding with a complaint under this directive, students are advised that there are several other College Directives dealing with specific types of problems. These include: E15-Academic Appeal, E16-Academic Discipline, A8-Harassment/Discrimination, E27- Student Misconduct, E24-Review of Final Grades. The student(s) should follow the procedure below for the type of complaint involved. It is recognized, however, that complaints do not always fall neatly into a category. In that event the student(s) may seek assistance from one of the parties noted above. In addition, the student has access to two student oriented bodies, the Program Councils and the Students' Association or Student Council. An approach to any of these will assist in guiding the student(s) to the appropriate avenue for resolution. Also, any of these agencies may provide assistance at any stage of a complaint.

2. **Faculty**

2.1 **Step 1 - Student-Professor Resolution**

In general, it is desirable that complaints and disputes arising between students and professors be resolved by the parties themselves. The student(s) is to discuss the complaints in an open manner with the professor involved. The professor will respect the contribution students make to instruction by bringing forward their complaints with a view to their resolution.

2.2 **Step 2 - Chair**

Normally, the Chair needs to be satisfied that the professor has heard the complaint and has been given an opportunity to resolve it. If this is not the case, the student(s) will, in most instances, be advised to discuss the matter with the professor involved.

If the student(s) and the professor are unable to resolve the dispute, one or both of the parties may bring the complaint to the Chair. The role of the Chair will be to facilitate resolution of the dispute with mediation between the faculty member and the student. The Chair will attempt to resolve the dispute with as minimal a delay as possible. It is anticipated that most disputes will be resolved within five working days.

In the interest of clarity, it is strongly recommended that students document what they perceive has occurred, their interpretation of that occurrence and what they believe resolution should be. Once the Chair, has reviewed the complaint with the parties involved and reached a conclusion, both the student(s) and the professor will be advised of the recommendation.

2.3 Step 3 - Appeal to the Dean

In the event that a student(s) believes he or she has not received a fair hearing of the complaint(s) the student(s) may appeal, in writing, to the Dean. The complaint will be reviewed with the parties involved and a resolution reached within five working days. Both the student and professor will be advised of the resolution.

3. Staff Other than a Professor

In the event of a complaint against a staff member other than a professor, the complaint should be taken to the individual's supervisor. In the event that this does not result in satisfactory resolution of the problem, the complaint can be taken to increasingly higher levels of management within that department, school or institute.

4. College Service

A complaint about a College service is normally best addressed directly with the supervisor of the department providing the service. In the event that this does not result in satisfactory resolution of the problem, the complaint can be taken to increasingly higher levels of management within that area.

5. College Policy and Procedure

College policies and procedures, as they affect students, fall into two broad categories, those dealing with academic matters and those dealing with service or administration. The student should first determine the nature of the policy involved and proceed as follows. It should be noted that changes to policy often require input of many parties, and as a result, take time to implement.

5.1 Academic Policy

Issues dealing with academic policies can be referred to the Program Council. The directive on Program Councils (Directive E2) identifies the nature of issues appropriate to be addressed to the Council. The student(s) should approach their representative on the Program Council.

Alternatively the student(s) can make a complaint directly to the Chair or Program Coordinator.

In some cases, the student(s) may approach the Students' Association or the Student Council. The student(s) may contact their class representative for information on how to contact the Students' Association or Student Council.

5.2 Service or Administration

Policies dealing with service or administration are best dealt with by the department providing the service. The student(s) should first determine who is the administrator responsible for providing the service. It may be necessary to use the assistance noted above to determine this. The complaint and a request for a change to the policy can be made to this individual.

6. Other Students

In the event of conflict with other students that is not covered by one of the policies noted above, students are encouraged to try to resolve the difficulty by a direct approach to the other student. If their own attempts do not resolve the problem, the student(s) should seek the assistance of one of the parties noted above.

(original signed by)

Vice President, Student Life and Human Resources