

STUDENT COMPLAINT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Students may have a complaint about various aspects of CCAD. Outlined below are specific policies about which complaints can be submitted and the specific procedures for each. Students must read thoroughly and carefully to determine which procedure applies to the situation about which they'd like to pursue a complaint or grievance.

PROVIDING FEEDBACK TO CCAD

Columbus College of Art & Design (CCAD) strives to maintain a learning environment that is just and equitable for all members of the college community. Students have a variety of opportunities for sharing feedback with CCAD, including course evaluations, annual surveys, and through Student Government Association (SGA).

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY & COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

CCAD admits students of any race, color, gender expression or presentation, religion, national and ethnic origin, disability, sexual orientation, veteran status, or age to all the rights and privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender expression or presentation, religion, national or ethnic origin, disability, sexual orientation, veteran status, or age in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and other school-administered programs.

Additionally, CCAD does not tolerate discrimination by members of our campus community against others. Discriminatory harassment is conduct that embarrasses, denigrates, or shows hostility toward a person because of race, color, gender expression or presentation, religion, national or ethnic origin, disability, sexual orientation, veteran status, or age. Harassment may be subtle or overt, but is intolerable in whatever form it takes. Examples of harassment include the following: verbal abuse; racial, ethnic, and religious epithets; intimidation; slurs, or jokes; graffiti (remarks written or drawn on walls or other structures); obscene gestures; derogatory online postings; and hazing. Even derogatory remarks between friends may be deemed overt acts of discrimination. **PROCEDURE:** The procedure to file a complaint related to acts of discrimination require students to email the Dean of Students at asanders@ccad.edu.

CCAD complies with all local, state, and federal laws concerning civil and human rights. Educational programs, admissions, housing, and employment practices are free of any type of discrimination based on race, color, gender, religion, national or ethnic origin, disability, sexual orientation, veteran status, or age (Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964). Discrimination on the basis of sex is prohibited by Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act prohibit discrimination on the basis of handicap. The Age Discrimination Act of 1975 prohibits age discrimination.

NONRETALIATION POLICY & COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

CCAD welcomes feedback from our students. Students who bring legitimate concerns to the attention of CCAD faculty or administrators should not fear that they will be retaliated against for

their efforts. Retaliation is defined as any adverse action taken against a person participating in a protected activity because of the person's participation in that protected activity. Retaliation against an individual for bringing forward a grievance is a serious violation of CCAD policy and will not be tolerated. **PROCEDURE:** If you feel you are experiencing retaliation of any kind, email the Dean of Students at asanders@ccad.edu.

OTHER POLICIES WITH SPECIFIC GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Complaints or appeals regarding the following CCAD policies and procedures, or the possible findings for each, must be addressed through the specific process that each of these prescribe and are separate from the below outlined complaint procedure. These policies and procedures are located in the [Student Handbook and/or the Code of Student Conduct](#), unless otherwise noted. Use the table of contents in the Student Handbook to locate the following:

- Academic or Behavioral Misconduct
- Sexual Misconduct
- Contesting a Final Grade
- Academic Dismissal
- Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Process
- Disability Accommodation Grievance (also found on [MyCCAD](#))
- Educational Records Challenge
- Employment: Complaints related to a student's employment status must be directed to Human Resources, Administration Building.

POLICY & PROCEDURE: ALL OTHER STUDENT COMPLAINTS

CCAD recognizes a complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction about a situation that the person making the complaint wants to see rectified. The Student Complaint Procedure is intended to resolve students' complaints related to College policies, programs, and services. The goal of the procedure is to provide students with a clear process for voicing concerns.

Any CCAD student may express or file a complaint with the College. All CCAD community members, including students and employees, must refrain from any retaliatory actions or threat of retaliation against any student registering a complaint. See the Retaliation Policy above or in the Code of Student Conduct. Please note, however that submitting deliberately false and/or malicious accusations or complaints that have the intended purpose of causing harm to another person or to the College will be seen as a serious offense and any student found responsible for this type of action will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action through the conduct process.

Submitting a complaint does not automatically render an at-fault decision. Students should not automatically expect full agreement or confirmation of their complaint solely on the basis that they submitted a complaint. The review process includes a full review of all information with the sole intention of responding to—and, if applicable, resolving—a complaint in a timely manner. It should also be noted that all CCAD employee information, including employment status, disciplinary actions, consequences, etc. is confidential and will not be shared with students.

Students may not submit a complaint based on CCAD not sharing protected employment information with them.

STUDENT COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

The following procedure is for all complaints that aren't addressed by the specific policies and procedures outlined above.

1. INFORMAL COMPLAINT

Students **must first** attempt to resolve concerns or complaints informally. To make an informal complaint, the student expresses their concerns or complaints to the faculty or staff member most directly involved. A student may make an informal complaint verbally or in writing. Students may request that the person's supervisor be involved in this informal resolution process. Any student needing advice on how to begin an informal complaint should consult the Dean of Students, asanders@ccad.edu. To be eligible for a formal complaint (see below), an informal complaint must be initiated first and have an unresolved outcome within 30 days of the original/first incident related to the complaint. If the incident occurs at the end of a regular semester or during a College break, a student will have up to 30 calendar days from the start of the next semester of enrollment to submit a formal complaint.

2. FORMAL COMPLAINT

If a student is not satisfied with the conclusions of the informal process, the student may submit a formal complaint. To be eligible, the student must be able to demonstrate that the following has occurred:

- a. The student initiated an informal complaint within 30 calendar days of the original/first incident related to the complaint. If the incident occurred at the end of a regular semester or during a College break, the student took informal steps within 30 calendar days from the start of the next semester of enrollment to initiate a formal complaint; and,
- b. The outcome of the informal complaint was unresolved.

Students are required to demonstrate their steps taken to resolve the complaint informally before the College will initiate a review of a formal complaint.

- 3.** If a student meets the eligibility criteria above, the student can submit a formal complaint using the [Formal Student Complaint Form](#). This form enables the College to ensure that all necessary information is collected from the student and provides an efficient process by which the College will respond to the student's concerns. Formal complaints must be submitted within 60 calendar days of the original/first incident related to the complaint.
- 4.** Once a formal complaint is submitted, the College will determine the best faculty or staff member to lead the review of the complaint and to conduct the process to completion.

CCAD will confirm that the student engaged in an informal attempt to resolve the complaint and if so, the College will review the complaint thoroughly, collecting any relevant information needed to understand the scope of the issue. This may include interviews with relevant persons, a records review, or other efforts that are necessary to form an accurate and factual basis for the resolution of the complaint.

5. Once the complaint review is concluded, CCAD will prepare a brief written report that summarizes the complaint and a finding (either “founded,” meaning the complaint is confirmed, or “unfounded,” meaning the complaint is without merit or lacked sufficient evidence). The written report will be delivered via email and typically, within 20 business days after the formal review is complete, depending on the complexity of the situation. Any expected delays in this timeframe will be communicated to all parties, as needed. Findings through the formal complaint process are final and there are no appeal procedures available.
6. CCAD will utilize founded complaints to improve its practices and procedures, as well as strategic planning efforts. Records of any complaint shall be maintained for a minimum of seven years in the College’s document drives.

EXTERNAL COMPLAINT OPTIONS

If the student believes that their complaint warrants further attention and is related to the College’s compliance with academic program quality and accrediting standards, the student is directed to contact the Higher Learning Commission ([HLC](#)). HLC is the primary academic accrediting body of CCAD.

If the student believes that their complaint warrants further attention and is related to the handling of the student’s education records, a complaint may be filed with the [Student Privacy Policy Office](#) under the US Department of Education.

If the student believes that their complaint warrants further attention and is related to discrimination and/or civil rights violations, a complaint can be filed with the [US Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights](#).

Nothing in this disclosure limits any right that you may have to seek civil or criminal legal action to resolve your complaints. CCAD has provided this disclosure to you in compliance with the requirements of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, as regulated in CFR 34, Sections 600.9 (b) (3) and 668.43(b). If you believe anything in this disclosure is out of date, please notify the Dean of Students for review at studentaffairs@ccad.edu.