

# Wilfrid Laurier International College Policy

## Student Grievance Policy

### Document

Policy Number	5
Responsibility	College Director and Principal, WLIC
Initial Issue Date	23 August 2021
Related Documents	5.1 Student Grievance Procedures

### Version Control

Issue Date:	Summary of Changes	Review Date
23 August 2021	Initial Release	23 August 2022

## 1. Purpose

- 1.1. This policy has been developed to ensure all current students at Wilfrid Laurier International College (WLIC) are given access to equitable, effective, and fair complaints resolution and appeals processes.
- 1.2. This policy provides a process for students to seek resolution of disputes and grievances that may not fall within the scope of one of the other policies or processes.
- 1.3. This policy and related documentation are accessible through the WLIC Policy Library.
- 1.4. This policy and related procedures will be communicated to staff via email and ongoing staff information sessions.

## 2. Scope and Application

- 2.1. This Policy applies to the following students who believe they have experienced incorrect, inappropriate, or unfair treatment:
  - 2.1.1. current students enrolled in full-time or part-time classes, credit or non-credit;
  - 2.1.2. students on a leave of absence;
- 2.2. This Policy does not apply to complaints or petitions that are covered by other applicable College policies and applications. Specifically, but not limited to:
  - 2.2.1. Complaints about student conduct will be handled in accordance with the College's Student Code of Non-Academic Conduct.
  - 2.2.2. Petitions of final grade reassessment will be handled in accordance with the Appeal of Final Results.
  - 2.2.3. Requests for deferred exams will be handled in accordance with the eligibility criteria and processes indicated on the Petition for Deferred Exams.
  - 2.2.4. Students seeking to excuse the semester due to extenuating circumstances will be handled in accordance with Withdrawal Under Extenuating Circumstances.
  - 2.2.5. Exceptions to academic regulations related to enrolment will be handled in accordance with the College's Enrolment Policy.

## 3. Definitions

### 3.1. the College

refers to Wilfrid Laurier International College

### 3.2. Complainant

a person lodging a complaint

### 3.3. Respondent

a person responding to a complaint; this may also be the person who made the original decision under dispute

### 3.4. the University

refers to Wilfrid Laurier University "Laurier"

#### 4. Policy Principles

- 4.1. All complaints and appeals will be dealt with in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness which respect the right of a complainant to be heard by an impartial party.
- 4.2. All attempts will be made to resolve complaints and appeals as close to the source as possible.
- 4.3. Complainants and respondents will not be subject to discrimination or harassment resulting from their participation in any academic grievance resolution process.
- 4.4. Staff shall make all attempts to respond to complaints within the time limits specified in this policy.
- 4.5. All procedures relating to this policy will be available to the public.
- 4.6. All communications arising from the complaints process, together with the proceedings of the appeals and grievance committee, will remain confidential except to the extent necessary to give effect to this policy.
- 4.7. Where the appeal relates to suspension of enrolment, students may maintain their enrolled status whilst awaiting the outcome of the appeal.
- 4.8. If at any time during the internal or external grievance process a decision is made which supports the complainant, WLIC will immediately implement the decision and advise the complainant of the outcome.

#### 5. Administrative Procedures

- 5.1. Records of all complaints and appeals will be kept at the institution.
- 5.2. All records relating to an academic grievance will be kept in strict confidence and filed separate from student files.
- 5.3. All academic grievance records will be under the responsibility of the Associate Director and College Director and Principal.

#### 6. Grievance Process

- 6.1. The academic grievance policy is a staged process:
  - 6.1.1. Information Resolution
  - 6.1.2. Formal Investigation
  - 6.1.3. Appeals and Grievance Committee
  - 6.1.4. Laurier/WLIC Academic Advisory Committee
- 6.2. Refer to **Student Grievance Policy Procedures (4.1)** on how the process shall be carried out.
- 6.3. Students who require assistance understanding this policy, its scope and procedures may contact the WLIC Student Success team for support.

## Wilfrid Laurier International College Policy

### Student Grievance Procedures

#### Document

Policy Number	5.1
Responsibility	College Director and Principal, WLIC
Initial Issue Date	23 August 2021
Related Documents	Student Grievance Policy (Policy 5)

#### Version Control

Issue Date:	Summary of Changes	Review Date
23 August 2021	Initial Release	23 August 2022
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**1. Purpose**

- 1.1. The purpose of these procedures is to describe the process that will be followed to resolve student grievances and appeals.

**2. Definitions**

**2.1. Appellant**

means a Student who has received a decision under the Policy and appeals that decision as per Section 3.6 of the Procedures outlined below.

**2.2. Formal Investigation**

means a Formal Investigation process, whether conducted by the Associate Director or by an assigned internal or external Investigator, to determine what occurred.

**2.3. Informal Resolution**

means the process whereby the College and Respondent agree upon an amicable solution to resolve the matter without proceeding to a Formal Investigation.

**2.4. Investigator**

means the person responsible for conducting the Formal Investigation, assigned by the Associate Director of College Director and Principal.

**2.5. Investigator's Report**

means the written report from the Investigator setting out the process that they followed in the Formal Investigation and their findings of fact.

**2.6. Preliminary Review**

means a review of a Complaint as described in Section 3.2.

**2.7. Procedural Fairness**

means that the University shall deal with all alleged Misconduct in a fair, unbiased, and timely manner. Procedural Fairness is described in Section 4 of the Policy.

**2.8. Student Success Team (SST)**

means a member of the Student Success Team, which is inclusive of Student Success or Student Experience Advisors, Coordinators, and/or Managers.

**2.9. Working Days**

means all weekdays, excluding statutory holidays as indicated on the Wilfrid Laurier International College website Important Dates page.

### **3. Procedures**

#### **3.1. Making a Grievance to the College**

- 3.1.1. Grievances should be made to the Student Success Team (SST) as soon as possible after the alleged incident occurs and, normally, within 10 days of the incident having occurred. In cases where no Grievance has been brought forward, the College may act as the Complainant. A member of the SST will conduct a Preliminary Review of the Complaint.
- 3.1.2. The SST may receive Complaints outside of the 10-day limitation period but will undertake a Preliminary Review (see Section 3.2) to assess its ability to proceed, which may include considerations relating to the availability of witnesses and evidence.

#### **3.2. Preliminary Review**

- 3.2.1. The Student Success Team (SST), based on available information, may reject a Complaint on the grounds that:
  - i) the Complaint lies outside the scope and jurisdiction of the Policy;
  - ii) the Complaint is false, trivial, or repetitious;
  - iii) the alleged conduct is minor and does not require corrective action; or
  - iv) an investigation is unlikely to find facts that would result in disciplinary action.
- 3.2.2. In such circumstances, the SST will communicate its decision in writing to the Complainant with reasons for the decision. All written responses are to be relayed to the complainant within 10 business days barring extenuating circumstances.
- 3.2.3. The Complainant will not necessarily be identified to the Respondent during a Preliminary Review.
- 3.2.4. If the SST determines through a Preliminary Review that a Complaint should proceed, the SST will, inform the Associate Director for the case to be assigned to an Investigator. Whenever possible, and appropriate, the SST will attempt to find an amical resolution.

#### **3.3. Informal Resolution**

- 3.3.1. If the SST believes that there are grounds for the grievance, the SST may discuss the matter with the Respondent to determine possible steps the Respondent could take to correct or resolve the issue. The SST may refer the Respondent to College, University and/or community-based support services.
- 3.3.2. A Respondent may be accompanied by a support person of their choice to the Informal Resolution meeting(s).
- 3.3.3. If the Complaint is not resolved by Informal Resolution within the 10 business days of the preliminary review, barring extenuating circumstances, the matter may proceed to Formal Investigation.

- 3.3.4. If the Respondent agrees to the resolution proposed by the SST, the Associate Director will oversee that the agreed upon resolution is achieved.
- 3.3.5. If a resolution cannot be determined, the case will proceed to the Formal Investigation.

#### **3.4. Formal Investigation**

- 3.4.1. When an informal resolution could not be reached, the SST shall inform the Associate Director who will initiate a Formal Investigation to obtain all information necessary to decide if there was a breach of the Policy.
- 3.4.2. The Associate Director will notify the Complainant and Respondent in writing that a Formal Investigation is being initiated.
- 3.4.3. A Complainant or Respondent may be accompanied by a support person of their choice to the Formal Investigation meeting(s).
- 3.4.4. The Associate Director will take the following actions in the formal investigation:
  - i) interview whomever they determine might have relevant information and who is willing to participate in the process. They may request one or more interviews with the Complainant and Respondent and will consider any evidence they decide is relevant for the Investigation Report.
  - ii) If the Complainant or Respondent refuses to cooperate with the Formal Investigation, the Associate Director may proceed with the Formal Investigation without the Complainant or Respondent.
  - iii) Upon conclusion of the Formal Investigation, complete the Investigator's Report, which will include the findings of facts in the case, disputed and undisputed.
  - iv) In their capacity as an Investigator, the Associate Director will decide whether, on a balance of probabilities, there was a breach of the Policy.
  - v) If there was no breach of the Policy, they will dismiss the Grievance.
  - vi) If there was a breach of the Policy, the College will provide the student with a written notification of the determination and outcome of their grievance.
- 3.4.5. The Formal Investigation will normally be completed within 10 business days.
- 3.4.6. In deciding upon the appropriate response to a finding of a breach of the Policy, consideration must be given to the Principles in Section 1.0 of the Policy and to the following factors:
  - i) the extent of the conduct;
  - ii) the impact of the conduct on members of the community;
  - iii) the inadvertent or the deliberate nature of the conduct;
  - iv) if it is an isolated incident or part of repeated acts; and
  - v) any other mitigating or aggravating circumstances.

- 3.4.7. The Respondent will receive the outcome in writing including:
  - i) their decision, with reasons, as to whether there was a breach of the Policy; and
  - ii) the disciplinary measures imposed or remedies.
- 3.4.8. The student will, where appropriate, be provided a copy of the decision, including any relevant academic or administrative departments of the College or University.
- 3.4.9. Upon request, the Complainant will be provided a written decision outlining the outcome of their Complaint.

**3.5. Appeal to College Director and Principal**

- 3.5.1. Appeals to the College Director from Associate Director Decisions
- 3.5.2. A student may appeal all or part of a decision made by the Associate Director to the College Director within ten (10) Working Days of the day the email containing the decision was sent. The student is then known as the Appellant.
- 3.5.3. The appeal can be lodged with the College Director and Principal by Student Grievance Policy Appeal Form located on the WLIC Student Portal.
- 3.5.4. The appellant will receive a decision from the College Director and Principal within 10 working days of submission.

**3.6. Appeal to Laurier/WLIC Academic Advisory Committee**

- 3.6.1. This shall be the fourth stage in the process
- 3.6.2. The committee's purpose is to review any decision relating to an academic grievance and issue an opinion establishing whether a similar conclusion would have been reached at Wilfrid Laurier University.
- 3.6.3. The committee will not enter any mediation or discussion regarding an appeal; all appeals are to be written for the committee's consideration.
- 3.6.4. This stage is only to be initiated if grievance was not adequately addressed through the appeal to the College Director and Principal and the complainant has grounds detailed in section 3.7.

**3.7. Ground for Appeals**

- 3.7.1. If the student is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may submit an appeal if they meet one of the following grounds:
  - i) that a procedural error occurred of sufficient magnitude that it may reasonably be said to have affected the fairness of the process or altered the outcome of the case;
  - ii) that a factual error occurred of sufficient magnitude that it may reasonably be said to have altered the outcome of the case; or
  - iii) that new material evidence is available which, despite the exercise of due diligence by the Respondent wishing to appeal, could not have been made available.