

Procedural Fairness and Appeals for Students

Number:	3.1.3
Responsible Executive:	President
Approval Authority:	Senior Team
Effective Date:	October 17, 2025
Next Review Date:	October 16, 2030
Revised Date:	June 18, 2026
Category:	Administration

PURPOSE

This policy sets out the process and practice for Coquitlam College (the College) to make fair, transparent, and equitable decisions when addressing student concerns, complaints, or appeals.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees and students involved in College decision-making, complaint resolution, and appeal processes.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. The College is committed to applying the principles of procedural fairness in all decisions affecting students.
2. All students will have access to clear, consistent, and timely processes for resolving concerns and appeals.
3. All parties will be treated respectfully and without fear of reprisal when engaging in the complaint or appeal process.
4. Decision-making processes will be free of bias or conflict of interest, and individuals will not adjudicate matters where such conflicts exist.

PROCEDURES

5. The principles of procedural fairness ensure that:
 - a. Students have a right to be informed of any allegations, decisions, or actions that may affect their academic standing, enrolment, or access to services.
 - b. Students have a right to a meaningful opportunity to respond, either orally or in writing, within a reasonable timeframe.
 - c. Students are entitled to receive written notice of the decision, including the reasons for the decision and any associated outcomes.
 - d. The process will be conducted in an unbiased manner, ensuring impartiality and fairness.
 - e. The confidentiality of all parties will be respected in accordance with the *Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA)* and College privacy policies.
6. In addition, the College will:
 - a. Follow reasonable and defined timelines set out in applicable College policies.

- b. Make decisions based on the information available at the time the decision is made.
- c. Consider evidence that is relevant and reliable, which may include documents, emails and other electronic communications, text messages, photographs, audio or video recordings, witness statements, or other relevant records.
- d. Determine what evidence will be considered and the weight it will be given, based on its relevance, authenticity, completeness, reliability, and the circumstances of the matter.
- e. Address similar matters in a consistent manner while considering the specific circumstances in each case.

Informal Resolution

7. Students are encouraged to first seek informal resolution by discussing concerns directly with the instructor, staff member, or the Chief Academic Officer (or delegate).
8. Where appropriate, mediation or facilitated dialogue may be offered to resolve a matter informally.

Appeals

9. The College's appeal processes are outlined in individual policies where student appeals may be warranted, e.g. student conduct and final grade appeal. Students are expected to review the applicable policy and follow the procedures outlined for resolution or appeal.
10. Appeal requests should be submitted within the timelines specified in the applicable policy. Requests submitted outside these timelines will not normally be considered.
11. Students who are dissatisfied with the outcome of the College's internal appeal process may seek external review or resolution through:
 - Languages Canada, for students in the English Studies Program.
 - Federation of Independent School Associations (FISA), in matters falling under FISA's mandate.
 - Legal counsel or other legislated authorities with oversight over the specific complaint.

DEFINITIONS

Procedural Fairness (Natural Justice): The duty to act fairly in administrative decision-making, ensuring individuals are given notice, a fair opportunity to respond, and an unbiased process.

Appeal: A formal request by a student to review or overturn a decision made by the College.

RELATED RESOURCES

- [Appeal of Final Grade Policy 2.2.3](#)
- [Prevention of Bullying and Harassment Policy 3.1.4](#)
- [Student Academic Responsibility Policy 2.2.1](#)
- [Student Accommodations Policy 2.2.4](#)
- [Student Non-Academic Conduct Policy 2.2.2](#)
- [Dispute Resolution Policy, Languages Canada](#)
- [Procedural Fairness Best Practice Guidelines for Independent Schools, FISA BC](#)