

Students are encouraged to seek resolution, as soon as possible, through informal communication with the appropriate individual(s). When a resolution is not resolved informally, a formal written complaint may be filed in the following manner.

#### **Filing a Complaint with IECC**

Students shall follow the steps defined below for complaints not governed by other IECC policy and procedure (e.g., sexual harassment, grade appeals, ADA, Student Code of Conduct, and readmission petitions).

**Step 1:** Within ten days of the incident causing the complaint, the student shall attempt to resolve the matter informally by communicating with their instructor or service provider. If the matter is not resolved within ten days from the date of the communication, the student may file a formal written complaint. A student may not file a formal written complaint without completing Step 1.

**Step 2:** Within five days from the expiration of days under Step 1, the student (complainant) may file a formal written complaint by submitting a Student Complaint/Complaint Appeal form to the appropriate personnel (identified in the guidance table below). The form must be filled out completely, incomplete forms will not be processed. 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 to the complainant within ten 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 may file a formal written appeal by submitting a Student Complaint/Complaint Appeal form to the appropriate Vice Chancellor (identified in the guidance table below). The Vice Chancellor will have 10 days to meet with the student and provide a written decision to the student. 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 a formal written appeal with the Chancellor. Upon review, the Chancellor may dismiss the complaint with or without meeting with the complainant. Alternately, the Chancellor may arrange a meeting with the complainant. All decisions of the Chancellor are final.

#### Legal Counsel

Students are entitled to due process and have the right to their own legal counsel at any time.

#### Retaliation

Participants in this process shall not be subjected to reprisals or retaliation because of participation in the complaint process.

#### Time Limits

Days are defined as days in which the district office and the campuses 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.

#### Withdrawal

The student may withdraw the complaint at any time.

#### Administrative Review

On behalf of all applicable Divisions, a log of all formal student complaints is compiled by the Division of Student Affairs for presentation to the Strategic Engagement Planning Council (SEPC) in the final quarter of each year. Student complaints are reviewed by SEPC to determine trends and to ensure complaints are addressed in a timely manner and in accordance with this procedure.

#### Records

All records resulting from student complaints are maintained by the Division for which the complaint was submitted/processed and retained in accordance with IECC record-retention requirements. The annual log of formal complaints is retained for a minimum of five (5) years in the office of the Chancellor.

#### **Filing a Complaint with ICCB**

Students who are not satisfied with the results of an appeal may file a complaint with the Illinois Community College Board by following the information provided on the IECC website at [www.iecc.edu/studentcomplaint](http://www.iecc.edu/studentcomplaint).

#### **Filing a Complaint with HLC**

The Higher Learning Commission will receive complaints for matters related to potential substantive noncompliance with the Criteria for Accreditation or other HLC requirements. HLC contact information is available at [www.iecc.edu/studentcomplaint](http://www.iecc.edu/studentcomplaint).

#### **Students in Distance Delivery Education**

Students attending IECC via distance delivery are governed by the same policies and procedures outlined in Policy 100.16 and this procedure.

As a member of the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA), IECC also abides by NC-SARA's complaint policy. If a distance education student believes their complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved by IECC—and the complaint is unrelated to grades or student conduct—they may forward it to the SARA State Portal Entity for further review. For community colleges in Illinois, this entity is the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB).

When an appealed complaint is received from an out-of-state student, ICCB will notify the student's SARA State