

# McPherson College |

## Formal Student Complaint Policy & Procedures

**PURPOSE:** The Formal Student Complaint Procedures at McPherson College aim to provide a fair and transparent process for addressing student concerns and complaints regarding academic, administrative, and non-academic matters. This policy ensures that all student complaints are handled promptly, fairly, and with respect for the rights and perspectives of all parties involved.

**SCOPE:** This policy applies to all current McPherson College students who have an informal or formal complaint related to the college's policies, procedures, decisions, actions, or the behavior of college employees or students. This policy covers both academic and non-academic complaints.

### **DEFINITIONS:**

**Informal Complaint:** A student-generated hand-written or electronically-written complaint signed and dated by a student and provided to the Executive Vice President, the Dean of Students, or the Vice President of Academic Affairs. Informal complaints will not be tracked.

Informal complaints may be provided via US mail, personal email, McPherson email, faxed, or hand-delivered. For the purposes of this policy, a student is defined as someone who is currently enrolled full- or part-time or who has recently been enrolled in the institution. If the informal complainant is someone who has not been enrolled during the previous two semesters or academic year, (or) must reapply for admission, or an alumnus who received a McPherson College degree or other award two or more years ago, will not be considered a student for the purposes of this policy. Informal complaints received from non-students will not be tracked for the purposes of this policy, including non-student informal complaints that might relate to a McPherson College student(s) or representative(s).

**Formal Complaint:** An institutionally recognized petition or appeal that requests a student to bring forth material facts, reasons, and sufficient support that names a McPherson College party in the complaint. Formally recognized forms are 1). Petition to McPherson College Form or 2). Specified appeal documents (Formal Grade Appeal, Academic Suspension Appeal, Financial Aid Suspension Appeal, etc.).

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**Types of formal complaints** include academic, non-academic, and harassment.

**Academic formal complaints and/or appeals** are reported to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Information about the policies and procedures for students who wish to pursue academic complaints or appeals are detailed in the Academic Catalog and the Student Handbook. Students who wish to pursue an academic complaint or appeal should follow the procedures outlined in the respective publication. Academic complaints and appeals include: academic suspension, accommodation request appeals, final grade appeal, academic dishonesty report appeal, and/or teaching/instructor complaint.

**Non-academic complaints and appeals** are reported to the Executive Vice President or Dean of Students. Information about the policies and procedures for students who wish to pursue non-academic complaints or appeals are detailed in the Student Handbook. Students who wish to pursue a non-academic complaint or appeal should follow the procedures outlined in the respective publication. Non-academic complaints and appeals include: formal incident reports, meal plan appeals, housing contract appeals, and/or staff complaint.

**Harassment complaints** are reported to either the Director of Human Resources, Dean of Students or Vice President for Academic Affairs. Preventing prohibited discrimination, harassment and retaliation is the responsibility of all members of the College Community. Faculty, staff, and third parties should report a potential violation of this policy as soon as possible. The policies and procedures for reporting complaints of harassment can be found in the Administrative Policies Handbook under heading *ADM180 McPherson College Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation Complaint Procedure*. Students wishing to pursue a complaint of harassment should follow the procedures outlined in this policy.

## **GENERAL GUIDELINES ON INFORMAL COMPLAINTS**

When a student files an informal complaint the college officer receiving the complaint will make every effort to schedule a meeting with the student who filed the complaint. As a result of this meeting, the student may arrive at a resolution for the concern or decide to file a formal complaint.

## **FORMAL COMPLAINT AND APPEAL GUIDELINES**

Students wishing to file a formal complaint should follow the published procedures for each type of complaint or appeal. When a complaint or appeal is filed, the college officer who receives the complaint or appeal will record the complaint or appeal in a secure electronic file, track the progress of the complaint or appeal, and provide regular updates to the complainant/appellant until conclusive action is taken and all appropriate reports, according to the corresponding complaint or appeal policy, have been filed with the appropriate office or officer.

## **COMPLAINTS TO THE HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION**

The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) has established a clear distinction between individual grievances and complaints that appear to involve broad institutional practices. Where a complaint does raise issues regarding the institution's ongoing ability to meet the Criteria of Accreditation, the Commission forwards the complaint to the institution and requests a formal response. HLC Contact information:

Higher Learning Commission  
230 South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500,  
Chicago, Illinois 60604-1411  
Phone: 800.621.7440. Fax: 312.263.7462.

[info@hlcommission.org](mailto:info@hlcommission.org)

Instructions on HLC website: <https://www.hlcommission.org/Student-Resources/complaints.html>

## **FILING A CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLAINT**

The U.S. Attorney's Office welcomes information from the public that brings to our attention possible violations of our nation's civil rights laws.

Please be aware that while the scope of our civil rights practice is broad, our authority to investigate and seek relief for individual complaining parties for alleged civil rights violations is limited. The U.S. Attorney's Office can only investigate and seek to remedy alleged unlawful conduct when authorized to do so by a specific statute and in the manner proscribed by that statute. In some instances, this means they can only investigate and seek to remedy patterns of unlawful discriminatory conduct, not individual incidents. Additionally, many civil rights claims must be investigated first by another federal agency before being referred to the U.S. Attorney's Office for litigation. For example, criminal civil rights matters are generally investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, before those matters come to their office for review. For more information about the limitations of the U.S. Attorney's Office's authority and/or required first steps, please use the links below regarding the specific type of claim you believe you may have.

**To file a complaint with the Department of Justice**, go to the [Department of Justice - How to File a Complaint website](#) and follow the instructions.

[Civil Rights Complaint Form – English](#)

To submit a complaint by phone, call (855) 321-5549, and request to leave a voicemail in the Civil Rights Intake Voicemail Box.

Language interpretation and disability accommodations are available upon request.

## **COMPLAINTS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, TITLE IX BASIS**

Kansas City Office (OCR Office for Kansas) Office for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education  
One Petticoat Lane  
1010 Walnut Street, 3rd floor, Suite 320 Kansas City, MO 64106 Telephone: 816-268-0550  
FAX: 816-268-0599; TDD: 800-877-8339 Email: [OCR.KansasCity@ed.gov](mailto:OCR.KansasCity@ed.gov)

U.S. Department of Education  
Office for Civil Rights  
Lyndon Baines Johnson Department of Education Building, 400 Maryland Avenue,  
SW  
Washington, DC 20202-1100  
Telephone: 800-421-3481  
FAX: 202-453-6012; TDD: 800-877-8339  
Email: [OCR@ed.gov](mailto:OCR@ed.gov)

To file complaints of discrimination with OCR, you may use the online complaint form available at: <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/complaintintro.html> or send a letter to the OCR enforcement office for the State of Kansas.