

AC207: Student Complaint

Policy Title:	Student Complaint
Policy Number:	AC207
Owner:	Sr. Vice President, Academic and Student Success
Approved by:	Senior Leadership Team
Effective Date:	September 1, 2026
Reference:	
See also:	Student Code of Conduct Academic Appeals Workplace Harassment, Discrimination and Bullying Sexual Violence Policy

St. Lawrence College is committed to making our resources fully accessible to all persons. This document will be made available in alternative format upon request.

BACKGROUND

Definitions:

Administrator: May be a Manager, Supervisor, Associate Director, or Associate Dean or another role who has full supervisory responsibility for an employee and/or a service unit/department.

Anonymity: Anonymity allows the name of the complainant to be withheld. However, a student reporting a complaint to a College employee or College official should understand that while every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality, the College cannot investigate or follow up on an anonymous disclosure.

Complainant: full-time or part-time students, including online students who are currently enrolled in a course or program at St. Lawrence College.

Complaint: An expression in writing, of some discontent or dissatisfaction with the College by one or more students about its standards of service, its operation, or its employees.

Confidentiality: The process of strict privacy guiding the College's response to a complaint. A Complainant's name and disclosure is known, but only to those who need to know to help

resolve the complaint/or provide support as per the Complainant's request.

Day / Business Day: For the purpose of this policy, "day" means any day that includes Monday to Friday, excluding holidays, as defined in the St. Lawrence College academic calendar.

Respondent: A person, department or office called upon to issue a response to a communication made by a Complainant. An Administrator may act as a Respondent if the complaint is regarding a policy, program or service within the college.

Senior Administrator: Refers to the next senior level of management, Dean, Director, or Vice-President.

Support Person: While not required, a support person may be chosen by any of the parties during the process to support the Complainant or Respondent involved. The support person will not be permitted to advocate for, or speak on behalf of, the Complainant.

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure concerns of students can be addressed and resolved appropriately and in a timely way, and without fear of reprisal for matters not covered through other processes (e.g. Code of Conduct, Academic Appeals).

St. Lawrence College places a strong emphasis on providing students with high-quality academic experiences and services, and to continuously improve them. An essential part of that commitment is receiving and responding to the concerns and complaints of students.

The College is committed to ensuring this policy is enforced in a consistent, fair, and non-discriminatory way.

Scope:

1. This policy applies to complaints from full-time or part-time students, including online students who are currently enrolled in a course or program at St. Lawrence College, or former students who were enrolled in a course or program when the alleged incident(s), leading to the complaint, occurred.

2. A complaint must be made within thirty (30) days of the incident(s) giving rise to the complaint except in extenuating circumstances which, in the opinion of the Senior Administrator assigned, would justify an extension.
3. SLC has a robust series of policies to support students. This policy applies to circumstances not already covered by existing policy and procedures and specifically, Student Code of Conduct, Academic Appeals, Workplace Harassment, Discrimination and Bullying, and Sexual Violence Policy.
4. This policy cannot review decisions made through another policy process that the College has established.
5. This policy does not apply to Student Governments. Students Governments are encouraged to provide their own complaints mechanism to their respective members.
6. Should the concern raised relate to implementation of academic accommodations for students with disabilities, individuals are to be directed to swa@sl.on.ca for information and support, as the matter may be best supported through retroactive accommodation.
7. The College will respond to any dissatisfaction with its services fairly and promptly.
 - Students and employees are encouraged to try to resolve complaints informally where possible.
 - An initial response to a formal complaint is provided within 10 business days.
 - Information on how to move the complaint to the next level is provided if the Complainant is not satisfied with the College's initial response.
 - The Complainant may access an appeal process of a formal decision if dissatisfied with the outcome.
8. Complaints may be addressed using an informal and/or a formal procedure. Students are encouraged to try to resolve their complaint informally before proceeding with the formal complaint procedure. All College staff have a responsibility for receiving complaints, treating them seriously, and dealing with them promptly. Advice and information regarding the complaint process for students can be obtained from Academic School offices, Student Rights & Responsibilities Office (SRRO) and Student Government offices.

9. There are two stages contained in this policy (Step 1: informal and Step 2: formal) to allow escalation where it has not proved possible to resolve a complaint informally, or where a student considers that their complaint has not or cannot be resolved informally, or where it is apparent that serious, complex and/or multiple issues are involved.
10. Administrators and/or Senior Administrators have the responsibility to review and resolve a complaint, and to lead or to contribute to an investigation into a complaint when this is considered appropriate.
11. The Office of the Senior Vice President, Academic & Student Success is responsible for the appeal process, which may include delegation where deemed appropriate.
12. All employees of the College who deal with a complaint shall respect the Complainant's and Respondent's rights to confidentiality. Note that confidentiality is not synonymous with anonymity.
13. While not required, a support person may be chosen by any of the parties during the process to support the Complainant or Respondent involved. The support person will not be permitted to advocate for, or speak on behalf of, the Complainant or the Respondent. In circumstances where a student requires an interpreter or other accessibility-related support personnel, such role will be separate and apart from the role of the support person.
14. There shall be no reprisals towards Complainants for engaging in Complaints Policy activity. A student is protected from retaliation in accordance with this policy as long as the complaint is made in good faith and is not knowingly false or materially inaccurate. Following investigation or fact-finding, the lack of a factual basis for a complaint will not unilaterally be considered evidence that a complaint was frivolous or vexatious.
15. A student who makes a complaint found to be vexatious or malicious, following the investigation under the Complaints Procedure, may be deemed to be in breach of the Student Code of Conduct policy. Investigation of retaliatory events will be launched by the Student Rights & Responsibilities Office. A complaint must be made within thirty (30)

days of the incident(s) giving rise to the complaint except in extenuating circumstances which, in the opinion of the Senior Administrator assigned, would justify an extension.

16. A group of students may delegate one or more of its members to voice a complaint on its behalf. However, no one shall initiate a complaint on behalf of another person without their permission. The decision whether to hear from other members of the group rests with the Administrator(s) by whom the complaint is addressed.
17. Anonymous complaints will not be dealt with under this Policy. People wishing to give feedback anonymously should utilize the Feedback process, by emailing Feedback@sl.on.ca.
18. While every effort is made to respond according to the timelines, an extension may be justified in extenuating circumstances as indicated by a Senior Administrator.
19. The College reserves the right to decline to review complaints that are repetitive, previously addressed through this process, or where no new relevant information has been provided.

MONITORING

All areas of the College are accountable for ensuring that the principles of this policy are upheld. It is the responsibility of the Office of the Senior Vice President, Academic & Student Success to maintain a clear record of all complaints that are maintained securely and in alignment with privacy regulations. The Office of the Senior Vice President, Academic & Student Success prepares an annual summary report on the formal complaints and the outcomes and presents the report for information to the Senior Leadership Team.

Where a complaint is upheld and action is required, a record of the action taken shall be kept with the complaint documentation. Where recommendations for changes to policies or procedures are made as the result of a complaint, a record of consideration for quality improvement shall be kept with the complaint documentation. The Office of the Senior Vice President, Academic & Student Success will monitor complaints which have been referred to them and will be responsible for implementing, or recommending to the appropriate authority changes to systems or procedures suggested by the nature and pattern of the complaints received.

NEXT POLICY REVISION DATE

This policy will be reviewed in 5 years: September 2031.

This review will be initiated by the Dean, Student Success.

SPECIFIC LINKS

[Student Code of Conduct](#)

[Academic Appeals](#)

[Workplace Harassment, Discrimination and Bullying](#)

[Sexual Violence Policy.](#)