

STUDENT FORMAL COMPLAINT PROCESS

LIM College is committed to providing quality education and support services for students attending the College.

In support of our students, we have established a formal student complaint process as an avenue of communication with students and to identify any problems so they may be appropriately addressed. Additionally, the College has a federal obligation to track significant student complaints so we may monitor the quality of our services.

Students have multiple means to express concerns or complaints and many faculty and staff with whom concerns can be shared. Established appeals and grievance processes are available for students to address many common issues, and these can be found on the Student Policies & Procedures page of the College website in the Student Appeals & Grievances document. In addition, NC-SARA (National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements) significantly impacts out-of-state distance education (online) students by providing a structured process for handling consumer protection complaints. ***Please note: NC-SARA policies do not cover complaints related to grades or student conduct violations.*** *Distance education students may appeal the institution decision to the SARA State Portal Entity in New York State within two years of the incident about which the complaint is made.* ***For more information on student complaints for online students, please see the resource links at the bottom of this document.*** To assist the College in identifying patterns of concerns and to comply with our obligations, the following **Student Formal Complaint Process** is defined:

Documented student complaints of significance are those that meet the below definition and that come to the attention of the Vice President of Student Affairs for follow-up and resolution. The College employee receiving the complaint determines whether a concern meets the definitions offered below and is of sufficient substance to be tracked.

HOW THE PROCESS WORKS:

- Initial complaint process- Student files formal complaint via LIM's Guardian Software on the Student Portal. Document has to be signed/identified by student (not anonymous). All supporting documents should be included in the submission.
- The complaint will be reviewed by the Vice President of Student Affairs and a decision will be issued within 7 business days. Depending on the nature of the complaint, additional time for a formal investigation may be needed. Please note: Human Resources may be involved if the complaint involves a staff or faculty member.
- Students reserve the right to appeal the decision in writing to the Provost. Appeals must be in writing and include the grounds for the appeal. Appeals must be made within 10 (ten) calendar days, not to include days LIM College is closed, of the date of the outcome letter. The party filing the appeal will be notified in writing as to the outcome of the appeal.

Please note: Formal complaints are not intended for routine decision (e.g., grade change, requirement waiver, etc.) or a grievance for which a defined process already exists

COMPLAINT INFO THAT IS TRACKED:

- *Date complaint received*
- *Student(s) identified with complaint*
- *Nature of the complaint*
- *Office assigned to address the complaint*
- *Steps taken to resolve complaint and final decision or College action taken*
- *External actions by complainant (e.g., lawsuit, EEOC, OCR)*

In accordance with our federal regulatory and accreditation standard requirements in this area, the College will annually review student complaints tracked in accordance with this process and will look to identify patterns in types of complaints and their resolution. The review will also include an assessment of what, if any, modifications or improvements the College needs to make as a result of information identified in handling student complaints and a process for implementing appropriate institutional enhancements accordingly.

REGULATORY REFERENCES

- Federal Regulations 34 CFR 602.16(a)(1)(ix)
- [Federal Regulations 34 CFR § 668](#))
- The Middle State Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), *Verification of Compliance with Accreditation Relevant Federal Regulations*
- NC-SARA complaint process- <https://www.nc-sara.org/sara-student-complaints-0>
- New York State Education Department's complaint procedures- <https://www.nysed.gov/college-university-evaluation/sara-student-complaint-process>