



## Addendum

2019 – 2020 Student Handbook

### September 1, 2019

The September 1, 2019 addendum contains changes and updates to policies as outlined below. Students are encouraged to contact their academic advisor with any questions.

#### NEW POLICIES

[19-20.1.1 Academic Complaint and Grievance Policy – Effective September 1, 2019](#)

[19-20.1.2 Non-Academic Complaint and Grievance Policy – Effective September 1, 2019](#)

#### UPDATED POLICIES

[19-20.1.3 Academic Integrity Policy – Effective September 1, 2019](#)

[19-20.1.4 Student Code of Conduct – Effective September 1, 2019](#)

#### DISCONTINUED POLICIES

[19-20.1.5 Complaint and Grievance Policy – Effective September 1, 2019](#)

[19-20.1.6 Student Appeals Policy – Effective September 1, 2019](#)



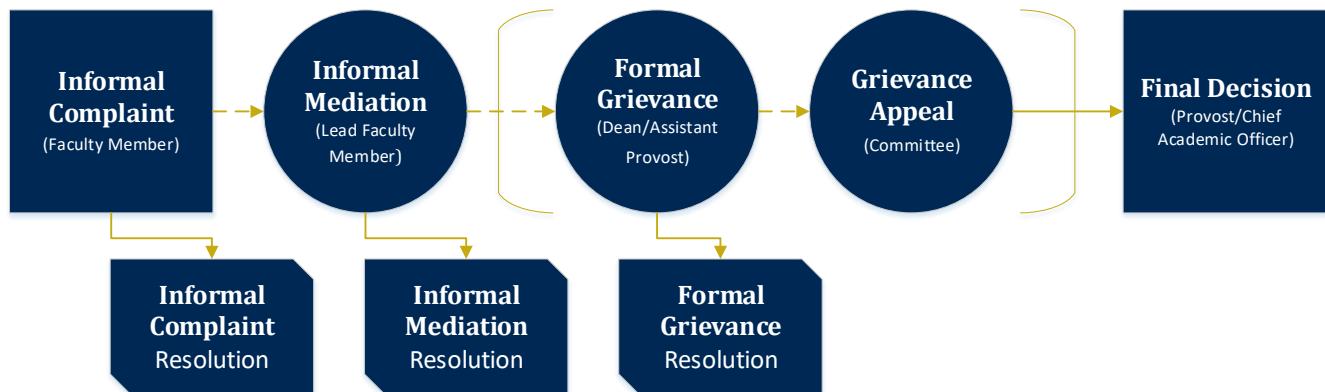
## 19-20.1.1

**Academic Complaint and Grievance Policy** is effective September 1, 2019.

### Academic Complaint and Grievance Policy

Columbia Southern University (CSU) acknowledges that students have the right to seek a remedy for a dispute or disagreement through a comprehensive complaint procedure. The purpose of the Academic Complaint and Grievance policy is to provide students with a pathway to have a complaint reviewed and a resolution rendered, within the academic or classroom context. An academic complaint is based on a case or circumstance that the student feels violates a published policy, syllabus, or rubric. Academic complaints include, but are not limited to, academic integrity, grading, feedback, etc.

The process to file an academic complaint is as follows:



### Informal Complaint

Within five business days of the specific occurrence, the student may provide the faculty member (whom the complaint is against) with a clearly written complaint that includes the specific policy, syllabus item, and/or rubric information that has been allegedly violated. The faculty member is responsible for reviewing the complaint and providing a response in writing to the student within three business days.

If the complaint is related to the lack of email response of the faculty member, the student should make a final attempt to contact the faculty member and allow 48 hours for response prior to moving to Informal Mediation.



## Informal Mediation

If the resolution rendered remains unsatisfactory upon receiving the faculty member's response, the student may contact the lead faculty member\* of the course within five business days of the informal complaint response. The student will provide the lead faculty with the faculty member's response and the specific policy, syllabus item, and/or rubric information that has allegedly been violated. The lead faculty is responsible for reviewing/investigating the complaint and providing a written response to the student within three business days.

\*Students may contact the [Office of Student Resolution and Conduct](#) to gain understanding and contact information for the appropriate lead faculty member.

## Formal Grievance

If the resolution rendered remains unsatisfactory upon receipt of a response from the lead faculty member, within 10 business days the student may submit a formal letter to [Grievance@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:Grievance@columbiasouthern.edu) outlining their grievance to be formally recorded by the institution. The student will be responsible for providing dates and documentation wherein they attempted an informal resolution for their complaint. The grievance will be provided to the dean/assistant provost responsible for the course in question. The dean/assistant provost will notify the faculty member that a formal grievance has been received and may choose to schedule a phone/virtual conference with the student and faculty member in order to gain more details regarding the formal grievance. The dean/assistant provost is responsible for reviewing/investigating the formal grievance and providing a written response within 10 business days of receiving the formal grievance.

## Grievance Appeal

If the resolution rendered remains unsatisfactory upon receipt of a response from the dean/assistant provost, the student may submit a formal letter within 10 business days to [Grievance@ColumbiaSouthern.edu](mailto:Grievance@ColumbiaSouthern.edu) outlining the desire to appeal the grievance decision and request a hearing before the Academic Grievance Appeals Committee. The student must submit all evidence to support that informal and formal processes have been completed, in addition to a clearly articulated expected outcome.

The Academic Grievance Appeals Committee shall be comprised of:

- Vice Provost for Academic and Student Affairs, chair
- Dean of Faculty Development
- Dean of Student Affairs
- Academic Program Director
- Academic discipline faculty



A virtual/in-person hearing shall be scheduled within 15 days of receipt of the grievance appeal. During the hearing, the student will be required to present their perspective to the committee. The Office of Student Resolution and Conduct will be responsible for scheduling the hearing with the committee, student, and faculty member. The faculty member will be present to provide rationale for the decision rendered. Within five business days of its conclusion, the committee will provide a formal recommendation to the provost/chief academic officer. The provost/chief academic officer shall provide a written decision to the student within five business days of receipt of the Academic Grievance Appeals Committee's recommendation. The decision of the provost/chief academic officer shall be the final action taken by the institution.

Students who wish to file a complaint with an external agency may review agency contact information on the [CSU Website](#). Students are encouraged to proceed through university processes before filing a complaint with an external agency.



## 19-20.1.2

**Non-Academic Complaint and Grievance Policy** is effective September 1, 2019.

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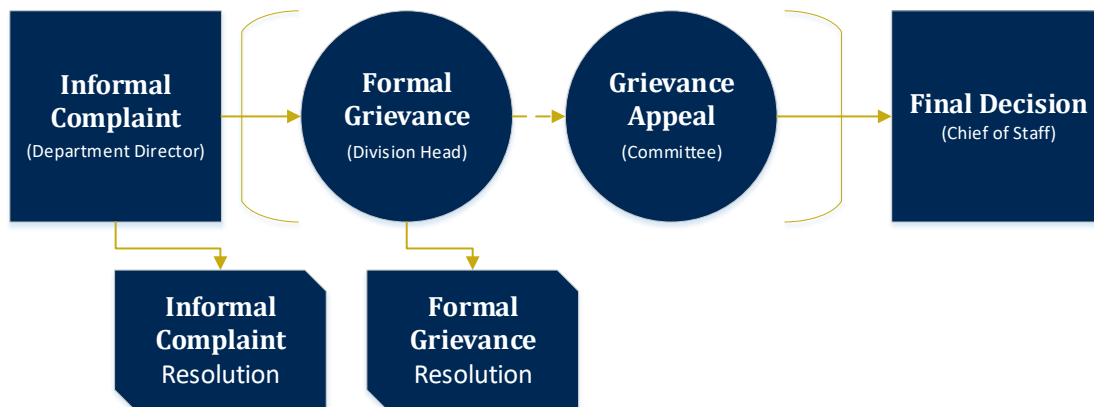
### Non-Academic Complaint and Grievance Policy

Columbia Southern University (CSU) acknowledges that students have the right to seek a remedy for a dispute or disagreement through a comprehensive complaint procedure. The purpose of the Non-Academic Complaint and Grievance policy is to provide students with a pathway to have a complaint reviewed and a resolution rendered, for situations that arise outside the context of the classroom. A non-academic complaint is based on a case or circumstance that the student feels violates a published policy, procedure, or agreement made between the student and the institution. Non-academic complaints include, but are not limited to: financial decisions\*, refunds, honors status, disparate treatment, etc.

Students with complaints of sexual discrimination and sexual harassment, including gender-based discrimination, stalking, and pregnancy, should contact the [Title IX Coordinator](#).

*\*Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) and any other appeal that has a separate policy/procedure is excluded from this policy*

The process to file a non-academic complaint is as follows:



### Informal Complaint

Within five business days of the specific occurrence, the student may provide the department director\* with a clearly identified complaint. The written complaint should include the specific



policy/agreement that has been violated, and their desired resolution. The department director is responsible for reviewing/investigating the complaint and providing a written decision to the student within three business days.

\*Students may contact the [Office of Student Resolution and Conduct](#) to gain understanding and contact information for a specific department director.

### **Formal Grievance**

If the resolution rendered remains unsatisfactory upon receipt of a response from the department director, within 10 business days the student may submit a formal letter to [Grievance@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:Grievance@columbiasouthern.edu) outlining their grievance to be formally recorded by the institution. The student will be responsible for providing dates and documentation wherein they attempted informal resolution for their complaint. The grievance will be provided to the division head for review and investigation. The division head will notify the department director that a formal grievance has been received. The division head may choose to schedule a phone/virtual conference with the student and department director in order to gain additional details regarding the formal grievance. The division head is responsible for reviewing and investigating the formal grievance and providing a response to the student within 10 business days of receipt of the formal grievance.

### **Grievance Appeal**

If the resolution rendered remains unsatisfactory upon receipt of a response from the division head, the student may submit a formal letter, within 10 business days, to [Grievance@ColumbiaSouthern.edu](mailto:Grievance@ColumbiaSouthern.edu) outlining the desire to appeal the grievance decision and request a hearing before the Non-Academic Grievance Appeals Committee. The student must submit all evidence to support that informal and formal processes have been completed, in addition to a clearly articulated expected outcome.

The Non-Academic Grievance Appeals Committee shall be comprised of:

- Director of Student Resolution and Conduct, chair
- Vice Provost for Academic and Student Affairs
- Assistant Provost of Institutional Effectiveness and Accreditation
- Associate Vice President of Finance

A virtual/in-person hearing shall be scheduled within 15 days of receipt of the grievance appeal wherein the student will be required to present their perspective to the committee. The Office of Student Resolution and Conduct will be responsible for scheduling the hearing with the committee, student, and department director. The department director will be present to provide rationale for the decision rendered. The committee will conduct the hearing and at the conclusion of the hearing and review of evidence shall provide a formal recommendation to the chief of staff within five business days of the hearing. The chief of staff shall provide a written decision to the student within



five business days of receipt of the Non-Academic Grievance Appeals Committee's recommendation. The decision of the chief of staff shall be the final action taken by the institution.

Students who wish to file a complaint with an external agency may review agency contact information on the [CSU Website](#). Students are encouraged to proceed through the university processes before filing a complaint with an external agency.



## 19-20.1.3

**Academic Integrity Policy** has been updated and is effective September 1, 2019.

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### **Academic Integrity Policy**

#### ***Academic Integrity Definition***

Academic integrity demonstrates intellectual honesty by avoiding incidents of cheating, plagiarism, self-plagiarism, and/or poor scholarship.

- Plagiarism is defined as representing the words, ideas, or other works of another individual or entity as your own without giving proper credit to the original author or source.
- Cheating is defined as using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, study aids, or computer-related information.
- Self-plagiarism is defined as submitting previously submitted course work that may or may not have received academic credit, without prior approval of the instructor.
- Poor scholarship is defined as an incorrect attempt to give credit to or document the use of an external source.

#### ***Statement of Policy***

Ethical conduct is foundational to a successful academic career at Columbia Southern University (CSU). Students, faculty, and staff must commit themselves to the highest standards of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Therefore, any deviation from these standards is a breach of the ethics that ensure the quality of CSU's academic programs, and thus, is a violation of CSU's Academic Integrity Policy.

The Honor Pledge reads as follows:

*I promise or affirm that I will not, at any time, be involved in cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, or misrepresentation of sources while enrolled as a student at Columbia Southern University. I have read the Student Code of Conduct Policy and the Academic Integrity Policy, which explains disciplinary procedures that will result from failure to comply with these policies. I understand that violation of the Academic Integrity Policy will result in sanctions, appropriate to the incident and the student record as a whole, that are outlined within this policy.*

#### **Violations of the Academic Integrity Policy include, but are not limited to:**

- Using unauthorized materials, electronic or print, or receiving unauthorized assistance during any examination or in connection with any work completed or submitted for academic credit





- Presenting the work or ideas of another as one's own without proper acknowledgement of the source, whether that material is paraphrased or copied in verbatim or near-verbatim form
- Sharing, selling, or buying information related to any graded learning activities
- Using another student's graded work to complete assignment(s)
- Resubmitting, in whole or any portion of, a previously written work by the student without professor consent
- Falsifying or fabricating information
- Using sources deemed as inappropriate by the University such as:
  - Internet essay/paper generators
  - Homework assistant websites
- Using an alternate, stand-in, or proxy during an examination
- Violations outlined within the Final Examination Proctor Policy

### **APA Guidelines**

Students are expected to follow the format of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA) (current edition) when assignment instructions indicate APA format is required. The APA manual presents explicit style requirements for students in the preparation of written works which may include research papers, projects, and other written assignments.

As required by APA writing style, all sources used directly or indirectly (quoted or paraphrased) must be cited within the text and all appropriate sources shall be compiled in a reference list at the end of all applicable written works. Students and faculty should refer to all assignment instructions for specific guidelines. CSU has created the [CSU Citation Guide](#) and other resources to assist students in complying with APA standards. These resources are all located in the myCSU Student Portal under the [Learning Resources](#) tab.

### **Sanctions**

Violations to the Academic Integrity Policy are a very serious matter and are officially documented in the student's record. Students who are found to be in violation of this policy are subject to sanctions which are based on the severity of the specific violation, in addition to any previous violation(s) identified. Violations are cumulative throughout the student's tenure at Columbia Southern University.

Sanctions include but are not limited to:

- Point(s) deduction
- Assignment failure
- Course failure
- University dismissal



- Degree revocation

Please note: Violations that occur during a final examination are also included in the cumulative number of violations that have occurred in the student's academic record. Final Examination sanctions may include a resubmission opportunity, point deduction, assignment failure, course failure, probation, suspension, and/or a university dismissal and degree revocation.

### ***Statute of Limitations***

There shall be no statute of limitations that precludes the University from acting on the discovery of alleged violations. This could take place during the time in which the course in question is being offered, after the course has ended, or after the student has graduated.

In the event additional academic integrity violations are discovered after degree conferral, it will result in degree revocation.

Students should be aware that dropping or withdrawing from a course in which there is an Academic Integrity violation does not void the violation and that all infractions will be recorded in the student's record.

### ***Contesting Violation***

Students found in violation of the Academic Integrity policy may contest the infraction by following the process outlined within the Academic Complaint and Grievance Policy.



## 19-20.1.4

**Student Code of Conduct Policy** has been updated and is effective September 1, 2019.

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### **Student Code of Conduct Policy**

Ethical behavior and conduct is foundational to a successful academic career at Columbia Southern University (CSU). Students, faculty, and staff must commit themselves to the highest standards of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Therefore, any deviation from these standards is a breach of ethics identified in CSU's Student Code of Conduct. Furthermore, violation of ethical standards can lead to disciplinary actions.

Students are responsible to know and comply with the Student Code of Conduct and other academic and student affairs policies contained within the student handbook. In addition, students are expected to demonstrate honesty and integrity with faculty, staff and other students throughout all interactions online and/or at university-sanctioned events.

### **Students are prohibited from engaging in conduct that includes, but is not limited to:**

- Disrespect of university personnel.
- Inappropriate communication including but not limited to harassment, prejudice, stalking, offensive language, threats, abuse, insults, or humiliation made within the university environment. The university environment consists of email correspondence, phone conversations, text messages, or other university communication mediums.
- Demeaning comments including, but not limited to those regarding an individual's religion, race, age, sexual orientation, or making unwanted sexual advances or intimidations.
- Breaches of privacy, hacking passwords or systems, distribution or replication of copyrighted material(s), unauthorized distribution of instructional materials, use of illegal or unlicensed software.
- Intentional breach of university policy or procedures.
- Reproduction of university materials to include course content, assessments, or other materials deemed to be the property of the university.
- Using and/or purchasing work that is not his/her own.
- Disruptive behavior that hinders or interferes with the educational process.
- Harassment or intimidation that has the effect of creating an offensive educational environment for any student, faculty, or staff member.
- Conduct that is disorderly, lewd, lascivious, indecent or otherwise inappropriate.
- Violation of any local, state, or federal law.
- Displaying harmful or threatening behavior towards students, faculty, or other university personnel.



## **Investigation**

The director of student resolution and conduct or designated university official shall conduct investigations of the Student Code of Conduct in a prompt and reasonable manner. The purpose of the investigation is to determine if adequate evidence exists to support a formal review. While an alleged violation is being investigated, interim action may be initiated. These actions include but are not limited to, removal from a course(s), prohibited attendance to university-sanctioned events and other functions, and/or a no contact order.

In those instances where CSU determines the conduct does not warrant a specific charge, CSU may choose to issue a warning. Note: Warnings are not appealable.

In the event of a threat or imminent harm, the university reserves the right to take immediate action prior to the investigation in accordance with sanctions outlined therein.

## **Notification and Response**

A student charged with a violation of the Student Code of Conduct will be notified of the specific violation in writing. Students shall be given 10 business days to submit a written response to the designated university official indicating responsibility for the charged offense or denying the charges. Failure of a student to respond to the official letter constitutes a violation of the Student Code of Conduct and may result in additional sanctions by the university up to and including dismissal from the university. A student denying the charge(s) will follow the below process.

## **Review of Response**

Reviews shall be conducted according to the following guidelines:

- The director of student resolution and conduct will assemble a committee of three university members to review the response.
- Additional documentation to substantiate a denial of the charge should be submitted to the director of student resolution and conduct.
- The determination of the misconduct shall be made on the basis of whether it is more likely than not that the student violated the Student Code of Conduct.
- The evidence in support of the charges shall be presented, considered, and a recommendation will be made by the committee to the director of student resolution and conduct or a designated university official.

## **Decision**

- The decision shall be communicated to the student in writing from the director of student resolution and conduct or a designated university official.
- In accordance with the requirements under the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA), upon written request, CSU will disclose to an alleged victim of a crime of violence, or a non-



forcible sex offense, the results of any disciplinary review conducted by the institution against the student who is the alleged perpetrator of the crime or offense.

- In accordance with the requirements under HEOA, in cases of an alleged sex offense, both the accuser and the accused will be informed of the determination involving an alleged sex offense, including any imposed sanction(s).
- A summary report containing findings of fact, decision, and sanctions, will be placed in the student's file.

### **Sanctions**

Disciplinary sanctions shall be based upon the seriousness of the charge(s) and may include, but are not limited to: warning, probation, loss of academic credit, suspension, and conduct dismissal.



## **19-20.1.5**

**Complaint and Grievance Policy** has been discontinued.

*The Complaint and Grievance Policy has been discontinued. All content and references pertaining to this policy are null and void indefinitely, effective September 1, 2019.*

*This policy is wholly replaced by **19-20.1.1, Academic Complaint and Grievance Policy** and **19-20.1.2, Non-Academic Complaint and Grievance Policy**, which are included in this addendum.*

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## **19-20.1.6**

**Student Appeals Policy** has been discontinued.

*The Student Appeals Policy has been discontinued. All content and references pertaining to this policy are null and void indefinitely, effective September 1, 2019.*

*This policy is wholly replaced by **19-20.1.1, Academic Complaint and Grievance Policy** and **19-20.1.2, Non-Academic Complaint and Grievance Policy**, which are included in this addendum.*

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