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**Applies to:** Faculty, staff, students, student employees, volunteers, vendors, visitors and members of the community.

**Responsible Offices**

**Office of Student Life**

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### POLICY STATEMENT

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Central Ohio Technical College actively encourages feedback from students and other members of the college community and addresses general concerns in a fair and timely fashion according to stated procedures; logs such concerns and their resolution; and analyzes them to improve its processes.

The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) requires, in accord with federal regulations, that each institution maintains a record of complaints received by the institution. This record is made available to the Commission upon request and is reviewed and evaluated by the Commission as part of the institution's decennial evaluation.

#### **Purpose of the Policy**

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To provide constituents with an avenue to express concerns and to work with College officials toward amicable resolutions.

#### **Policy Details**

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- I. This policy applies to concerns, complaints or feedback regarding academic matters, non-academic matters, facilities, safety & security (non-emergency), and procedures and actions of faculty and staff who provide services on behalf of Central Ohio Technical College.
- II. The policy applies to matters raised by students, faculty, staff, volunteers, vendors, visitors, and community members.
- III. This policy does not apply to concerns/complaints that are covered by other applicable College policies, specifically:
  - a. Complaints about sex discrimination, harassment and/or retaliation are handled in accordance with the College's [Sexual Misconduct, Sexual Harassment and Relationship Violence Policy](#) and corresponding procedures.
  - b. Complaints about discrimination, harassment and/or retaliation, not based on sex, are handled in accordance with the College's Equal Employment Opportunity and Non-discrimination and corresponding procedures.
  - c. Complaints related to the ADA/Section 504 accommodation process or related to the implementation of approved reasonable accommodations are handled in accordance with the College's [Equal Employment for Individuals with Disabilities Policy](#) and the federal guidelines as outlined in the Americans for Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
  - d. Complaints related to student conduct are handled in accordance with the College's Code of Student Conduct.
  - e. Staff employment disputes are handled in accordance with the College's Employment Disputes and Resolution policy. Dispute resolution for full-time faculty will be in accordance with the grievance procedure included in the Agreement between Central Ohio Technical College and the United Faculty/Central Ohio Technical College, AFT/OFT.
- IV. All aspects of student complaints shall be treated as confidential in accordance with the College's policies regarding the confidentiality of student records.

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- V. All formal complaints and the correspondence related to them shall be kept on file in the Office of Academic Affairs for a minimum of seven years, and will be made available to regional accrediting bodies upon request.
- VI. No adverse action will be taken against any party who raises a concern or feedback in good faith or against any person who in good faith provides information about a concern or feedback.

## PROCEDURE

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- I. Reporting Concerns or Feedback
  - A. In the event of a concern or complaint at Central Ohio Technical College, issues should be resolved at the lowest level possible to resolve the concern quickly and to the satisfaction of those involved. Students are encouraged to make an informal inquiry to an instructor, advisor or assigned dean/director as soon as possible following the event that gave rise to the complaint.  
  
Staff, visitors, community members or other individuals are encouraged to make informal inquiries to the designated staff person with assigned responsibility in the area of concern as soon as possible to reach a resolution.
  - B. When resolution is not reached or not practical through informal inquiry, a report can be made by any individual who is directly involved in or who observes a concern or feedback warranting institutional notification
  - C. Reports can be made by completing an online form, located at <http://www.cotc.edu/Life/student-complaints-and-concerns>.
  - D. Upon submitting a concern or feedback, an automatic reply will be sent to the submitter, including a copy of the submitted details/information.
- II. Conducting Reviews
  - a. Once a concern or feedback is submitted, the Office of Academic Affairs will receive notification that a concern or feedback has been received.
  - b. Within three business days of receipt, the Executive Secretary within the Office of Academic Affairs will forward the concern or feedback to the appropriate College representative for review.
  - c. Depending on the nature of the concern and/or feedback, the timeframe for response may vary. However, the person(s) and/or department(s) responsible for the review of the concern should make every effort to review and respond within 30 days, communicating with the person submitting the concern or feedback as necessary.
  - d. If needed, the review will include interviews with all parties involved and a review of relevant documentation. Based on the concern or feedback and information obtained through interviews and document review, the responsible individual(s) will decide the facts surrounding the issue, determine the concern's validity, and attempt to resolve the matter.
  - e. Within thirty calendar days from the referral of the receipt, the person(s) and/or department(s) responsible for the review will communicate an update and/or information regarding the resolution of the concern or feedback to the Executive Secretary within the Office of Academic Affairs. If the appropriate update or resolution is not received within this timeframe, the Executive Secretary will notify the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Director of Student Life for referral to the appropriate supervisor.
- III. Notification of Findings
  - a. In all reports of concern and/or feedback, if appropriate, the college representative to whom the concern was referred will notify the submitter in writing the finding and any relevant information pertaining to the concern, including, but not limited to, any actions taken to resolve the concern or feedback.

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### Responsibilities

Position or Office	Responsibilities
Person(s) submitting the concern or feedback	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whenever possible, a concern or feedback should be addressed with the faculty member, staff member, or other student involved.</li> <li>Raise the concern or feedback as quickly as possible.</li> <li>As a measure of good faith, be prepared to make their identity known. Concerns and feedback can be filed anonymously, however, the review and response to the concern may be limited due to insufficient information or the inability to ask for clarifying details.</li> <li>Report to the Director of Student Life as soon as possible perceived retaliation by anyone for being involved in a matter reported under this policy.</li> <li>Use the appropriate level of confidentiality to protect the reputations of all persons involved.</li> </ol>
Executive Secretary in the Office of Academic Affairs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receive submitted concerns and feedback and refer them in a timely fashion to the appropriate person(s) or department(s) for review. Track information pertaining to the submitted concern or feedback, including, but not limited to, the nature of the concern, the person(s) or department(s) involved, and referrals . Receive and log resolutions from the college representative assigned to review the concern. Monitor responses, and if a response is not received within 30 days from referral, notify the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Director of Student Life for referral to the appropriate next level supervisor. Use the appropriate level of confidentiality to protect the reputations for all persons involved.</li> </ol>
College representative assigned to review the concern	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obtain information through interviews and document review.</li> <li>Decide the facts surrounding the issue, determine the concern's validity, and attempt to resolve the matter.</li> <li>Notify the submitter of the concern and/or the outcome.</li> <li>Within thirty calendar days from the receipt of the concern, communicate an update and/or information regarding the resolution of the concern or feedback to the Executive Secretary within the Office of Academic Affairs.</li> </ol>
Director of Student Life and Vice President for Academic Affairs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist with the referrals and/or investigation of concerns and feedback as needed.</li> <li>Meet once per semester to review submitted concerns or feedback for the purpose of monitoring resolutions, investigating patterns or identifying trends, and recommending process improvements, if appropriate.</li> <li>Provide reports to the President and/or the Executive Leadership Team as deemed appropriate.</li> </ol>

### Resources

**For more information:**

Concern and Feedback Form and other information, <http://www.cotc.edu/Life/student-complaints-and-concerns>

### Contacts (required)

Subject	Office	Telephone	E-mail/URL
Process consultation	Office of Academic Affairs	740.366.9357	<a href="mailto:hindel.10@cotc.edu">hindel.10@cotc.edu</a>
To file a concern or feedback	Office of Academic Affairs	740.366.9357	<a href="http://www.cotc.edu/Life/student-complaints-and-concerns">http://www.cotc.edu/Life/student-complaints-and-concerns</a>

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### History

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