

Policy to Address a Complaint (100.16)

Date Adopted: November 17, 1998

Revised and combined with Policy 500.12: October 20, 2009

Revised: September 15, 2015

This policy applies to all employees, faculty, and students of Illinois Eastern Community Colleges District 529 except for sexual harassment complaints, student readmission petitions, and grievances under the faculty collective bargaining contract. The purpose is to provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints.

Employees, faculty, and students are entitled to due process and have the right to their own legal counsel at any time they are being questioned by the administration or Board of Trustees. They shall have the right to appeal a decision made by a supervisor or administrative officer to the next higher authority and through appropriate successive steps to the Chair of the Board of Trustees or his/her designee. Participants in this process shall not be subjected to reprisals or retaliation because of participation in the complaint process.

Days are defined as days in which the district office and the colleges are normally open to conduct business. The time limits prescribed for each step shall be adhered to unless there has been mutual agreement between the complainant and the administrator to extend the time limits. Failure by the administration at any step of the process to communicate the decision on a complaint within the specified time limit shall permit the complainant to proceed to the next step. Failure on the part of the complainant to appeal the decision to the next step within the specified time limits shall be deemed to be an abandonment of the complaint.

Employees and faculty shall follow the steps defined below for complaints other than sexual harassment complaints and grievances under the faculty collective bargaining contract.

- Step 1: Within ten days of the incident causing the complaint, the complainant shall attempt to resolve the matter informally. The complainant should meet with his/her immediate supervisor. If the matter is not resolved within ten days from the date of the meeting, the complainant may file a formal written complaint.
- Step 2: Within five days from the expiration of days under Step 1, the complainant shall file a formal written complaint. The complainant shall file his/her complaint with the college President. If the complaint is against the administrative officer defined in any Step, the complainant shall advance to the next Step. Employees reporting directly to the Chief Executive Officer shall advance to Step 3; employees reporting directly to the Board of Trustees shall advance to Step 4. A written response shall be provided within five days of receipt of the complaint. If the matter is not resolved, then Step 3 shall apply.
- Step 3: Within five days of receipt of the response under Step 2, the complainant shall file his/her appeal with the Chief Executive Officer. A written response shall be provided within five days of receipt of the appeal. If the matter is not resolved, then Step 4 shall apply.
- Step 4: Within five days of receipt of the response under Step 3, the complainant shall file his/her appeal with the Chair of the Board of Trustees, or his/her designee. The Chair, or his/her designee in consultation with members of the Board of Trustees, shall provide a written response within five working days of receipt of the complaint or appeal. The Chair or his/her designee of the Board of Trustees is the final appeal authority within Illinois Eastern Community Colleges.

Students shall follow the steps defined below for complaints other than sexual harassment complaints and readmission petitions. These complaints include, but are not limited to, academic, grading, and institutional decisions which directly affect a student. Readmission petitions are governed by procedures detailed in the section on readmission in the college catalog.

- Step 1: Within ten days of the incident causing the complaint, the complainant shall attempt to resolve the matter informally. The complainant should meet with his/her instructor or service provider. If the matter is not resolved within ten days from the date of the meeting, the complainant may file a formal written complaint.
- Step 2: Within five days from the expiration of days under Step 1, the complainant shall file a formal written complaint. The complainant shall file his/her complaint with the Dean of the College/Instruction. If the complaint is against the administrative officer defined in any Step, the complainant shall advance to the next Step. A written response shall be provided within five days of receipt of the complaint. If the matter is not resolved, then Step 3 shall apply.
- Step 3: Within five days of receipt of the response under Step 2, the complainant shall file an appeal with the President. The President shall appoint an Appeal Committee composed of two students, two faculty members, and one administrator. The Committee's recommendation will be forwarded to the President within ten days. The President will render a written decision concerning the appeal within five days from receiving the Committee's recommendation. If the matter is not resolved, then Step 4 shall apply.
- Step 4: Within five days of receipt of the response under Step 3, the complainant may file an appeal with the Chief Executive Officer. A written response will be provided within five days of receipt of the appeal. If the matter is not resolved, then Step 5 shall apply.
- Step 5: Within five days of receipt of the response under Step 4, the complainant may file an appeal with the Chair of the Board of Trustees or his/her designee. The Chair, or his/her designee in consultation with members of the Board of Trustees, shall provide a written response within five days of receipt of the appeal. The Chair or his/her designee of the Board of Trustees is the final appeal authority within Illinois Eastern Community Colleges.