

The following FAQ are for Academic student concerns. Academic concerns include grade appeals and/or exceptions of program policies or processes.

1. Do I have to meet with my instructor before filing the complaint/concern?

For an academic concern, the student should try to resolve the complaint/concern informally. This could be through a meeting, a phone call, an email conversation or via a discussion board in CANVAS in which a valid attempt is made to resolve the concern. In the case of a meeting or phone call, the conversation should be documented (an email conversation is already documented).

There are other types of concern on campus that do not require a meeting or attempt at informal resolution. An example of this type of concern would be sexual harassment or discrimination. For concerns of this nature, please contact the College's Director of Human Resources/Title IX Coordinator at 253.589.5533.

2. What's the first step?

Try to resolve the concern informally with your instructor or college employee.

3. What can I expect the process to look like?

Try to resolve the concern informally as soon after the incident occurred as possible. It must be within 15 days of the event.

If you choose to submit a formal concern, those submissions are through the web portal at [A Better CPTC \(https://www.cptc.edu/better-cptc\)](https://www.cptc.edu/better-cptc). Be sure to fill out all sections of the form and attach supporting documentation. Incomplete forms will be returned to the student. Once the completed form is submitted, the person who will be investigating the concern will (within 5 days):

1. Determine if it is submitted to the correct office. If the concern needs to be sent to another office, the dean's office will do so, and notify the student via their student email account.
2. Determine if it is a grievable matter. If it is determined that it is not a grievable matter, the student will be notified via their student email account. (For a list of matters that are grievable and which are not, please see # 20 below).
3. Send a copy of the concern to the instructor/employee.

The instructor/employee will provide a written response to their supervisor (within 5 days).

The person investigating the concern will look at both the concern and the response as well as college, state and federal laws and guidelines.

The supervisor may call a meeting. If both parties agree, a meeting will take place to discuss and attempt to resolve the concern.

If a meeting does not occur, or a resolution was not reached, the investigator will render a decision in writing (within 5 days). Both parties will receive a copy of the determination letter.

If you are not satisfied with the determination, you can choose to request a hearing before the Appeal Review Committee. The request must be in writing, and submitted to the Vice President of Student Learning within 5 days of receiving the determination letter.

The Appeal Review Committee will review all of the documentation, and speak with all parties. The decision of the Appeal Review Committee is final, and cannot be reviewed.

4. How long will the process take? What's the timeline?

This depends upon the type of concern. For an academic concern, the timeline is based upon *instructional days*. This means that weekends, holidays and the break between quarters do not figure into the timeline. Once the **formal** process starts, the student should receive a determination within 15 instructional days (steps 2-4). This timeline may be extended for cause, such as: the student submits additional information during the process, when the meeting between the parties can be scheduled.

If the concern goes to appeal, the request for appeal must be within 5 days of the determination letter. The appeal committee will convene and render a decision within 10 days.

5. What qualifies as an informal meeting?

An attempt in good faith to discuss and resolve the concern. This could be an actual face-to-face meeting between the instructor and student, a phone conversation, an email conversation, or a

discussion utilizing the discussion board on CANVAS in which a valid attempt is made to resolve the concern. Both parties should be focused on the discussion. For example, asking a question while passing in the hall, interjecting something during a phone conversation, or other examples of making a comment while the other person is otherwise engaged is not a valid attempt at resolving the concern.

6. What is a complaint vs concern?

A complaint is when a person wishes to inform the college/administration about actions or practices they feel were unfair and/or they feel should be changed. In a complaint, the person does not have a personal resolution stated and may remain anonymous. An example would be a letter that is sent to the supervisor. The student may be contacted for further information, but other than that is not involved in the process after the initial complaint. No letter of determination will be sent, and there is no set timeline.

A student concern can be submitted when a student feels there has been a violation of college academic policy, procedure or regulation, or to resolve an alleged case of inequitable treatment. This is a formal process in which a personal resolution is sought. The instructor/college employee is given a copy of the concern and a chance to respond. In a concern, the student and instructor will receive a determination letter.

7. I am concerned about retaliation from my faculty member – what should I do?

Student rights are protected in the process, and will not suffer repercussions because they choose to file a concern or appeal in good faith.

8. Where do I find the necessary paperwork?

A Better CPTC (<https://www.cptc.edu/better-cptc>) is where student concerns can be submitted using the on-line form. The process, timeline and additional information is available in the college catalog, the student handbook and on-line at: <http://www.cptc.edu/student-concerns>.

9. I am too intimidated by my faculty member, what should I do?

You can discuss the concern via email if you are not comfortable discussing it in person.

Alternatively, you can request that the faculty member's School Lead or direct supervisor mediate a meeting between yourself and your instructor.

10. What email address should I send my faculty an email from?

Your college student email address. All college correspondence will be sent to your college-issued email address.

11. Is the concern form/paperwork kept anonymous?

No, but it is kept confidential to the extent possible. The concern form and supporting documentation is shared with the instructor/employee and information contained in the concern may be shared with other relevant parties in order to complete a thorough investigation.

12. What is the process to file a complaint?

There is no formal process to file a complaint.

13. Can I bring someone with me? What is an advocate?

You can. However, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), prohibits us from discussing your academic record with anyone else without your written permission. So before bringing someone to a meeting, you will want to fill out and submit a Release of Information form to the Registrar. If you do choose to bring someone to the meeting, please remember that we will be talking to you, and that you are speaking for yourself.

14. Will the faculty read my complaint form?

It is important here to remember the difference between a concern and a complaint. (See #6) The faculty will receive a copy of a formal concern in order to provide a response.

If a complaint letter is received, and the person sending it asks to remain anonymous, the letter will not be shared with the faculty, although the content will.

If an anonymous letter is received, those will often be shared with faculty.

15. I filled out and submitted the form at A Better CPTC, now where does it go?

This depends upon the type of concern. For academic concerns, they are forwarded to the Dean of the program. The dean (or designee) will investigate the concern.

Concerns will be forwarded to the office or department the concern is about. For example, if your concern is about Financial Aid, it will be forwarded to the Financial Aid office. Please see 'Types of Concerns' at the bottom of this FAQ.

16. If I don't hear back from my instructor after submitting the paperwork, what do I do?
You probably will not hear back from your instructor about a formal concern until it is resolved, or a meeting is called by the dean/designee.
17. In what instance do I go directly to the dean?
If you feel unsafe, the dean's office can talk about next steps.
If you are unsure what type of concern it is, the Dean's Office can help.
18. Who is my dean/department chair?
See organizational chart: <https://www.cptc.edu/organization>
19. What is the maximum amount of time to file a complaint/concern?
This depends upon the type of concern. For academic concerns, it is within 15 days of the incident or grade.
20. What type of things are not grievable under the academic student concern process?
This is best determined through discussion. The college operates under Federal and state laws, rules and regulations, and it would be difficult to compile a full list. These could include, but would not be limited to: issues of Academic Freedom, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Financial Aid regulations and ethics laws. Here are some examples:
 - Academic Freedom:** Faculty academic freedom at Clover Park includes faculty's right and responsibility to use their professional expertise and discretion in selecting materials, course content, effective methods of instruction and text selection. Although students are encouraged to comment on these items, they are not grievable under this process.
 - FERPA:** The college cannot discuss a student's academic record with another student without their express, written permission. This includes any accommodations, grades or discipline.
 - Personnel issues:** All employees at Clover Park Technical College have an expectation of confidentiality regarding personnel issues. Employment actions not be shared with students. Asking that an employee be disciplined or dismissed is not an acceptable resolution.
 - Ethics:** CPTC strictly adheres to state ethics laws. This includes use and gifting of state resources.

Types of concerns:

Academic: grade appeals, inequitable treatment regarding program policies, procedures or processes.

Accommodations: concerns regarding a faculty member, and office or program's refusal to provide an accommodation in accordance with notice from the Disabilities Resources for Students (<http://www.cptc.edu/disabilities>).

Behavioral (student): complaints regarding student conduct. Please see Code of Student Conduct (<http://www.cptc.edu/conduct-code>).

Discrimination or Sexual Harassment: a person feels that they have been unlawfully discriminated against or harassed (includes sexual discrimination and harassment). These claims are handled through CPTC's Title IX Coordinator in the Human Resources department.

Facilities/Bookstore: buildings, college equipment, bookstore services. These claims are handled in the Business Office.

Financial Aid: The student feels that their financial aid is in error or they wish to appeal a suspension. <http://www.cptc.edu/financial-aid/satisfactory-academic-progress-requirements> .
To appeal Financial Aid suspension due to unsatisfactory academic progress, submit the Satisfactory Academic Progress Suspension Appeal(
<http://www.cptc.edu/sites/default/files/files/15-16%20SAP%20appeal%20form.pdf>

Quality of Course or Quality of Instruction: faculty members use their professional expertise and discretion to select materials, course content, effective methods of instruction and text selection. As such, these are not grievable matters under the concern process. Students have an opportunity to evaluate course and instructional quality every quarter through the on-line Course Evaluations.