**Complaint Process**

Guideline for handling complaints.

All minor complaints and disputes should be resolved as promptly as possible. In matters assessed as less serious an informal resolution should be attempted first, whenever possible.

Complaints must be reported via the Complaint form, located on the bottom of the www.montcalm.edu main page, or to the Dean of Student and Enrollment Services (DSES) via email, unless the complaint is less serious and is resolved informally. Students, Employees, Partners, Stakeholders and all community members may utilize this avenue to register a complaint. The matrix following this overview describes the path of each type of complaint.

A matter is considered less serious if it involves a minor breach or complaint and is not seen to be part of a pattern of conduct that would lead to disciplinary/remedial action or a major change in existing processes. An example of this type of complaint is money lost in a vending machine. This is a mechanical issue that can be resolved with a refund and a call to the vending company.

If assistance is needed in deciding whether or not a complaint is ‘serious’, refer to the Complaint Matrix or seek advice from a supervisor, Director of HR or the DSES. If in doubt, report the complaint via the Complaint/Suggestion form, located on the bottom of the www.montcalm.edu main page, or to the DSES via email.

A person making a complaint will have expectations as to how their complaint should be handled and may require assistance in making the complaint. To manage complainant expectations:
- explain the complaint handling process to the complainant or tell them where to get information about it;
- if the matter is to be referred, explain why and to whom;
- confirm with the complainant that their complaint is fully understood and ask what outcome they are seeking;
- outline the possible outcomes, including whether or not the outcome they are seeking is reasonable;
- provide realistic timeframes for dealing with the matter;
- ensure that any promises made are followed through.

All parties to a complaint are expected to treat the matter confidentially, unless addressing the complaint effectively requires otherwise. Confidentiality requires that everyone, including the complainant, ensures that information is restricted to those who genuinely need to know. Furthermore, involved parties only be told as much as they need to know for effective resolution.

**Steps in the complaint procedure**
1 – Complaint is received via complaint form (or other avenue) by the Dean of Student & Enrollment Services (DSES) with Vice President of Administrative Services participating as back-up in DSES absence.
2 – DSES records complaint in the complaint log and makes calendar entry for follow up regarding the complaint.
3 – DSES considers the complaint and determines whether or not a coordinated approach is needed.
4 – DSES checks for previous action re the complaint.
5 – DSES commences investigation or refers complaint to head of division about which the complaint was made for investigation.
6 – DSES follow up until resolution has taken place.
7 – Resolution is recorded in complaint log.
Possible outcomes
- providing explanation and reasons if not previously provided
- dismissing the complaint, e.g. if the decision accords with workplace policy or procedure
- concluding that the complaint has been substantially resolved
- reaching a compromise solution
- upholding the complaint and implementing specific action such as overturning a decision, giving an apology or providing a service not previously provided
- addressing or referring the issue for system improvement.

Systems Improvement
Systems improvement is the process of improving a system to prevent future problems. If complaints are recognized as being the result of an issue with a process, then the process in question will be reviewed by the department responsible for the process and/or the Quality Counsel.

Steps in the Systems Improvement Procedure
This procedure applies whether or not the complaint is anonymous. The extent of record keeping can vary according to circumstance. The optional Complaint Form can be used to record details and the Complaint Action Form to record action taken.
Step 1 – Assess if remedy and/or systems improvement is warranted
Step 2 – Immediate remedy
Step 3 – Refer matter to the department responsible for the process
Step 4 – Refer matter to Quality Council

Systems improvement may involve one or more of:
- referral for consideration of policy or procedure change
- policy development or revision
- process improvement (i.e. changes to procedures and workplace practices)
- program review
- expert assistance, staff development or performance improvement
- improved implementation (e.g. issuing updated documentation or reminders)
- monitoring compliance
- other action to ensure that the matter is handled appropriately in future.

Timeframe
Complainants utilizing the online complaint form will receive immediate notification of receipt of complaint. Other avenues of complaints will receive notification either immediately (if face-to-face complaint is made) or within in 48 business hours. The delegate should aim for resolution of the suggestion or complaint within a month of receipt if the above timeframes cannot be met. If the recommend resolution is not satisfactory to the complainant, they may appeal. Students may appeal the decision using the appeal process outlined in the catalog. Employees may appeal decisions using the process outlined in their contracts.

Analysis of process and resolutions
Throughout the year, the DSES will bring to the attention of ET any anomalies or serious concerns that need to be addressed at a level beyond the complaint resolution process.
At the end of each fiscal year data from the complaint log will be reviewed by the DSES, who will summarize complaint types and resolutions, and look for patterns and issues. Recommendations will be shared with QC at the August QC meeting, along with the data. All changes resulting from data analysis will be captured in a year-end summary.
Map of Complaint Process overview

1. Complaint received
2. Complaint logged
   - Complaint forwarded on to relevant parties as outlined in specific complaint maps.
   - Complainant contacted for more information or/and to notify that complaint was received.
3. Complaint follow up until resolution can be recorded.
   - Within 2 business days
   - Weekly until resolved
Complaint about student, by another student or by an employee

Complaint about employee by student

Complaint comes into Dean of Student & Enrollment Services who determines level of concern

Low
Ex: person unhappy with non-closure for snowy weather
Move concern to appropriate employee

Medium
Ex: Student unhappy with exam grade
DSES investigates situation.

Issue that is resolved by syllabus
DSES discusses options with student
Options may include:
1. Recommend student appeal grade
2. Faculty Supervisor contacts instructor requesting action
3. Other

Issue not resolved by syllabus
DSES confers with instructor and/or faculty supervisor

DSES investigates situation.

High
Ex: Report of bullying incident/larceny
Ensure student safety
DSES investigates situation.

Notify relevant individuals (supervisor, HR, Police. Etc)
Follow up with student regarding findings and to provide direction
Arrange for counseling/discussion

Critical
Report of sexual harassment; threats of violence
Ensure student safety
DSES investigates situation.

Notify relevant individuals (supervisor, HR, Police. Etc)
Follow up with student re: findings and to provide direction
Arrange for counseling/discussion
Complaint about F/T non-Health Occ. instructor by another instructor

Complaint shared with VP for Academic Affairs and HR

- VP investigates complaint
  - No issue exists
  - Follow up with complainant re: findings and to provide direc-

Necessary appointments made for interviews

- Issue Exists
  - Severe
    - Take Steps to assure employee safety, if necessary
    - Discuss with Dean of SS&ES if involves student
  - Minor
    - Discuss with HR, if deemed appropriate
    - Discuss with Dean of SS&ES if involves student

- Appointments missed

Letter sent via email and note made in employee file
Complaint about F/T health occ instructor by another instructor

Complaint comes into VP of Admin who contacts HR and Dean of Health Occ

Appointments made to gather information

Dean investigates complaint

No issue exists

Follow up with complainant re: findings and to provide direc-

Issue Exists

Severe

Minor

Take Steps to assure employee safety, if necessary

Discuss with HR, if deemed appropriate

Discuss with Dean of SS&ES if involves student

Discuss with VP of SS & AA

Discuss with Dean of Instruction & Student Development, part time instructor

Arrange for counseling/discussion, training

Discuss with HR, if deemed appropriate

Discuss with Dean of SS&ES if involves student

Discuss with VP of SS & AA if deemed necessary

Discuss with Dean of Instruction & Student Development, if deemed necessary

Email note sent and note put in employee file

Appointments missed

Appointments made to gather information
Complaint about P/T non-health occ instructor by another instructor

Complaint comes into VP of Admin/HR and they contact Dean of P/T fac

Dean investigates complaint

Appointments made to gather information

Email note sent and note put in employee file

Follow up with complainant re: findings and to provide direc-

Appointments missed

Take Steps to assure employee safety, if necessary

Discuss with HR, if deemed appropriate

Discuss with Dean of SS&ES if involves student

Discuss with VP of SS & AA

Discuss with Dean of Instruction & Student Development, part time instructor

No issue exists

Issue Exists

Severe

Minor

Arrange for counseling/discussion, training

Discuss with HR, if deemed appropriate

Discuss with Dean of SS&ES if involves student

Discuss with VP of SS & AA if deemed necessary

Discuss with Dean of Instruction & Student Development, if deemed necessary
Complaint about employee (non-faculty) by another employee

Complaint comes into HR

HR investigates complaint

Issue Exists

Severe

Take Steps to assure employee safety, if necessary

Discuss with Dean of SS&ES if involves student

Discuss with Union Officials if necessary

Discuss with Central Administration, if necessary

Discuss with lawyer, if necessary

Minor

Arrange for counseling/discussion

Discuss with Dean of SS&ES if involves student

Follow up with complainant re: findings and to provide direc-
Complaint from community member

Complaint comes in to DSES through form

Complaint entered in log

Follow up Weekly until resolved

Complaint directed as follows:

Within 1 business day

Minor Complaint about employee - send to employee supervisor

Major Complaint about employee - send to HR and employee supervisor

Complaint about facilities send to VPAS

Complaint about services send to appropriate dept head

Resolution noted in complaint log