

# Student Complaints Policy

---

Lambton College in Toronto, at Cestar College, is committed to providing to its students high-quality academic experiences and services, and continuously improving those experiences and services. An essential part of that commitment is receiving and responding to the concerns and complaints of the students and doing so in a timely and constructive manner.

## Policy

1. This policy and associated procedures apply to student complaints and concerns regarding the provision, or lack thereof, of quality academic experiences and services. This policy is not meant to address concerns or complaints concerning grades or marks, academic decisions, student misbehavior or conduct, or harassment or bullying or other such behaviours by students or employees, all of which are addressed by other policies published by the College.
2. Cestar College (the College), which is responsible for the delivery of Lambton College programs and associated support services at its site, will receive, consider and, where warranted, act upon complaints received from its students concerning the academic experiences and services provided by the College.
3. The College will receive and consider student complaints in an open and receptive spirit and will ensure that students making a complaint, informally or formally, will experience no adverse or detrimental consequences or effects, directly or indirectly, as a result of making a complaint.
4. A student making a complaint – whether informal or at any stage of the formal process – may be accompanied by any College community member of his choice. No external (to the College) advisors, representatives or assistants may attend at any stage of the informal or formal complaint processes.

## Informal Process

5. A student, or students, with a concern or wishing to make a complaint regarding an academic experience or service is required initially to express the concern or make the complaint through an informal process. The informal process is described below under Procedures: Informal Process.
6. The concern or complaint must be brought to the attention of the relevant manager – the manager responsible for the experience, service or area that is the subject of concern.
7. If the concern or complaint is the result of a specific precipitating incident, the concern or complaint must be raised with the relevant manager within five College working days of the incident.
8. The concern or complaint of the student will be addressed by the relevant manager within five College working days of the student's initial notice to the College of his/her concern or complaint.
9. It is expected that the concern or complaint will be addressed and discussed in an open, honest and forthright manner by all parties, preferably in a face-to-face meeting or, alternatively, through a telephone or e-mail discussion, resulting in a mutually satisfactory resolution of the concern or complaint.

## Formal Complaint

10. If the concern or complaint made through the informal process is not appropriately addressed, or not addressed in a timely fashion, or not addressed to the satisfaction of the student, the student may then initiate a formal complaint. The initiation of the formal complaint must follow the procedures described below under Procedures: Formal Process.
11. A formal complaint must be initiated within seven College working days of the expression of concern to or the initiation of the informal complaint with the College.
12. The formal complaint must be made to the Director of Lambton in Toronto.
13. The Director of Lambton College in Toronto may;
  - Address directly the matter of the complaint and provide a response, or
  - Meet with the complainant to investigate or discuss the complaint before providing a response, or
  - Forward the complaint to a more appropriate relevant manager.
14. The relevant manager - whether the Director of Lambton in Toronto or the recipient of a forwarded complaint - will
  - 14.1 Acknowledge receipt of the complaint within two College working days,
  - 14.2. If requested, necessary or desirable, meet with the complainant within five College working days of receipt of the complaint,
  - 14.3. Provide a response, verbal or written, to the complainant addressing the complaint within seven College working days of receipt of the complaint.

## Appeal of a Complaint

15. A student complainant, dissatisfied with the result of the Formal complaint, because of the response, or a non-response, or actions taken or not taken, may choose to request an Appeal of the complaint.
16. The request for an Appeal of a complaint must be made to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Cestar College. Assistance in acquiring the contact information for the CEO will be provided by Student Services, if requested.
17. The request for an Appeal of the complaint must be delivered to the CEO, personally or by e-mail, within five College working days of either the receipt of the supervisor's response or the passing of the time limit without the response. The request for an Appeal of the complaint must follow the procedures described below under Procedures: Appeal of a Complaint.
18. The student may request that a Lambton College representative from Sarnia be present during the Appeal and must make this request at the same time that a request for an Appeal of a complaint is made and properly note this on the form.
19. The CEO will
  - 19.1 Acknowledge receipt of the appeal within two College working days,
  - 19.2 Meet with the complainant and/or the supervisor of the manager, unless the review can be productively completed without a meeting, within five College working days of receipt of the appeal
  - 19.3 Provide a written response to the complainant addressing the Appeal of the complaint within seven College working days of receipt of the request for an Appeal.

20. The decision of the CEO is final.

## Procedures

### Informal Process

#### 1. Addressing the Concerns or Complain

- 1.1 The student should seek to address his/her concern or complaint with the manager either in a meeting or via an email.
- 1.2 The concern or complaint is to be raised within 5 College working days of any precipitating incident
- 1.3 The concern or complaint should be directed to the relevant manager.
  - 1.3.1 See the attached Appendix for managers, or
  - 1.3.2 Contact Student Services for assistance in identifying the manager
- 1.4 Through face-to-face or email discussion, the parties should discuss the issue(s) and attempt to reach a full, mutual understanding of the issue(s) and a mutually satisfactory resolution.
- 1.5 The manager should open a file and maintain notes of all meetings, discussions, communications and actions.

### Formal Process

#### 2. Initiation of the Complaint

- 2.1 The formal complaint must be filed within 7 College working days of the initiation of the informal complaint or the first expression of concern.
- 2.2 The student complainant(s) must complete a Formal Complaint form.
- 2.3 The student complainant(s) must deliver the Formal Complaint form, personally or by email, to the relevant manager.
  - 2.3.1 See the attached Appendix to identify the appropriate manager, or
  - 2.3.2 Contact Student Services for assistance in identifying the manager.
- 2.4 The contacted manager will determine if he/she is the appropriate manager to deal with the complaint.
  - 2.4.1 If appropriate, the complaint should be forwarded to a more relevant manager.
  - 2.4.2 The manager – original receiving manager or the manager receiving the forwarded complaint – should respond to the complaint within the framework and time limits described by the policy.

2.4.3 The responding manager should open a file and maintain notes of all meetings, discussions, communications and actions.

2.4.3.1 The file may be used in subsequent reviews and appeals.

2.4.3.1 This file may become available to the complainant.

### 3. Review of a Complaint

3.1 The request for a formal Review of the Complaint must be filed within 5 College working days.

3.2 The student complainant(s) must complete the Review of a Complaint form.

3.3 The student complainant(s) must deliver the Review of a Complaint form, personally or by email, to the supervisor of the manager with whom the formal complaint was initiated.

3.4 The student complainant should contact Student Services for:

3.4.1 The Review of a Complaint form,

3.4.2 Assistance in completing the form,

3.4.3 Assistance in identifying the supervisor of the manager,

3.4.4 Assistance in obtaining the contact information for the supervisor of the manager

3.5 The supervisor of the manager will respond to the complaint within the framework and time limits described by the policy.

3.5.1 The supervisor of the manager should open a file and maintain notes of all meetings, discussions, communications and actions.

3.5.1.1 This file may be used in a subsequent appeal.

3.5.1.2 This file may become available to the complainant.

#### 4. Appeal of a Complaint

4.1 The request for an Appeal of the Complaint must be filed by the student complainant within 5 College working days of receipt of the responses from the supervisor of the manager, or the passing of the deadline for a response.

4.2 The student complainant(s) must complete the Appeal Complaint form.

4.3 The student complainant(s) must deliver the Appeal of a Complaint form, personally or by email, to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Cestar/Lambton College in Toronto.

4.4 The student complainant should contact Student Services for

4.4.1 the Appeal of a Complaint form,

4.4.2 Assistance in completing the form

4.4.3 Assistance in identifying the contact information for the CEO.

4.5 The CEO will respond to the complaint within the framework and time limits described by the policy

4.5.1 The CEO should open a file and maintain notes of all meetings, discussions, communications and actions.

#### Appendix A:

##### Informal Complaints – Where do I go?

Possible Issues	Contact
Is my concern related to a staff member or instructor?	Michael Vourakes – <a href="mailto:michael.vourakes@cestarcollege.com">michael.vourakes@cestarcollege.com</a>
Is my concern related to a course issue, fees, schedule, program, progression, policies or general inquiries?	Student Services – <a href="mailto:studentservices@cestarcollege.com">studentservices@cestarcollege.com</a>
Is my concern related to an incident on campus?	Security – <a href="mailto:security@cestarcollege.com">security@cestarcollege.com</a>
Is my concern related to the Cestar database, classroom AV equipment, or the internet?	IT Services – <a href="mailto:itsupport@cestarcollege.com">itsupport@cestarcollege.com</a>
Is my concern related to Campus facilities?	Reception – <a href="mailto:reception@cestarcollege.com">reception@cestarcollege.com</a>
I am not sure where to start?	Student Services – <a href="mailto:studentservices@cestarcollege.com">studentservices@cestarcollege.com</a>