INFORMAL PROCESS: A student must complete the following steps prior to submitting a formal written complaint to
the Director of Community Standards Office.

__ Step 1.
- Schedule a meeting with the instructor(s) outside of class time to explain your complaint.
- It may be helpful for you to:
  a. Prepare notes for your use during the meeting regarding the specific points related to your concern(s)
  b. Forward a letter to the instructor(s) outlining your concern(s) prior to the meeting
- Be able to produce documentation, as appropriate, that may support your concern(s)
- Inform the instructor(s) that you are considering a formal academic grievance, and you view the meeting as step one in the informal resolution process
- If the concern(s) is not resolved with the instructor(s), proceed to step two
- Document the date(s) and time(s) you met with the instructor(s) or and any notes you wish to keep regarding the meeting(s)

__ Step 2.
- Schedule a meeting with the appropriate department chairperson(s) to explain your complaint (Note – if the instructor(s) is also the department chairperson(s) you may proceed to step three
- It may be helpful for you to:
  a. Prepare notes for your use during the meeting regarding the specific points related to your concern(s)
  b. Forward a letter to the department chairperson(s) outlining your concern(s) prior to the meeting
- Explain to the department chairperson(s) the outcome of your meeting with the instructor(s) (that is, what is/are the perspective of the instructor(s) regarding your concerns; what is your perspective having met with the instructor(s)
- Be able to produce documentation, as appropriate, that may support your concern(s)
- Explain to the department chairperson(s) that you have met with the instructor(s), you are investigating an academic grievance, and you view the meeting as step two in the informal resolution process
- If the concern(s) are not resolved with the department chairperson(s), proceed to step 2A or step three
- Document the date(s) and time(s) you met with the department chairperson(s) and any notes you wish to keep regarding the meeting(s)

__ Step 2A. (optional)
- At the discretion of the department chairperson(s), meet with the instructor(s) and the department chairperson(s) together to review your concern(s)

__ Step 3.
- Meet with the Director of Community Standards to discuss the merits of a formal written complaint and to review the academic grievance hearing procedures.
- Decide if you wish to have a supporter from within the College community (i.e., faculty, staff, or student) to assist you in preparing a formal written complaint and support you during the hearing. If yes, contact the individual to obtain his/her approval to serve as your supporter. Submit the supporter’s contact information to the Director of Community Standards. The Director of Community Standards will provide the supporter with guidelines regarding the informal and formal grievance processes and the supporter’s role.
- Prepare a formal written complaint, and submit it to the Director of Community Standards. The deadlines to submit a formal written complaint for the Fall/Jan Plan terms and Spring/Summer terms appear in the Student Handbook and Academic Planner. If you don’t have a Student Handbook and are unsure of the deadline, ask a staff member in the Director of Community Standards’ Office.
- When preparing a written complaint, you must demonstrate how the instructor(s) engaged in prejudiced, capricious or unfair academic appraisal or treatment. Your written statement must include the following:
  a. Your name and address; the course/section number; the course title; and the name(s) of the instructor(s)
  b. A specific explanation as to the nature of your complaint(s) (for example, “I received a grade of D in the class and I believe I deserve a grade of C for the following reasons…”


c. An explanation regarding the steps you have taken to resolve the complaint. For example, “I contacted the instructor and left messages on June 1, 8 and 15. I met with the instructor on September 1. The instructor does not feel my concern is justified because… I met with the department chairperson on September 5. The department chairperson does not feel my concern is justified because…”

d. Identify how you would like the complaint resolved. For example, “Based on the documentation I have provided, I feel my grade should be changed from a D to a C.”

e. Copies of appropriate documentation (e.g., course syllabus) that support your complaint

f. If appropriate, identify your supporter (name, address and daytime telephone number). It is your responsibility to notify the supporter of the hearing date, time, and location

g. Identify any witness(es) (name, address and daytime telephone number) you wish to have available at the grievance hearing and the relationship of the witness(es) to the complaint. You must provide this information no less than three full College business days prior to the hearing to the Director of Community Standards. It is your responsibility to 1) contact any witnesses to determine whether they will support your grievance and appear at the grievance hearing and 2) notify any witnesses of the grievance hearing date, time and location. The Director of Community Standards reserves the right to approve or deny your witness request

FORMAL PROCESS:

- Upon receiving your formal written complaint, the Director of Community Standards will schedule a meeting with you to discuss the merits of the grievance and whether the Academic Grievance process is applicable to your situation.

- If the grievance has merit the Director of Community Standards will select members for the Academic Grievance Board and coordinate the grievance hearing date, time and location.

- A copy of your written complaint will be forwarded to the Academic Grievance Board (comprised of three faculty members and two students), the instructor, and the department chairperson.

- The Director of Community Standards will recommend that the instructor respond in writing to your complaint in advance of the hearing. If the instructor submits a written response, you will receive a copy of it prior to the hearing.

- A hearing date, time and location will be arranged based on all involved parties’ schedules. You will receive written notification from the Director of Community Standard’s Office confirming the hearing date, time, and location, as well as the names of the Academic Grievance Board members. The hearing will be scheduled within a reasonable timeframe and not sooner than seven College business days after the Director of Community Standards receives the written complaint.

- You must attend the scheduled hearing time, and be punctual. If you fail to arrive at the scheduled hearing time, the Board may render a decision using the information available and without the benefit of having the student’s input or information. Such decisions do not presume a finding on behalf of the student or instructor(s).

- Hearings are closed to the public. The following individuals will be present at the hearing: Academic Grievance Board (comprised of three faculty members and two students), instructor(s), and your supporter (if appropriate). The instructor(s) may request the department chairperson(s) attend the hearing.

- The hearing will be recorded using College equipment. You may request a copy of the hearing recording from the Director of Community Standards.

- At the conclusion of the hearing, the Academic Grievance Board will meet privately and reach a decision. You will be notified in writing of the decision by the Director of Community Standards.

- If the Board finds the grievance to have merit, the Board will provide a written recommendation of the action(s) to be taken.
The decision of the Academic Grievance Board to sustain or change an assessment, grade, or treatment is final.

The complete Academic Grievance Procedures appear in the *Student Code of Conduct and Grievance Procedures* online at: [http://www.flcc.edu/pdf/judicialaffairs/StudentCodeofConduct.pdf](http://www.flcc.edu/pdf/judicialaffairs/StudentCodeofConduct.pdf)

**SUPPORTER’S ROLE IN THE ACADEMIC GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

Students are afforded the opportunity to have a Supporter from the College community (defined as a currently enrolled student or current employee) provide assistance and support prior to and during the formal hearing.

The Supporter may:
- Advise the student on the merits of his/her grievance;
- Coach the student in fulfilling the informal grievance procedures;
- Review the student’s formal written grievance prior to submission to the Dean of Student Services Office; and
- Attend the formal hearing with the student.

The Supporter may not:
- Accompany the student in fulfilling the informal grievance procedures;
- Investigate the complaint outside of the stated Academic Grievance Procedures;
- Write the student’s formal grievance; and
- Question and respond to the Grievance Board or respondent(s) on behalf of the student during the formal hearing.

Revised 5/8/15 - ARB