St.Lawrence
CEGEP CHAMPLAIN

INSTITUTIONAL POLICY ON STUDENT APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS

Recommended by the Commission of Studies on November 26, 2025, and adopted by the Governing Board on December 2, 2025.

1. Preamble

The Institutional Policy on Appeals and Complaints is part of the mechanisms put in place to offer CEGEP Champlain-St. Lawrence's students a CEGEP experience that fosters success through a safe academic environment. It aligns with and complements the Institutional Policy on the Evaluation of Student Achievement (IPESA), the Institutional Code of Student Conduct, the Policy Against Sexual Violence, the Harassment Policy, the Ethics and Professional Responsibilities guidelines for faculty, and the applicable union collective agreements.

2. Purposes and objectives of the policy

The Institutional Policy on Appeals and Complaints is intended to foster a college environment that is conducive to learning and the overall development of students.

The College's objective in implementing the first local iteration of this policy is to ensure timely and constructive dispute resolution.

3. Glossary

Appeal: A request to reconsider a judgment or decision made by an employee of the College.

Assigned Manager: The manager assigned by the Director of the Constituent College to follow up on the complaint.

Complaint: The expression of the student's discontent with some aspect of College life.

Concerned parties: The person or persons filing the appeal or complaint, and the person or persons whose behavior or decision is the object of the appeal or complaint.

Employees: Full-time and part-time persons employed by the College.

Mediation: A structured process where a neutral third party, the mediator, assist the concerned parties in finding a mutually acceptable resolution to the dispute.

Student: Any person currently enrolled in a course or program at CEGEP Champlain St. Lawrence or who was enrolled in a course or program when the alleged incident(s) giving rise to the complaint occurred.

4. Values and principles

The values and principles that guide the reception and management of appeals and complaints at St. Lawrence are:

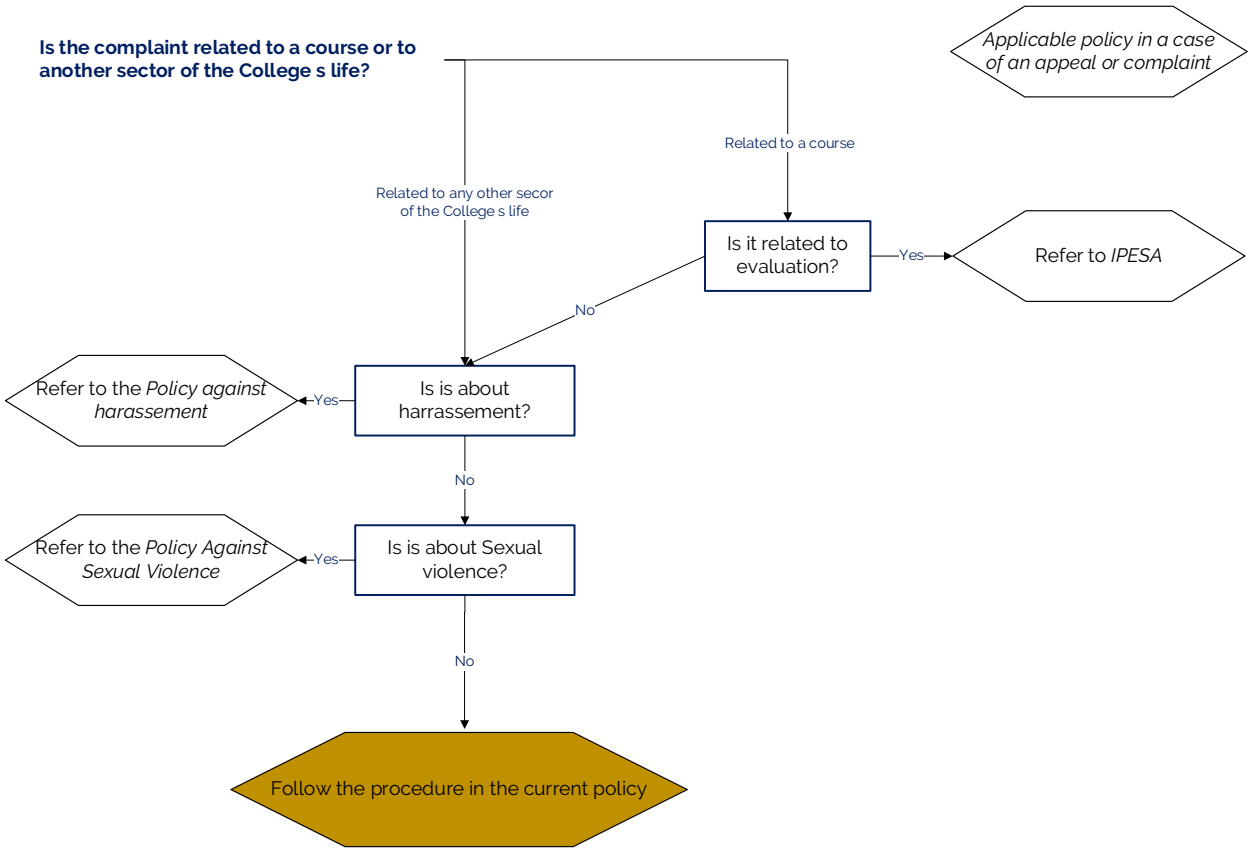
a) The process is trustworthy, impartial and neutral.
b) The process is transparent, people concerned are heard, and the cases are confidential but not anonymous.
c) The process is simple and accessible (note: importance of communication of the process and within the process, dissemination is key).
d) Decisions are ethical, within the regulatory framework, and respectful of the people they impact.

5. SCOPE OF THE POLICY

This policy applies to full-time and part-time students, including continuing education students, currently enrolled in a course or program at CEGEP Champlain St. Lawrence.

However, it does not apply to appeals and complaints pertaining to the evaluation of student achievement (refer to IPESA), harassment (refer to the Harassment Policy) or sexual violence (refer to the Policy Against Sexual Violence). Together with this policy, these policies constitute the various mechanisms through which students can file an appeal or a complaint at the College.

When unsure which policy applies to their specific situation, students can refer to the following decision tree.



6. ADDRESSING APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS

Appeals and complaints about the academic experience, services, or other students raised by students shall be addressed in a manner that respects the rights of all parties and leads to the timely resolution of disputes. The College must start the work of addressing appeals and complaints within 10 working days. If the employee concerned is on vacation or leave, they will be informed within 5 working days of their return. The College reserves the right to conduct a fact-finding or investigative process sensitively and thoughtfully following a student complaint; such a process in no way implies an outcome or predetermination of any wrongdoing or error before the conclusion of the process.

When the College addresses an appeal or a complaint, it does so while respecting the confidentiality of all parties involved. Only the information needed to resolve the issue is shared, and only with the persons involved.

When dissatisfied with the decision rendered by the College on an appeal or a complaint, the student can contact the Ombudsperson. The College can also, when it deems appropriate, ask for the help of the Ombudsperson when addressing an appeal or complaint

7. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS INVOLVING AN EMPLOYEE

As disputes often stem from misunderstandings, the student should first discuss the issue with the teacher, staff member, or manager with whom they disagree to resolve the issue at an informal level. When the dispute involves a teacher, the student can also reach out to the department coordinator for help in solving the problem informally.

Due to the nature of the incident and the parties involved, certain circumstances may require acting directly under complaint or appeal procedures, which are described in the following paragraphs.

When a complaint or appeal is filed, it is essential to note that both parties have the right to be heard and to present evidence of their positions. Both are entitled to be accompanied by a person of their choice, such as a union or student association representative, at all times during and at all stages of the procedures. These representatives act as observers during meetings.

To file a complaint or appeal, the student must complete the Appeal and Complaint form and send it to the Director of the Constituent College's Office. The student is responsible for providing complete information on the incident(s) or event(s).

Once a complaint or appeal is received, the Director of the Constituent College will assign a manager to follow up on it. If the complaint or appeal concerns a manager, they will act as the assigned manager. If the complaint or appeal concerns the Director of the Constituent College, it should be addressed directly to the Director General of Champlain Regional College.

In all cases, the assigned manager will send a copy of the complaint to the concerned parties. If the case involves a teacher, a copy will also be sent to the department coordinator (or co-coordinator).

If the assigned manager determines that a complaint lacks merit, cannot be substantiated, or is deemed frivolous, vexatious, or made in bad faith, the student will be notified in writing, and sanctions may apply according to the code of student conduct.

The assigned manager first tries to lead both parties to reach a common resolution.

If this conciliation process is impossible or unsuccessful, the assigned manager will render a final decision based on available supporting evidence from all parties within 10 working days.

The assigned manager must inform the concerned parties of the results of the formal procedure. If the results of the formal procedure lead to disciplinary action against the employee who is the subject of the complaint, the applicable collective agreement must be respected.

8. Complaints regarding a service

If a complaint is filed regarding a service, a process similar to the one described previously is initiated. Examples of services provided to students include professional services, printing, parking, a bistro, and the library, among others.

9. Ombudsperson

The Ombudsperson acts independently, impartially and confidentially to ensure that appeals and complaints are handled fairly and in accordance with the institutional policy, and will support the continuous improvement of practices by:

a. Supporting students in understanding policies, regulations and guidelines.
b. Reviewing the process when a student is dissatisfied with the treatment of their complaint or appeal.
c. Recommending, when needed, actions to the College regarding its policies and procedures or the handling of a particular case.

When a student is dissatisfied with the treatment or outcome of their appeal or complaint, they can contact the Ombudsperson, whose contact information is on the appeal and complaint form.

The Ombudsperson is independent from the College's Management and is appointed by and reports to the Governing Board. The Ombudsperson provides an annual report to the Governing Board, which may include recommendations for improving the treatment of complaints as needed.

When receiving a recommendation from the Ombudsperson, the College considers it and decides on the follow-up actions. The Ombudsperson does not have decisional power in the College.

10. Sharing of Responsibilities

10.1. Governing Board

a) Adopts the policy

b) Appoints the Ombudsperson

c) Receives the Ombudsperson's annual report and considers their recommendations

d) Adopts the report on the evaluation of the application of the policy

10.2. Ombudsperson

a) Provides information to students on the application of policies, regulations and guidelines.

b) Follows a request from a student, reviews the treatment and outcomes of their appeal or complaint.

c) Recommends, when needed, actions to the College regarding its policies and procedures or the handling of a particular case.

d) Presents an annual report to the Governing Board stating the number of requests received, their outcome, and any recommendations that arose.

10.3. General Director

a) Receives complaints if the Director of the Constituent College is involved.

10.4. Director of the Constituent College:

a) Appoints the assigned manager.

b) Monitors annually the application of the policy and informs the Governing Board of any problems that may arise.

c) Carries out periodical evaluations of the policy application and produces a report that is presented to the Governing Board for adoption.

10.5. Director of the Constituent College's Office:

a) Secures that the information about policies, regulations and guidelines is available for employees and students.

b) Receives appeal and complaint requests.

10.6. Assigned manager:

a) Reads the complaint or the appeal

b) Sends a copy of the complaint to the concerned parties and department coordinator (or co-coordinator) for the cases involving a teacher.

c) Attempts conciliation if applicable.

d) Renders a final decision based on available supporting evidence, if applicable, from all parties within 10 working days.

e) Follows up with the Director of the Constituent College.

f) Informs the concerned parties of the conclusion.

10.7. Coordinator of Human Resources

a) Provides employees with information about policies, regulations and guidelines.
b) Informs the employee of any disciplinary action when applicable according to the relevant collective agreements.
c) Keeps records when an employee is involved.

10.8. Concerned parties

a) Provide complete information about the incident, attend meetings with the assigned manager, and participate in conciliation sessions if applicable.

11. Mechanisms for continuous policy improvement

11.1. Mechanisms for evaluating the application of this policy

The Director of the Constituent College annually monitors the application of the policy and produces a report that is presented to the Governing Board for adoption. The criteria used to assess the policy's application are the compliance of practices with the policy and the efficiency of the policy itself.

11.2. Mechanisms for evaluating this policy

The Director of the Constituent College evaluates the current policy at least once every seven (7) years. The criteria for evaluating the policy itself are its compliance with regulatory requirements, the internal coherence of its elements, and its clarity. All relevant bodies, such as the Student Association, the employees' unions, the managers, and the Ombudsperson, are consulted during the evaluation.

The results of the policy evaluation are presented to the Governing Board.

11.3. Mechanisms for modifying this policy

When the policy evaluation concludes that a partial or complete revision is needed, the revision process is initiated by either the Director of the Constituent College or by recommendation of the Governing Board.

The Director of the Constituent College pilots the revision process and presents a revised policy to the Governing Board for adoption.