

SECTION I

PART T STUDENT APPEALS POLICY

1.00 Introduction

This policy applies to students currently enrolled at a public institution of higher education. It mandates that each institution define and implement appeals processes to hear student appeals in a fair and expeditious manner. It identifies student issues that are statutorily institutional decisions and those that may be referred to the state appeal board. The full appeals process is effective immediately. The expedited appeals process is effective fall 2003.

2.00 Statutory Authority

Several sections in statute outline the Commission's responsibility to ensure that the public higher education system is designed to function for students' benefit. Its responsibilities range from ensuring the design of degree programs to permit graduation within a reasonable time [23-1-108 (13)], intra-institutional and inter-institutional transfer [23-5-122] to the Student Bill of Rights [23-1-135]. The Commission is directed to develop the broadest and simplest mechanisms possible to ensure student rights.

3.00 Goals and Definitions

The policy goals of CCHE's Student Appeal Policy include:

- 3.01 To uphold the Students' Bill of Rights and other statutory goals for the public higher education system as they pertain to students.
- 3.02 To ensure that student issues are resolved in a timely and reasonable manner.
- 3.03 To inform students of the appropriate way to solve non-academic problems.

4.00 Role, Responsibilities, and Limitations Pertaining to Student Appeals

4.01 Role of the Commission

- To arbitrate unresolved student appeals that involve academic issues related to state policy.
- To facilitate resolution of other academic issues.
- To modify state policies or request institutions to modify policies to prevent persistent student problems from recurring.
- To publicize its appeal process and promote the publication of all appeal processes.
- To appoint members to the Student Appeals Board.

4.02 Role of Governing Board

- To ensure that its institutions comply with state policy regarding appeals, including the intent for students to have a timely and fair hearing.

4.03 Role of Institution

- To hear student appeals in a timely and unbiased manner. In some instances, an institution is the sole determinate of a student issue, including but not limited to:
 - a) Tuition Classification. The institution shall establish an appeals process and timelines to hear cases in which a student disputes tuition classification. The decision of the institution appeal board is binding.
 - b) Graduate issues related to admission, thesis defense and comprehensive exams.
 - c) Admission decisions.
 - d) Issues related to student government and student organizations.
 - e) Financial Aid.
 - f) Grading.
 - g) Non-academic issues.
- At minimum, the institution shall publish its appeal procedures and the Student Bill of Rights in the college catalog and on the college web site.
- Institutions shall notify CCHE of its appeal procedures and identify the primary contact person for its various appeals processes.

4.04 Role of CCHE's Appeal Board.

The Commission delegates its authority to hear student appeals to an appeal board. The appeal board will include 5 members – 3 student representatives and 2 at-large members. Each appointment will be a two-year term. The appeal board will convene as needed during the academic year to resolve cases.

5:00 Commission Appeal Process and Procedures

A student may appeal to the Commission by submitting a written request (letter or e-mail) describing the issue and the steps the student has taken to resolve the issue. Eligible appeals (e.g., transfer, inter-institutional agreements) will follow the full appeal process. Appeals that involve state guaranteed transfer courses will be handled through an expedited process. Appeals that involve issues that are reserved for the institution will be referred to the appropriate authority.

5.01 Full appeal process.

CCHE will assist the student by identifying the institutional staff person or department that is in the best position to resolve the issue directly.

If an institution does not act on an appeal within thirty days of the date that the appeal is received or if the outcome appears inconsistent with state policy, a student may formally request a hearing by CCHE's Appeal Board.

For issues that are within CCHE's authority, CCHE will convene the board. It will request the involved institution to provide a 1-2 page rationale for its actions. The board will review the submitted material within two weeks and meet to hear the student's appeal. The board will recommend appropriate action. To implement the decision in a timely manner, the decision of the board will be communicated to both the student and the institution. Such decisions are binding and not subject to further appeal. CCHE staff will respond to all other issues by letter.

5.02 Expedited Appeal Process.

An enrolled student who receives a transcript evaluation that does not award general education transfer credit for a "state guaranteed" general education course may appeal directly to the Commission. The disputed credit must be earned in a course in which the student received a C or better grade. The student must have enrolled in the course during the 2002-03 academic year or later. The Commission staff will resolve such cases within five business days.