

COLLEGE POLICY

POLICY TYPE:	Administrative
POLICY TITLE:	Student Complaints
POLICY NO.:	ADMIN-239
RESPONSIBILITY:	Durham College Leadership Team
APPROVED BY:	Durham College Leadership Team
EFFECTIVE DATE:	September 2012
REVISED:	March 2016
REVIEW DATE:	September 2019

1. Introduction

At Durham College the student experience comes first. This includes providing students with high-quality teaching, learning and service experiences. The college has a number of institutional policies and procedures that are designed to help it realize success in these areas, and also assist students in finding a resolution to concerns or complaints. The college is committed to addressing student concerns in a responsive and timely manner, including complaints related, but not limited to, the advertising and marketing of a program, the educational experience and/or the services they receive. In addition to this policy and related procedure, students may also submit a concern or complaint via DC Cares. DC Cares provides several ways for students to provide the College with feedback on our services, facilities and DC Cares receives comments on the website at: <http://www.durhamcollege.ca/dccares>. In addition, boxes to receive paper based comments are located on each campus and at the Pickering Learning Site.

2. Purpose

To establish a policy that provides an opportunity for students, without fear of reprisal, to raise concerns about a program, their learning experience or the services received in situations where a college policy or procedure specific to their concern is not already in place. A list of policies and procedures that address specific academic or service concerns or complaints is listed at the bottom of this policy and the documents are available on the college's website. Where no obvious policy or procedure exists, this policy should be followed.

3. Definitions

3.1. Complaint

Complaint – The expression, verbal or written, of a student’s concern or dissatisfaction with his or her learning experience, college services or its employees.

3.2. Employee

Employee – Full- and part-time persons employed by the college.

3.3. Student

Student – Full- and part-time students currently registered at the college and former students registered at the time the incident occurred which is giving rise to the complaint.

3.4. Administrator

Administrator – Dean, associate dean or academic director responsible for the program or course, or a manager or director of a service department (e.g. Admissions, Student Academic Learning Services, Student Affairs, Library Services, Facilities, etc.).

3.5. Senior administrator

Senior administrator – Includes the principal of a campus, the vice-president or associate vice-president responsible for the academic or service department (e.g. Academic, Student Affairs, Administration).

4. Policy statements

- 4.1. Durham College places a strong emphasis on the student experience, including the provision of high-quality teaching and learning experiences.
- 4.2. The college is committed to addressing any concerns students have about their educational experience or the services they receive, in a responsive and timely manner.
- 4.3. Students have the right to raise their concerns and to expect a timely response from the college.
- 4.4. Complaints raised by students about the teaching and/or learning experience, or services 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.

- 4.5. All employees of the college who deal with a complaint shall respect the student's right to confidentiality.
- 4.6. A complaint must be made within 30 business days of the incident(s), giving rise to the complaint except in extenuating circumstances that, in the opinion of the college, would justify an extension.
- 4.7. If there is a conflict between one or more provisions of this policy or procedure and one or more provisions of another policy and/or procedure more appropriate to the nature of the concern or complaint, then the latter policy and/or procedure will prevail. See below for a list of relevant policies and procedures..
- 4.8. Students who submit complaints deemed to be false, frivolous, vexatious, or made in bad faith will be required to meet with the relevant senior administrator who may refer the issue to the Durham College Student Conduct Policy (ACAD-115) and Procedure (ACAD-115.1).

5. Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) considerations

- 5.1. Durham College's commitment to accessibility and AODA standards has been considered in the development of this policy and it adheres to the principles outlined in the AODA standards and Durham College Accessibility Policy (ADMIN-203).
- 5.2. Durham College strives at all times to provide its goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities/exceptionalities. It is also committed to giving people with disabilities/exceptionalities the same opportunity to access goods and services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other customers, as per the Durham College Customer Service Standard Policy (ADMIN-249).
- 5.3. Durham College will make the student complaints processes accessible to people with disabilities/exceptionalities by providing, upon request, accessible formats and communications supports in a timely manner and at no additional cost.

6. Roles and responsibilities

- 6.1. The Durham College Leadership Team is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to and fully implemented.
- 6.2. Specific details related to individual responsibilities are provided in the Student Complaints Procedure (ADMIN 239.1).

7. Non-compliance implications

Non-compliance reduces the likelihood of resolving the student(s) concern and does not align with the college's mission and values.

Reputation may be negatively impacted when complaints are not resolved.

8. Communications Plan

A message will be posted on ICE alerting faculty/staff when new or revised policies and procedures are added to ICE. A message will be posted on MyCampus alerting students when new or revised policies and procedures are added.

9. Related policies, procedures and directives

- Durham College Academic Integrity Policy ACAD-101 and Procedure ACAD-101.1
- Durham College Accessibility Policy ADMIN-203
- Durham College Advanced Standing and Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Policy ACAD-109 and Procedure ACAD-109.1
- Durham College Accessible Customer Service Policy, ADMIN 249
- Durham College Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation: Information and Communication Standard, Employment Standard, ADMIN 250
- Durham College Grade Appeals Policy ACAD-111 and Procedure ACAD-111.1
- Durham College Grading and Promotion Policy ACAD-112 and Procedure ACAD-112.1
- Durham College Harassment and Discrimination Policy ADMIN-202 and Procedure ADMIN-202.1
- Durham College Student Complaints Procedure ADMIN-239.1
- Durham College Student Conduct Policy ACAD-115 and Procedure ACAD-115.1