STUDENT HANDBOOK

Complaints, Grievances, Grade Appeals & Code of Conduct
Student Complaints, Grievance & Grade Appeal Procedures

Note: Code of Conduct is the Second-half of this Document

Definitions:

A-Z

**Academic Injury** is determined based on whether an alleged grading error caused a student’s grade to decrease by a full letter grade. In other words, if a Grade Appeal has to do with a grade changing in percentages (within the same grade category of “A”, “B”, “C”, “D” or “F”), the Grade Appeal will be denied. Meaning, if the change a student is seeking moves a grade from a 82% to an 86%, the Grade Appeal will fail, for the student was not successful in demonstrating that the alleged error had any academic injury, for the grade in the course did not change. Grade Appeals, then, are for students who can demonstrate that an alleged error in the calculation of the final grade caused the grade to drop at least one full letter grade (i.e., error caused the grade to drop from a “B” to a “C”, etc…)

**Anonymous Complaints:** Anonymous complaints are read and the College takes such complaints under advisement. While such complaints are read, no formal action from the College is required unless the College feels it is appropriate (to take action). Students issuing Anonymous complaints should not expect any formal reply or cause of action, since the complaint was issued without a name. Thus, students are encouraged to issue formal complaints if they would like their complaint addressed and tracked by the College formally.

**Appeal:** An appeal can be filed if a student is dissatisfied with a Dean’s Resolution (under the Grade Appeal or complaint process). Appeals are not automatically granted and are assessed and evaluated based on the evidence put forward by the student requesting the appeal. (See the Grievance Process and the Grade Appeal Process for more information).

**Complaint:** A student complaint is a College-related problem or condition in which a student believes to be unfair, inequitable, discriminatory, or a hindrance to the educational process. A complaint also includes discrimination on the basis of race, color, disability, gender, religion, creed, national origin or age.
Complaint Process: Lawson State has a two-tiered Complaint Process. The first, initial stage, called the Informal Complaint Process, moves a complaint through the proper chain-of-command up to the Dean’s level. In the end, the Dean issues a final resolution (called a Dean’s Resolution) to formally close and address the complaint. Typically, the majority of complaints end on this level. The second tier, called the Formal Complaint Process, only comes into play when a student is dissatisfied with the Dean’s Resolution issued. In such cases, the student can file an official grievance. Afterwards, the complaint is then taken to Committee and reviewed and another resolution is then issued.

External Agency (Social Networking/Public Display) Complaints: Students are strongly discouraged and cautioned against using Social Networking sites to discuss school-related issues or concerns or to personally vent or attack another student or LSCC personnel member, opposed to following Lawson State’s proscribed Informal and Formal Complaint Process. Please note that issuing false claims via a Social Networking site (i.e., Facebook, blogs, websites, and even email) could potentially make the student subject to legal jeopardy (slander) if the accusations shared proved false or proved to be written with malicious intent to cause harm to the institution’s reputation or person’s reputation. Thus, students are encouraged to issue formal complaints if they would like their complaint addressed and tracked by the College.

Formal Complaint Process: The Formal Complaint Process is the second tier of the overall complaint process as LSCC. It only comes into play when a student is dissatisfied with the Dean’s Resolution issued (See Informal Complaint Process). In such cases, the student can file an official grievance. Afterwards, the complaint is then taken to Committee and reviewed and another resolution is then issued.

Grade Appeal: The purpose of the Grade Appeal Process is to provide students with a safeguard against receiving an unfair final grade (based on a calculation error; a misrepresentation of the grading scale; incorrect application of the grading scale; or other error which academically injured the student), while respecting the academic responsibility of the instructor. Grade Appeals cannot be filed unless the student provides evidence of the error. The Vice President for Instructional Services has the final say on all grade appeals.

Arbitrariness: The grade awarded represents such a substantial departure from accepted academic norms as to demonstrate that the instructor did not actually exercise sound professional judgment in administering the grade.

Prejudice: The grade awarded was motivated by ill will, and is not indicative of the student’s academic performance.

Error: The instructor made a calculation error in fact or application of points awarded or the weighting of final grades (as outlined in the syllabus)
Grade Dispute: A grade dispute is NOT a grade appeal. A grade dispute deals with disagreements related to individual grades received on assignments, projects, tests. If you have a dispute as it relates to an individual assignment, project or test, you MUST address that matter with the instructor one-on-one. Please be advised that the faculty member, not administration, has the final say on the issued grade for your assignment, test, project, etc...unless your dispute meets the following criteria: (a) the grade issued was issued out of unfairness or calculation error; (b) the grade issued was issued out of retaliation; (c) the grade issued was issued due to harassment. In such cases, the student needs to meet with the Department Chair and the instructor to resolve the single grade dispute. If the matter goes unresolved, and the single grade caused enough academic injury to cause the student to fail the class, the student can provide the grade dispute evidence as part of the formal Grade Appeal packet (for consideration).

Grievance: A grievance is filed when a student is not satisfied with the Formal Complaint Process findings and involves a formal hearing by a Grievance Committee. A grievance can only be issued after a student has adhered to the College’s formal complaint process and a Dean’s Resolution has been issued (in writing) and the student would like to challenge the decision reached. (See Formal Complaint Process for more information).

Informal Complaint Process: The first or initial stage of LSCC’s complaint process is called the Informal Complaint Process. The Informal Complaint Process moves a complaint through the chain-of-command up to the departmental level. Typically, the majority of complaints end at this level. If a student is dissatisfied at this level, he or she can file an official complaint using the Advocate system. In doing so, the formal complaint process is initiated.

Retaliation: Retaliation is punishment received for filing a complaint. Students filing complaints should never fear retaliation. Retaliation for complaints issued is NOT tolerated on the campus of Lawson State. If a student feels he or she is being retaliated against after filing a complaint, they need to file a Retaliation Complaint immediately. Employees and students are subject to discipline if practicing any form of retaliation against a student or another employee after filing a complaint.

Resolution: For the purposes of Lawson State Community College’s complaint, grievance and appeal procedures, the word “Resolution” refers to any decision reached in the complaint process, after facts, evidence and testimony (in some cases) have been reviewed. Resolutions are always mailed to the individual who filed the complaint.

Unqualified (Third-Party) Complaints: Unqualified complaints are those complaints that come in from non-Lawson State students or unqualified external agencies. Such complaints are read but no formal action from the College is required unless the College feels it is appropriate (to take action). Students issuing an unqualified complaint should not expect a
formal reply by the College or cause of action, since the complaint was issued by a third party. Thus, students are encouraged to issue formal complaints if they would like their complaint addressed by the College formally.

Terms (associated with harassment and retaliation) below have been expressly written by the legal team from the University of Alabama. Lawson State Community College has been granted special license to use all terms and wording set forth as outlined below.

**Harassment**
Harassment is abusive or hostile conduct which is directed toward or inflicted upon another person because of his or her race, color, religion, ethnicity, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, or veteran's status and which, because of its severity or pervasiveness, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work or academic performance or creates a hostile or abusive work or learning environment for that individual's work, education, or participation in a [college] activity. Harassment is typically based on stereotyped prejudices and includes, but is not limited to, slurs, jokes, objectionable epithets, or other verbal, graphic, or physical conduct that demeans, insults, or intimidates an individual because of his or her race, color, religion, ethnicity, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, or veteran status (UA, 2012).

**Sexual Harassment**
Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when (1) submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of employment or academic advancement; (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment or academic decisions; or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance as an employee or student or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or learning environment (UA, 2012).

**Retaliation (Against Sexual Harassment Claims)**
Retaliation against persons who oppose or complain about harassment is strictly prohibited. Retaliation is any action that has the effect of punishing a person for engaging in a legally protected activity, such as alleging harassment, making a harassment complaint, or assisting in a harassment investigation. Examples of retaliatory adverse employment actions include suspension, demotion, or termination. In addition, this policy prohibits retaliation in the form of harassment, intimidation, threats, or coercion, or in the form of any materially adverse harm that
would dissuade a reasonable student or employee from filing a harassment complaint or participating in a harassment investigation (UA, 2012).

**Retaliation**

Retaliation against persons who oppose, complain, seek a grade appeal or file a grievance or any other issue is strictly prohibited on the campus of Lawson State. Retaliation is any action that has the effect of punishing a person for engaging in a legally protected activity, such as making a complaint or appeal or grievance, or assisting in a complaint or appeal or grievance investigation. Examples of retaliatory adverse employment actions include suspension, demotion, or termination. In addition, this policy prohibits retaliation in the form of harassment, intimidation, threats, or coercion, or in the form of any materially adverse harm that would dissuade a reasonable student or employee from filing a complaint, an appeal or grievance or participating in said investigation (UA, 2012).
The Complaint Process—from Informal to Formal

NOTE: If you have a Grade Dispute, see Grade Dispute Procedures.

Most complaints issued are resolved informally. Informal complaints related to instructional issues or non-instructional issues all follow the same process that is designed to lead to a fair and vetted resolution of your complaint (informally). All students (whether a ground/on-campus student or online student) are required to follow the Informal Complaint Procedure as outlined (in steps) below. Failure to follow this process can invalidate your complaint.

**STEP 1: Informal Process**
If comfortable, talk one-on-one with the individual directly related to complaint
If dissatisfied on this level, move to Step 2

**STEP 2: Informal Process**
Speak or meet with the Department Chair and/or Instructor (if this is student related)
This step cannot be skipped.
If dissatisfied, move to Step 3

**STEP 3: Formal Process (Dean's Resolution)**
File a formal complaint online. This will ensure that you meet or speak with the Deans
A Dean's Resolution will be issued. Move to the grievance phase if dissatisfied at this level.

**STEP 4: Formal Process (Grievance)**
If dissatisfied with the Dean's Resolution, an official Grievance can be filed (online).
Grievances are heard by Committee and are considered final.
Steps 1 & 2: The Informal Complaint Process

**Note:** If dealing with matters of harassment and/or retaliation, you can skip to Step 3 (if you feel uncomfortable working through Steps 1 and 2).

**Step 1:** Speak with the Individual Privately about Your Concern(s)

Step 1 is the first stage of the Informal Complaint Process.

*(If comfortable, speak directly to employee connected or student associated with the complaint in person or over the phone, if you are an online student)*

Students who wish to file an informal complaint **should** first discuss the concern with the College employee or student most directly responsible for the condition which brought about the alleged complaint. If no satisfactory resolution is reached at this level or if the student feels uncomfortable, move to Step 2.

**Step 2:** Speak with the Individual’s Department Chair or Your Instructor (if this matter involves another student)

Step 2 is the second stage of the Informal Complaint Process.

*(Speak with the Department Chairperson or Director of the Office in person or over the phone, if you are an online student)*

Step 2 requires that the student meet with the first level administrator, the Department Chair (if the complaint falls under Instruction) or a Director, if the complaint falls under Administrative (including the Business of Financial Aid Offices) or Student Services Offices or Library Services.

**How to Locate a Department Chair or Office Director**

To view a current listing of Department Chairs or Directors, click on Lawson State’s official webpage at [www.lawsonstate.edu](http://www.lawsonstate.edu).

Once on the webpage, follow these steps to find the Supervisor and their contact information:

- Click on either the **Student Portal** or the **Current Student** button (from LSCC’s main webpage).
- From there, click on either the **Complaint Process**, or **Report a Concern** button.
- Once on that page, look for the “Find a Supervisor” button. This will link to the Employee Directory. Department Chairs are listed by the Department, so search for the specific department. Do not involve the Vice Presidents or Deans at this level. If you still encounter problems locating a supervisor, speak with your advisor for assistance.
d. NOTE: You can click on Quick Links (on the web) which also houses the directory. From there, you can email the Department Chair. Email is preferred and also creates a track record (evidence) that you tried to contact the director. Phone calls are discouraged.

Students filing informal complaints MUST complete Step 2 in order to advance to Step 3, if warranted. If no satisfactory resolution is reached, the student may move to the next level of authority (the Dean’s level, Step 3).

**Step 3: The Formal Complaint Process**

**Step 3: Filing a Formal Complaint**

Step 3 moves complaints from informal to formal. Formal complaints are recorded and tracked at the college.

*Formal Complaints MUST be Filed Online*

Filing a formal complaint takes place after the Informal Process was not successful for you (but not before). Filing a Formal Complaint is done in writing and **online only**. Once filed, a formal investigation into your complaint and meetings to discuss your complaint (with a Dean or Deans) will take place.

If the complaint is still unresolved after following Step 2 (but not before), the student may file a formal complaint online via the Advocate Complaint Reporting System.

**How to File a Formal Complaint (Ground & Online Students)**

Whether you are a ground (on campus) student or whether you are an online student (distance education student), filing of formal complaints is the same and occurs online ONLY.

To file a formal complaint, you need to access Lawson State’s official webpage at [www.lawsonstate.edu](http://www.lawsonstate.edu). Once on the webpage, Click on either the Student Portal or the Current Student button. From there, click on either the Complaint Process, Complaints or Report a Concern button. The system will then “walk you through” the filing of a complaint formally online. Be sure to read the information before filing a formal complaint.

If you have not followed the Informal steps (first) before filing a formal complaint, it is very likely that you will be redirected after issuing your complaint and asked to complete the
Informal Process first. This is not to frustrate you. Rather, the college is simply trying to resolve the complaint informally first before advancing your complaint formally.

No Computer. How Do I File?

If you are a ground (on campus) student, and you do not have access to a computer at home, file your complaint in either the library or SPACE Center where computer access is plentiful. Again, formal complaints must be in writing in order for the Deans to initiate a formal investigation into your complaint.

**NOTE:** If you are filing a retaliation or harassment charge, you do not have to follow the informal process, if you feel uncomfortable. You can move directly to filing a formal complaint online, so the matter can be sped up and advanced to the Dean’s level immediately. Lawson State has a no tolerance policy as it relates to harassment and retaliation complaints, so such accusations need to investigated and resolved immediately.

Dean’s Resolution (Formal Resolution)

Once you file a formal complaint (online), the Deans will investigate your complaint. Students filing a formal complaint MUST cooperate in all matters related to the investigation of the complaint. This includes meeting with the Deans and providing additional information, upon request. Once the investigation is over, the Deans will issue a formal resolution (called the **Dean’s Resolution**). The formal resolution will be sent by certified and/or registered mail to the student and to any and all parties related to the complaint.

Once the Dean’s Resolution has been issued, the complaint will be formally closed by the college. The entire Formal Complaint process is typically completed within 30 business days, from the initial filing of the complaint online. However, some investigations could take longer, depending on the scope of investigation that is launched and the number of individuals involved.

Step 4: Formal Grievances

Step 4: File a Formal Grievance

*(Challenging a Dean’s Resolution)*

Filing a Grievance is a serious step to take and must be based on facts, not opinion or simply disagreeing with findings outlined in the Dean’s Resolution. Although extremely rare, if the **Dean’s Resolution** does not prove to be a satisfactory closure to the student (who filed the original formal complaint), a student may file a formal grievance to the **Grievance Committee**. In doing so, a **Grievance Committee** reviews the Dean’s Resolution issued and the original complaint to once again, try to find closure of the complaint.
A Formal Grievance can only be filed if the student has first followed all of the required steps under the Informal and Formal Complaint Process (Steps 1 through 3). If the student does not have an official Dean’s Resolution finding in writing (that is being disputed), then he or she cannot proceed to this step (filing a formal grievance), and as such, must go back and follow the College’s Informal and Formal Complaint Process (Steps 1-3).

**NOTE:** Grade disputes follow a different process. See Grade Disputes/Appeal section for more information.

The Grievance Process continues the Formal Complaint Process and begins ONLY if a student finds that the Dean’s Resolution did not resolve the complaint satisfactorily. The chart below, outlines the Grievance Process (in detail).

### Filing a Grievance

Procedures for filing an official grievance are as follows:

**Filing Procedures:** A student who wishes to file a Grievance to be heard by the college’s Grievance Committee (which includes one of the Vice Presidents or designee serving on the committee) must file a formal grievance via the online Advocate system. To file a grievance, go back to either the Student Portal or Current Students page and click on the Complaint button. From there, click on the link to file a Grievance and proceed as instructed.

A Formal Grievance must be submitted online (within 5-business days of receipt of a Dean’s Resolution). Failure to follow the online process and submit your request within that timeframe will automatically invalidate your request for a hearing and the Dean’s Resolution will stand.

Please note that grade disputes are not handled through this process. If you have grade dispute, please follow the Grade Dispute Complaint Process.

A Grievance Hearing date must be provided to the student (via email) within 10 to 14 business days of a student filing a Formal Grievance. The hearing should take place no later than 30 to 45 business days following notification to the Grievance Committee (that a hearing has been requested), unless the request comes during a holiday. If a Formal Grievance is filed between semesters (when the College is not operational), expect a delay beyond 30 to 45 business days.
Please note that the Grievance Committee works to adhere to outlined deadlines but students may experience reasonable delays depending on the case load of the Committee to hear all cases.

The Grievance Committee is an ad hoc committee and consists of student(s), faculty members, staff members and administrators and one or both of the Vice Presidents (or designee). It is the responsibility of the College President (or designee) to appoint all committee members, and the appointer shall examine each member to ensure his or her impartiality. All Grievance Committee members held to strict confidentiality rules and are trained on conflict resolution techniques.

The Grievance Committee (which includes the Vice President’s ruling) will make it findings and send its decision to the grievant (student) and the appropriate Dean (who filed the original Dean’s Resolution). Grievance Committee findings are final and binding and officially close the complaint at the college. No further investigate or remedy to the original complaint is required after a Grievance Committee has reached a final resolution of the complaint.

1. A Grievance Hearing is not automatically granted, but all challenges to a Dean’s Resolution are reviewed. The Grievance Committee can take the following actions after reviewing the facts presented in a formal grievance:
   a. **Action 1:** Full Denial. Uphold the decision issued in the Dean’s Resolution without granting a formal hearing.
   b. **Action 2:** Full Reversal. Overturn the decision issued in the Dean’s Resolution (without a hearing) and issue a new decision.
   c. **Action 3:** Modification. Modify the decision in the Dean’s Resolution (without a hearing).
   d. **Action 4:** Grant the Grievance Hearing in which the student is granted a full hearing and re-vetting of the circumstances with the Grievance Committee (and other third parties, if requested by the Committee).

2. The Grievance Committee will make the final finding (called the Grievance Committee’s Resolution) and send the decision to the student, Committee members, the Vice Presidents, and the appropriate Dean. The student will receive the final resolution via certified and/or registered mail. The Grievance Committee’s decision is final and cannot be appealed.
Student Responsibilities:
Grievance Procedures & Requirements

If a student submits a formal grievance (challenging a Dean’s Resolution), a grievance must be filed online (via the Advocate System) in writing (within 5 business days after the Dean’s Resolution has been issued) and contain:

1. The student's name and address;
2. Student’s Lawson State email account;
3. The detailed nature of the grievance; why you are filing and what evidence you are presenting in order to counter the Dean’s Resolution reached.
4. The corrective action sought (what you would like the college to do); and
5. Submit any relevant information requested to establish grounds for the grievance.

Simply disagreeing with the Dean’s Resolution, does not establish grounds for a grievance. You must provide a strong rationale for your request to go to hearing.

As previously noted, the Informal and Formal Complaint Process should take no more than 30 days (typically). However, the formal Grievance Process could take a protracted amount of time in large part due to unforeseen legal entanglements. The college does work expeditiously to resolve all complaints in a reasonable amount of time to ensure and protect all parties considered, yet times can vary depending on the type of grievance filed and the complexities that each unique circumstance may yield.

In conducting any Grievance proceeding, administrators representing the College can:

1. Require any student or employee to provide a written statement, along with any documents concerning the events and circumstances that may have given rise to the grievance;
2. Require any student or employee to provide a written statement as to why (or under what grounds) do they object to the Dean’s Resolution filed;
3. Require any student, witness or employee to appear and testify before the Committee;
4. Require any student, witness or employee to maintain confidentiality as it relates to the information shared during the hearing.
5. Record proceedings (audio or video);
6. Require the signing of affidavits, if deemed necessary
7. Question each individual who testifies; and
8. Copy all documents.

Legal Representation at Hearings

Hearings are not an adversarial proceeding. The Committee shall conduct a Hearing in a professional and cooperative manner, and all participants are expected to do likewise. Students wishing to bring legal counsel, although rare, may do so only if pre-approved by the
Grievance Committee (in advance). In such cases, the student must notify the Grievance Committee no less than 7 business days prior to the hearing. **Pre-approval MUST be sought.** If the student fails to notify the Committee as required, the committee can refuse entry of any and all legal representatives if it chooses to do so. If granted access to a Grievance Committee, legal representatives cannot engage the Committee in any manner or disrupt the Hearing. The legal representative can only engage the student or employee and not ask questions of the Committee directly or interfere in the proceeding in any way. If the legal representative violates this procedural rule, then he or she will be asked to leave the Hearing, without penalty to the student and without incident.

### Grievance Hearing (Students Rights)

A student has a right to be heard (in writing or in person, if approved) and their complaint (and all evidence collected to support that complaint) vetted. When participating in any Grievance Hearing, students can:

1. **Have legal representatives attend** (if pre-approved 7 business days prior to the Grievance Hearing). As previously addressed, students wishing to bring legal counsel must notify the Grievance Committee no less than 7 business days prior to the hearing. If the student fails to notify the Committee as required, the committee can refuse entry of any and all legal representatives if it chooses to do so. Legal representatives, though, cannot engage the Committee in any manner or disrupt the Hearing. The legal representative can only engage the student or employee and not ask questions of the Committee directly or interfere in the proceeding in any way. If the legal representative violates this procedural rule, then he or she will be asked to leave the Hearing, without penalty to the student and without incident.

2. **Have a parent or guardian present.** This does not include boyfriends or girlfriends, but legal spouses can attend (for support). Students are permitted to bring a parent or guardian (if they so choose) to a Grievance Hearing or a spouse. If the student is 18 years of age or older, the parent can only engage the student and cannot ask questions of the Committee or disrupt the proceeding in any way. If the parent or guardian violates this procedural rule, then he or she will be asked to leave the Hearing, without penalty to the student. If the parent is a witness to what generated the complaint or is issuing the complaint themselves, then this rule changes and the parent can engage the Committee. This rule also changes if the student is under 18. In such cases, the parent can ask questions of the Committee and be involved in the hearing without restriction. In cases in which the parent or guardian is a witness the
Committee may request that the parent or guardian be interview without the student present.

3. **Invite witnesses related to the Complaint to a Grievance Hearing.**
   Witnesses must be first-hand witnesses in order to attend a hearing. Meaning, if the witness is only going to report on what he or she was told by the Complainant (student issuing the complaint), then the witness cannot participate in the Grievance Hearing. However, if the individual witnessed the actual incident that led to the complaint, then the witness can participate.
   NOTE: All witnesses are subject to questions by the Committee and must be pre-approved by the Committee before attending. Only witnesses listed in the initial complaint can attend a hearing. Witnesses do not participate in Vice Presidents’ Appeals process or President’s Appeal situations unless requested.

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**Causes to Dismiss a Complaint or Grievance**

There are several reasons that could cause a Complaint or Grievance to be dismissed during the Informal or Formal Complaint Process. **They are as follows:**

- Failure (on the part of a student) to comply with a summons, order or request from a Committee or college representative investigating the complaint.

- Submitting of false statements (of any kind) in a complaint or within a Grievance Hearing will cause a complaint or grievance to be dismissed automatically. Submitting false claims can also lead to disciplinary action being sought against and could potentially lead to legal action being sought if such claims involve filing a false harassment charge.

- Writing or conspiring with another student or witnesses to issue false claims within the investigation of the formal complaint or during a Grievance Hearing.

- Failure to answer questions as it relates to the complaint or grievance filed.

- Failure to file a grievance within the outlined deadlines (within 5-business days after receiving a written Dean’s Resolution).

- Failure to attend a scheduled meeting related to your complaint or grievance on the scheduled date and time provided, a No Show.

- Posting confidential information about the Complaint Process, individuals involved in the complaint, and how the College is handling the complaint on a Social Networking Site or website.
The Reasonable Standard

The College views all student issues, concerns, and complaints seriously. Thus, a student has a right to be heard and their complaint (and all evidence collected to support that complaint) vetted appropriately.

Findings of Complaints and Grievances shall be based on impartiality and recommendations will be based on objectivity, common sense, and good judgment.

Committees (charged with investigating complaints) make recommendations and/or decisions based on the “reasonable” standard. In other words, what would a “reasonable” person do or how would a “reasonable” person react. Using this standard, the Deans (charged with fielding formal complaints) and Grievance Committee members will move forward with a decision.

The Deans and Grievance Committee members also work from a premise of fairness to all parties involved. In order to guarantee fairness, all formal complaints and Grievance Hearings shall ensure that all relevant evidence is obtained from parties during formal complaint investigations and hearings and that all parties are questioned thoroughly and that all information shared during meetings and/or hearings remain confidential.

Other Procedural Matters
(within the Formal Complaint Process)
Related to Required Cooperation & Dismissal of Complaints

If a student files an informal or formal complaint, the following procedures apply:
(1) The student shall discuss the informal complaint fully at each level in the process in a professional manner. (2) At each level of authority, a decision shall be made based on common sense and good judgment of a reasonable person. (3) Each level may seek the appropriate authority, if necessary, to resolve the complaint. (4) Complaints can be dismissed if the student is no longer willing to discuss the complaint or if he or she misses at least one scheduled meeting to discuss the complaint or if it is determined that a falsehood has been reported by the student.

NOTE: The Grievance process is outside of the scope of the Informal Complaint Process and may be a protracted process taking anywhere from 30 to 45 business days (typically) to meet full resolution, depending on the complexity of the complaint.
Scope

Student Complaints vs. Student Code of Conduct

Complaints must be filed within 45-days of the alleged incident. The student complaint and grievance processes are not intended to supplant the Student Code of Conduct, which allows the student procedural due process in disciplinary proceedings initiated by the College. Rather, the student complaint and grievance procedures are designed to provide the student with the opportunity to file a complaint or a grievance, as defined above and below, and to provide a process for a fair and fully vetted resolution.

At times, student complaints can overlap and involve violations of the Student Code of Conduct. For example, if a complaint involves a student harassing another student, then the complaint will be investigated (under the Student Complaint Process) and if the Student Code of Conduct is found to be violated, then a sanction will be issued. In such cases, the student will fall under the Student Code of Conduct due process protections and will have the right to appeal the findings or the findings could lead to a Disciplinary Hearing being ordered.

General complaints of all types of nature (i.e., treatment on campus by an employee or student; disagreement with a rule issued by a faculty member that caused academic harm, etc…) are taken seriously and should be issued. A student may also file a complaint concerning a policy, procedure, rule, or grade if the complaint alleges discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, or age is the basis for the complaint. This student complaint procedure is not designed to include changes in policy nor does it apply to grading practices. A grade dispute that is not based on an allegation of discrimination is handled under the Grade Dispute and Appeal Process.

NOTE: Recommendations for initiating new policy or changing established policy are handled through normal administrative channels, not the Complaint process.

Harassment & Retaliation Claims

Filing a Harassment or Retaliation Claim

Lawson State has a no tolerance harassment and retaliation policy. Due to the serious nature of any harassment or retaliation claim and obvious risk and potential harm to the student, the standard student grievance procedure is not applicable to complaints of this serious nature. Rather, all students shall report complaints of harassment or retaliation to either the Dean of Students, the Academic Dean, or the Dean of Educational Support Services for immediate handling. Complaints must be filed within 45-days of the alleged incident. To report an
incident of harassment or retaliation, students must formally submit a harassment or retaliation claim online or go directly to any Dean (see listing above).

To file online or in-person, students need to follow the steps outlined on the next page.

**Filing a Harassment or Retaliation Claim (Online)**

**Step 1:** Log on to www.lawsonstate.edu

**Step 2:** From the Main page, click on the Current Students page and locate the Complaint Process buttons to begin the process.

**Step 3:** Once on the page, review the Terms and Conditions (at the bottom of the page) which outline what Harassment and Retaliation are specifically. Read the definitions. Then, if you still feel you have a claim, Click on the Report Harassment or Report Retaliation ink (provided on the page).

**Step 4:** Clicking on the Harassment/Retaliation link, will take you to Lawson’s online Advocate Complaint Reporting System. From there, follow the prompt to submit your harassment or retaliation complaint. The system will prompt you to put your claim in writing, provide witness information (if you have any), and evidence (if you have any). Provide only truthful and accurate information.
NOTE: Filing an intentional false harassment or retaliation claim can lead to disciplinary or civil action being sought. Never file a false claim.

Step 5: One of the Deans at the college will contact you for a formal meeting regarding your harassment or retaliation complaint. It is your responsibility to cooperate fully in the investigation of your complaint. Failure to attend meetings or refusing to discuss the complaint absolves the college from all responsibility to pursue your complaint.
Filing a Harassment or Retaliation in Person

(Secondary Way to File)

Due to the serious nature of harassment complaints and retaliation complaints, students can report the complaint to the Dean in person.

Follow these steps:

Step 1: Report to any Dean’s office (Academic Dean, Dean of Students or Dean of Educational Support Office) to file your report and see the Dean, if available.

Academic Dean: Office is located on both campuses. Birmingham: Library Complex, Building “D”. Bessemer campus: Library Complex, Building “A” Room:

Dean of Students: Office is located on both campuses. Birmingham: Office is located in Student Services in the Leon Kennedy Building (across from the bookstore on the 2nd floor). Bessemer campus: Office is located in Student Services (near the bookstore) in Building “A”.

Step 2: Submit your claim in writing online (at the time of your office visit), providing only truthful and accurate information. Let the Administrative Assistant know you would like to report a harassment or retaliation complaint. They will ensure you have access to a computer to report it at the time of your visit.

Step 3: In some instances, if the Dean is available at the time you come to the office, be prepared to meet on the same day your claim is filed.

You will be contacted within 24 to 48 hours, depending on the day and time of the filing of your harassment / retaliation claim. All harassment and retaliation claims are investigated by the institution and resolved in a timely manner and are fully vetted. Harassment and retaliation claims are handled by Committee.

Due to the seriousness of harassment and retaliation claims, such claims are expedited at the College. Complaints of this nature, then, do not follow the normal grievance or appeal process. They are fast-tracked and given priority at the institution.

NOTE: Filing false claims of harassment or retaliation can be viewed as an act of retaliation (on the part of the person filing the claim) and will be thoroughly investigated and could lead to a violation of the Student Code of Conduct. This in no way should discourage an individual from filing a claim. This warning is written expressly to discourage the practice of filing intentional false claims.
Grade Disputes, Appeals & Challenges

Understanding What Qualifies for a Grade Appeal Filing

SPECIAL NOTE: Lawson State Community College holds that the instructor of record has the professional obligation and expertise to administer final grades. Thus, the grade appeal process should not be treated or turned into an exploration on the part of the student to find points in order to pass. The grade appeal process does not involve going back and looking at every assignment (and every question within every assignment) and examining every exam question in hopes of finding points. Rather, grade disputes must center on a specific claim of unfairness (directed and applied on the single student) or should center a specific error or arbitrariness (i.e., calculation error, weighting of grades error, gradebook errors) that the student feels the faculty member made in the calculation of the final grade. The re-vetting of assignments and old exams is not permissible under the grade appeal process. Students who wish to question an exam, assignment, or project results must do so during the administration or review of an exam (while the class is up and running) and work with the instructor of record for clarification of individual assignment grades at the time they are administered, not beyond. If unresolved, the student must use the informal complaint process to resolve individual grade disputes. Grade Appeals, then, deal with final grades, not specific test questions or assignment questions. Hence, grade appeals are not designed to dissect a course and should not be treated as such.

The purpose of the Grade Appeal Process is to provide students with a safeguard against receiving an unfair final grade (based on a calculation error; a misrepresentation of the grading scale (as outlined in the syllabus); incorrect application of the grading scale; or other human errors which academically injured the student), while respecting the academic responsibility of the instructor. Thus, this procedure recognizes that,

- Every student has a right to receive a grade assigned upon a fair and unprejudiced evaluation based on a method that is neither arbitrary nor capricious; and,
- Instructors have the right to assign a grade based on any method that is professionally acceptable to all students and applied equally.
- Disagreement with the establish standards applied in the course to evaluate or calculate final grades or projects is not criteria to appeal a grade unless such standards are professionally unacceptable and are not applied equally within a specific class or if a calculation error can be demonstrated.
- Lawson State Community College holds that the instructor of record has the professional obligation and expertise to administer grades. Thus, grade appeals are not designed to go back through the entire class and challenge individual test questions and individual test answers or individual grades on various assignments, projects, etc… in the course unless the student can demonstrate that a calculation error has occurred. Instructors have the
right to assign a grade based on any method that is professionally acceptable and equally applied to all students.

- All syllabi must outline how grades will be calculated and all instructors must follow what is outlined in the syllabus in terms the final calculation of grades.
- Attempting to challenge a grade based on what occurred in a different class is not grounds for a grade appeal.
- Grade appeals must occur within a reasonable time frame, no more than one semester beyond when the grade was issued.

Instructors have the responsibility to provide careful evaluation and timely assigning of appropriate grades. Course and project grading methods should be explained to students at the beginning of the term. Lawson State presumes that the judgment of the instructor of record is authoritative, and the final grades assigned are correct and should be respected by all parties.

A grade appeal shall be confined to charges of unfair action toward an individual student and may not involve a challenge of an instructor’s grading standard. A student has a right to expect thoughtful and clearly defined approaches to course and project grading, but it must be recognized that varied standards and individual approaches to teaching and grading are valid and permissible and the faculty member has the academic freedom to approach his/her course based on their own professional expertise and judgment.

The grade appeal considers whether a grade was determined in a fair and appropriate manner; it does not attempt to grade or re-grade individual assignments or projects (within a course). Rather, it is incumbent on the student to substantiate the claim that his or her final grade represents unfair treatment, compared to the standard applied to other students. Only the final grade in a course or project may be appealed, not individual assignments. Thus, in the absence of compelling reasons, such as clerical error, prejudice, or capriciousness, the grade assigned by the instructor of record is to be considered final.

In a grade appeal, only arbitrariness, prejudice, and/or error will be considered as legitimate grounds for an appeal.

**Arbitrariness:** The grade awarded represents such a substantial departure from accepted academic norms as to demonstrate that the instructor did not actually exercise sound professional judgment in administering the grade.

**Prejudice:** The grade awarded was motivated by ill will, and is not indicative of the student’s academic performance.
**Error:** The instructor made a calculation error in fact or application of points awarded or the weighting of final grades (as outlined in the syllabus)

This grade appeal procedure applies only when a student initiates a grade appeal and not when the instructor decides to change a grade on his or her own initiative. This procedure does not cover instances where students have been assigned grades based on academic dishonesty or academic misconduct, which are included in Lawson State’s Student Handbook and Catalog. Also excluded from this procedure are grade appeals alleging discrimination, harassment or retaliation in violation of Lawson State’s Harassment Policy, which shall be referred to the appropriate office. In such cases, the student needs to report a harassment or retaliation claim with the college (online) formally so both matters can be addressed.

**Grade Appeal Policy Procedures**

**Academic Injury** is determined based on whether the alleged error caused the student’s grade to decrease by a full letter grade. In other words, if a Grade Appeal has to do with a grade changing in percentages (within the same grade category of “A”, “B”, “C”, “D” or “F”), the Grade Appeal will be denied. Meaning, if the change you are seeking moves your grade from a 82% to an 86%, the Grade Appeal will fail, for you were not successful in demonstrating that the alleged error had any academic injury to you, for you still received a grade of “B” in the course. Grade Appeals, then, are for students who can demonstrate that an alleged error in the calculation of the final grade caused the grade to drop at least one full letter grade (i.e., error caused the grade to drop from a “B” to a “C”, etc…). Before filing a Grade Appeal, be sure you have read the “What Qualifies for a Grade Appeal Filing” (at the beginning of this section). Below are the steps that outline how to file an official grade appeal at Lawson State Community College. Failure to follow these steps and meet all deadlines will void your petition.

**Under no circumstances shall a student of Lawson State involve the President of the college in a grade dispute or grade appeal or grade appeal challenge.** Grade Disputes and Appeals are handled by the following individuals: the instructor of record, the Department Chair, the Associate Deans, the Academic Dean and the Vice President for Instructional Services (who renders the final decision on all grading matters). **The Vice President for Instructional Services makes ALL final decisions on all Grade Appeals (Disputes) issues.** Failure to follow the chain-of-command and outlined policy is grounds for dismissal of your petition for a grade change.
Defining a Grade Dispute

A grade dispute is NOT a grade appeal. A grade dispute deals with disagreements related to individual grades received on assignments, projects and tests. If you have a dispute as it relates to an individual assignment, project or test, you MUST address that matter with the instructor one-on-one (at the time the grade is administered). Please be advised that the faculty member, not administration, has the final say on the issued grade for your assignment, test, or project. If the matter goes unresolved, and the single grade caused enough academic injury to cause the student to fail the class or lowered the student’s grade by one letter grade, the student can provide the grade dispute evidence as part of the formal Grade Appeal packet (for consideration).

Filing a Grade Appeal and/or Grade Appeal Challenge

The steps below outline the Grade Appeal process (step-by-step). There are four levels in the Grade Appeal and Grade Appeal Challenge Process: (Level 1, Informal) meet with instructor and Chairperson; (Level 2, Informal) meet with Instructor and Associate Dean and/or Assistant Dean; (Level 3, Formal) File an online Grade Appeal. Dean will issue a Dean’s Resolution; (Level 4, Formal) File a Grade Appeal Challenge which challenges the Dean’s Resolution

### STEP 1: Informal -- Speak with Faculty Member

- Speak to the faculty member directly (Level 1)
- 1st Level Supervisor should be present. If dissatisfied, move to Step 2

### STEP 2: Informal -- Conference with Dept. Chair & Admin.

- Speak and/or meet with Instructor and Associate or Assistant Deans (Level 2)
- This step cannot be skipped. If dissatisfied, move to Step 3

### STEP 3: Formal -- File a Grade Appeal

- File a Grade Appeal Online (Level 3). Report the findings from Step 2 and all evidence to your challenge
- A Dean’s Resolution will be issued. Move to the Appeal Challenge phase, if dissatisfied at this level.

### STEP 4: Formal -- File a Grade Appeal Challenge

- File a Formal Grade Appeal Challenge (to the VP), if dissatisfied with the Dean’s Resolution
- This is your final step. The Vice President for Instructional Services has the last word on all Grade Appeal Challenges
Filing a Grade Appeal and Grade Appeal Challenge (Steps Outlined)

As previously noted, Grade Appeals deal with Final Grades, not individual grades unless the challenge deals with an individual grade had enough weigh to ultimately cause the student to fail the course (i.e., Final Exam, Project). Before any Grade Appeal can be formally filed at the college, the student MUST be on record of first addressing the matter directly with the faculty member (who issued the grade) and the Department Chairs as well as the Associate or Assistant Dean. In doing so, the student must point out the standard of error (i.e., calculation error, exception area was violated and caused the grade to drop at least one letter grade, error in applying weighted totals to calculate final grade, capricious grading, etc..) made in awarding of the final grade.

Step 1: Faculty (Level 1):

Step 1 is quite simple. Speak directly to the faculty member about the final grade issued and demonstrate your evidence (i.e., syllabus, calculator output) that the grade was improperly calculated and caused you academic injury. Ask instructor to demonstrate (in writing to you) how the grade was calculated to clear up any questions about your final grade. Please keep in mind that individual grades cannot be disputed once grades have been formally issued. Individual assignment grades MUST be disputed at the time they are issued during the class (as outlined in this manual—See Grade Disputes. Students cannot argue individual assignments during a final grade challenge unless the individual assignment occurred at the end of the course (i.e., Final Exam, Final Project) which left the student little time to dispute the grade or if the individual grade (in question) falls under the Exceptions category outlined within this section of the handbook.

If in disagreement with the decision reached by the instructor or if the instructor is no longer employed at the College, move to Step 2.

NOTE: A Grade Dispute cannot be lodged over disputes about make-up work provisions. In other words, instructors have the autonomy to make up their own decisions about allowing or not allowing students make-up work (in cases of absenteeism). Students, then, cannot compel a faculty member to allow for make-up, for there is no such thing as an excused absence. Students are expected to attend classes regularly and submit work on time. Anything outside the parameter (submitting work) on time is beyond the parameters of the student. If a student is hospitalized or undergoes a major life changing event (death of an immediate family member
defined as brother, sister, son, daughter, mother, father) and cannot complete the semester, students are strongly encouraged to withdraw from the class and return the next term, unless the event takes place towards the end of the term. If the student has completed at least 75% of the course (at the time of the interruption), speak with the instructor about receiving an Incomplete grade. In such cases, speak to each instructor individually for assistance and guidance.

**Step 2: Chairperson (Level 2)—This step cannot be SKIPPED!**

Meet with the faculty member and the Department Chair and Associate and Assistant Dean, if available. Provide your evidence and point out the standard of error made in awarding of the final grade.

If in disagreement with the decision reached under Step 2, **move to Step 3.**

**Step 3: File an Official Grade Appeal Online (Level 3):**

Grade Appeals MUST be filed online and can only be filed if the dispute in question has posed academic injury to the student. Meaning, the grade (due to the circumstances) was decreased by at least one letter grade. If in disagreement with the decision reached after meeting the Department Chair and Associate or Assistant Dean (which was Step 2), you are now authorized to file an **Official Grade Appeal Online** at the college. Grade Appeals are reviewed by Instructional Deans based on the evidence submitted. Meetings can be called, but they are typically not necessary in all cases to reach a decision unless the Dean has additional questions. What happens is that your rationale for the grade appeal will be reviewed along with your evidence and the faculty member will be asked to respond (in writing) providing their evidence as well. From there, the Instructional Dean will evaluate both packages of evidence (including the syllabus) and recalculate the grade to determine if any errors were made. In other words, they will test the theory the student puts forth. If more information is needed from either party, the Dean may call a meeting for further clarification or could simply call to address the matter over the phone.

Following a review the evidence presented, a **Dean’s Resolution** is issued (by certified mail) which formally closes the **Grade Appeal** petition. If in disagreement with the Dean’s Resolution reached, move to **Step 4 (the Grade Appeal Challenge)**, the final step in the Grade Appeal process.
How to File Your Grade Appeal

1. First gather all of the evidence you have to support your grade appeal (copy of syllabus, graded assignments, grade reports from Blackboard, emails to instructor, etc…).

   **NOTE:** If you submit a Grade Appeal without any evidence, it is likely that your appeal will not be successful.

2. Logon Lawson State’s website [www.lawsonstate.edu](http://www.lawsonstate.edu)

3. Click on **Current Students** tab from the main webpage. This will take you to the Current Students landing page (as pictured below)

4. Then, Click on the **Grade Appeals** button. This will take you to Lawson’s Advocate online reporting system (as pictured below). Follow the prompts to file your **Grade Appeal**.

5. Attach all documentation. If you need to scan documents and you do not have a scanner, visit the **SPACE Center** on campus.
Grade Appeals (Review of Criteria)

Grade Appeals MUST be filed online and can only be filed if you are challenging the final grade received in a course and you have completed up to Step 2 in the Grade Appeal process.

In filing a Grade Appeal (online), students MUST provide evidence to support their claims that the final grade issued in a particular class was issued in error, was prejudiced or arbitrary. Simple disagreement with a grade is not enough to change an Instructor’s recorded grade for a college student. Thus, the student will have to demonstrate actual teacher error (i.e., the teacher did not properly apply the correct weight to the grade; the teacher singled you out and discriminated against you; the grade issued was capricious in nature; the grades entered in the gradebook were incorrect; the teacher did not follow the syllabus as printed in terms of weights or point values; and as such, it caused academic injury to you as a student. Academic Injury is determined based on whether the alleged error caused the student’s grade to decrease by a full letter grade. In other words, if a Grade Appeal has to do with a grade changing in percentages (within the same grade category of “A”, “B”, “C”, “D” or “F”), the Grade Appeal will be denied. Meaning, if the change you are seeking moves your grade from a 82% to an 86%, the Grade Appeal will fail, for you were not successful in demonstrating that the alleged error had any academic injury to you, for you still received a grade of “B” in the course. Grade Appeals, then,
are for students who can demonstrate that an alleged error in the calculation of the final grade caused the grade to drop at least one full letter grade (i.e., error caused the grade to drop from a “B” to a “C”, etc…).

**NOTE:** Lawson State has the following Associate and Assistant Deans: The Business and Information Technologies Associate Dean, the College Transfer Associate Dean, the Health Professions Associate Dean, and the Career Technical Associate Dean, and the Career Technical Assistant Dean.

### Exceptions to Individual Grade Challenges

As noted, students cannot file Grade Appeals based on individual grades unless a student grade suffered (at least one letter grade) due to the following **unresolved exceptions** (listed below).

During the semester, if a student encounters any of the situations below, contact the instructor and Department Chair immediately for correction and remedy. Students should never wait until the end of the term. Challenge the action taken against you immediately. To assist students in this endeavor, it is advisable for students to print off the guidelines below and present a copy of these exceptions to your instructor or Department Chair to make the process of resolving your concerns easier.

If left unresolved by the instructor or Department Chair, a student can include these circumstances in the Grade Appeal for further investigation, particularly if the violation was challenged but still permitted, and it ultimately caused the student academic harm (of at least one letter grade in nature). If the violation did not cause any harm academically (reduction of at least one letter grade), a Grade Appeal (on this basis) should **not** be filed by the student. Grade Appeals deal with final grades, so a student could only use a violation of these exceptions if the violation caused harm to the Final Grade.

**Exceptions:** Individual grade challenges cannot be submitted as part of a Grade Appeal or Grade Challenge, unless they fall under one of the following situations:

1. **Exception 1:** Student attempted to submit an assignment or project on the same day the assignment was due, but it was refused. **NOTE:** Instructors can impose a reduction of points if the assignment is not submitted during the class period (if they deem this appropriate), but cannot report that the assignment was not submitted or attempt to issue a zero for assignment (that has been presented the day it was due). Meaning, if the student misses class, but attempts to submit the work (after class but on the same day), a grade
should be issued for the assignment. A zero should not be imposed if the assignment was actually turned in during the class period the day the assignment was due (i.e., refusing to take work from a student who arrived 10 minutes late for class, etc…). If the student misses classes but submits the assignment via electronic means (Blackboard) on the same day, the instructor can impose a reduction in points, but cannot mark the assignment as being not submitted. Provisions must be made for students submitting work on the same day it was due (regardless of means of delivery).

NOTE: Although some instructors do allow for late work, this is NOT a requirement of the college. Lawson State holds that all students should respect deadlines for assignments, so students seeking permission to submit late work (as determined by trying to submit an assignment a day after it was due) are dependent on their individual instructor guidelines about such practices, not the college. All such policies, though, must be clearly denoted in the course syllabus and applied equally to all students.

2. **Exception 2:** Student is refused entrance in a class (due to lateness) and as such, the student cannot submit work due or gain access to taking an exam, quiz or assignment.

Because college is not compulsory and students pay tuition to access their classes, students cannot be refused access to an exam or quiz or assignments, even if they are late for class. In such cases, the student will be able to take the exam or quiz or participate in any assignments, **but NO additional time** (to complete the exam, quiz or assignment) should be provided. In other words, if 60 minutes have been given for all students to take an exam, and a student shows up 40 minutes late, he or she will only have 20 minutes to complete the exam (unless the instructor grants additional time on their own). Or, if the student missed the giving of the quiz and entered the room after the quiz had been already administered and collected, the late arriving student has NO rights to the quiz and/or assignment missed. Please note the instructor has the right to issue low marks for students who do not participate in class due to attendance issues. Meaning, if the student was not present to participate in class or came late, and as such, could not participate, the instructor can deduct participation points from the student without question or challenge. This is considered a participate grade, not an attendance grade. There is a difference. Grades cannot be given for attending classes, only for participation within a class.

3. **Exception 3:** If an eCollege student is denied the opportunity to reattempt an exam after encountering a documented technical error, the instructor must reissue the exam and cannot penalize the student with proctored evidence of a technical failure occurring while accessing an exam. Such technical difficulties are reported by Proctor U and are official evidence that
the student is warranted a retake. Faculty also has access to the recorded technical glitch and can view the tape, if suspicious.

**Step 4: File a Grade Appeal Challenge (Level 3):**

Students cannot request a Grade Appeal Challenge without a Dean’s Resolution being issued in writing. All Dean’s Resolutions are submitted to students via certified or registered mail. Grievances governing Grade Appeals are not guaranteed and are handled on the merits of each case filed. Procedures for filing a Grade Appeal Grievance are as follows:

1. If the **Dean’s Resolution** does not prove satisfactory to the student, the student may file a Grade Appeal Challenge online within 5 business day (of receipt of the Dean’s Resolution).

2. The Grade Appeal Challenge Committee consists of one individual: the Vice President for Instructional Services (although third-parties may be consulted or invited to participate by the Vice President, if a hearing is provided).

   **NOTE:** Failure on the part of the student to file his or her Grade Appeal Grievance request ONLINE within 5 business days (upon receipt of the Dean’s Resolution) will invalidate the request and the Dean’s Resolution will stand. There are no exceptions to this policy.

3. Students who wish to file a Grade Appeal Challenge to be heard by the Vice President must establish grounds and submit an official online Grade Appeal Challenge Request within 5 business days upon receipt of the Dean’s Resolution. Simply disagreeing with a Dean’s Resolution does not establish grounds for an appeal. An appeal must be based on the student’s ability to demonstrate that a grade was awarded based on arbitrariness, prejudice or error (as previously dictated under the Grade Appeal Process).

   a. **Arbitrariness:** The grade awarded represents such a substantial departure from accepted academic norms as to demonstrate that the instructor did not actually exercise sound professional judgment in administering the grade.

   b. **Prejudice:** The grade awarded was motivated by ill will, and is not indicative of the student’s academic performance.

   c. **Error:** The instructor made a mistake in fact or application of points awarded.

4. Failure to submit a Grade Appeal Challenge Request (online) within the specified time period (of 5-business days) following the receipt of a Dean’s Resolution will automatically invalidate a student’s request for a grade appeal and the Dean’s Resolution will officially stand.
5. Grade Appeal Challenges are NOT automatically heard, but all challenges are reviewed by the Vice President for Instructional Services. The Vice President can take the following actions after reviewing the facts presented in a grade appeal:

   a. **VP Action 1**: Full Denial. Uphold the decision issued by the Dean without granting a hearing.

   b. **VP Action 2**: Full Reverse. Overturn the decision issued by the Dean (without a hearing) and adjust the grade.

   c. **VP Action 3**: Modification. Modify the decision issued by the Dean (without a hearing).

   d. **VP Action 4**: Grant the Appeal and move to a formal Vice Presidents’ Grade Appeal Grievance Hearing in which the student is granted a full hearing and re-vetting of the circumstances with the Vice President (and other third parties, if requested).

   e. **VP Action 5**: Following the hearing, the Vice President can uphold the decision, modify the decision or overturn the decision issued by the Dean.

6. To ensure all parties are protected and all legal matters are thoroughly investigated before conducting a hearing on this level, if a VP Appeal Hearing is granted, the Hearing date **should** be conducted within 45-business days of the initial request for a Vice Presidents’ Appeal Hearing.

7. If a VP Appeal Hearing is not granted, the **Vice Presidents’ Resolution** must be submitted to the student no later than 45-business days upon receipt of the students Vice Presidents’ Appeal Request. The extended time period is in place to ensure all matters can be legally vetted and reviewed by external parties prior to issuing a Vice Presidents’ Resolution.

8. The Vice Presidents’ will make their formal findings (called the **Vice Presidents’ Resolution**) and send their decision to the student, the President, the Grievance Committee Chair, and the appropriate Dean.

9. Although rare, if a student is dissatisfied with the Vice Presidents’ Resolution, he or she may make one final appeal (on grounds) by filing a President’s Appeal (see Step 7). The President’s Resolution (decision) shall be final and cannot be appealed.
Timeliness & Rationales of Grade Appeals

Under all circumstances, the student shall file an online Grade Appeal within 90 days after the disputed grade has been issued, preferably at the beginning of such term. If a student attempts to file a Grade Appeal two semesters beyond when he or she took the disputed course, the Grade Dispute will **NOT** be valid. In a summer session; however, the grade dispute must be initiated either that summer (if the student is enrolled during the summer) or no later than the end of the following fall semester (if the student was not enrolled during the summer).

The chart below is designed to assist students in understanding these restrictions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When was the grade issued?</th>
<th>When should I file a grade dispute online (to challenge the grade)?</th>
<th>When is it too late for me to file an online grade dispute?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade issued during the fall term. Check your Student Suite account for your grade. Grades are NEVER mailed.</td>
<td>Within 120 days after the grade has been issued—the earlier the better. You enrollment status does NOT impact this deadline.</td>
<td>On the 121st day (or beyond) after a grade has been issued.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade issued during the spring term. Check your Student Suite account for your grade. Grades are NEVER mailed.</td>
<td>Within 120 days after the grade has been issued—the earlier the better. You enrollment status does NOT impact this deadline.</td>
<td>On the 121st day (or beyond) after a grade has been issued.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade issued during the summer term. Check your Student Suite account for your grade. Grades are NEVER mailed.</td>
<td>Within 120 days after the grade has been issued—the earlier the better. You enrollment status does NOT impact this deadline.</td>
<td>On the 121st day (or beyond) after a grade has been issued.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Resolutions of Grade Appeals**

A student shall receive a written response within 14 business days (following an Official Grade Appeal) with a decision rendered by the Dean. Some appeals can take longer depending on their complexity. The appropriate faculty member and Department Chair shall be notified in writing regarding the resolution of the matter as well. A Grade Appeal shall only be considered if it is being filed within the 120-day deadline (following the receipt of the grade in Student Suite).

A student shall receive a written response within 21 business days (following an Official Grade Appeal Grievance) with a decision rendered by the Dean. More time is given for grievances for Hearing may be requested. The appropriate faculty member and Department Chair and Dean shall be notified in writing regarding the resolution of the matter as well. A Grade Appeal Grievance shall only be considered if it is being filed within the 5 business day deadline (following the receipt of the Dean’s Resolution).
Lawson State Community College recognizes that enrolled students are both citizens and members of the academic community. Upon enrolling in the college, all students assume an obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with the college's function as an educational institution both as ground (traditional) and online students. Upon enrollment, students also fall under the Lawson State Community Colleges Code of Conduct and all sanctions imposed. It is expected that students are enrolled for serious educational pursuits and that they will conduct themselves so as to assume the responsibilities of citizenship in the academic community.

The following Student Code of Conduct (extracted from the Student Handbook) is relative to conduct on college property and at all college-sponsored activities held off campus as well as any online activities (related to Lawson State and students of Lawson State). Failure to comply with the Code of Conduct (which governs both discipline issues and academic integrity issues) can lead to sanctions (punishments) issued and possibly probation or suspension or (in severe cases) criminal charges levied against a student. Students at Lawson State are entitled to due process, if a sanction is imposed.

Below you will find the following:

1. List of Code of Conduct violations and recommended sanctions
2. A detailed breakdown of the Code of Conduct
3. Overview of the Due Process and Appeal Process
Code of Conduct and Code of Conduct Sanctions

Below is a listing of Code of Conduct provisions. Other provisions that fall under the Code of Conduct are listed after this preliminary list and are outlined with a complete listing of sanctions imposed for violating specific codes under the Code of Conduct.

College Documents and Policies

1. Furnishing false or misleading information and/or forging, altering, or misusing college documents, records, or identification cards;

2. Disclosing records, files, or data in violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 and/or using or attempting to use college computers, computer facilities, or data without proper authorization. Deliberate installation of "viruses" on college computers is included in this provision;

3. Disclosing or otherwise misusing college computer access codes;

4. Writing, issuing, or attempting to negotiate a check on an account that has insufficient funds. Violations of this provision will result in a student being automatically withdrawn from the college unless the check, plus applicable service charges, is immediately paid.

5. Sharing of passcodes associated with Lawson State Community College and its online platforms (email, Blackboard, Student Suite) or accessing other student records via unauthorized modes.

6. Gaining unauthorized access into administrative or faculty files, records, etc…

College Sponsored Activities

1. Engaging in or sponsoring as an individual student or group of students any college activity on or off the campus that represents a clear and present danger to the normal educational process of the college;

2. Gambling in any form on campus or at any social function approved by the college;

3. Violating college policies, procedures or regulations concerning registration of student organizations, the use of college facilities, or the time, place, and manner of public expression;

4. Soliciting and/or selling on campus unless approved by the President;

5. Entering or occupying college buildings or property without proper authorization or bringing a guest or visitor to the college or to an approved college activity who fails to abide by the rules and regulations of the college; A student is responsible for obtaining a visitor's pass from the Student Services Center lobby for any guest or visitor he/she may bring on campus.
### College and Personal Property

1. Defacing, damaging, or maliciously destroying any college, faculty, or student property or the attempt to do such destruction; Violators may be required to make appropriate financial restitution.

2. Stealing property of the college or other individuals for personal use;

3. Selling stolen property of the college or other individuals to a member of the college community or a visitor to the campus;

4. Eating or drinking in unauthorized areas, especially in classrooms, shops, and laboratories.

### College Instruction

1. Conducting an activity on the part of any individual or group that causes disruption or interference with the teaching-learning environment or the regular operation of the college, including:
   - a. occupying any building or campus areas for the purpose of disruption or interference;
   - b. preventing or attempting to prevent the entrance or exit of students, faculty, administration, staff, or authorized visitors to and from the campus or buildings;
   - c. failing to obey directions of faculty, administrators, or security officers in situations relating to the regular operation of the college;

2. Displaying any inflammatory or incendiary signs, posters or banners, or the distribution of literature, or the circulation of petitions or publications proposing any actions to disrupt the educational process or teaching-learning environment;

3. Failing to comply with a request to report to a faculty or staff member for a conference;

4. Failing to follow department rules, directives of instructors, or failing to carry out assignments;

5. Leaving scheduled classes or training sessions without permission of the instructor;

6. Cheating on tests, individual projects, and/or individual assignments through any means, including electronic means.


Firearms, Drugs, and Alcohol

1. Possessing, exhibiting, or using firearms of any kind, explosives (including all types of fireworks), live ammunition, obnoxious bombs, chemicals, or weapons already designated as illegal by city, county, state, or federal law. Duly authorized peace officers, who will be wearing or carrying guns, are required to display their official badges at all times while on campus.

2. Possessing, transporting, selling, and/or using any illegal or hallucinatory substances and/or drug paraphernalia while on campus and/or involved in any college activity.

3. Possessing, transporting, distributing, consuming, or being under the influence of alcoholic beverages and or illegal drugs while on campus or involved in approved college activities.

Harassment and Retaliation

Lawson State Community College has a zero tolerance policy against harassment and/or retaliation and takes such actions seriously. With that in mind, please be advised that knowingly filing false harassment or retaliation claims can have serious repercussions.

Harassment

1. Harassing a student or students, faculty, staff, administration, or the college as an institution by a student or students, or by a non-student or nonstudents, including threats in any way expressed or implied against persons or property.

2. Assaulting physically or abusing any person on campus or at an approved college activity to the extent that such abuse would endanger or threaten the general health or welfare of the person abused or assaulted.

3. Conducting or expressing oneself in a loud, indecent, or profane manner on campus, on college-controlled property, or at approved college activities.

Harassment is abusive or hostile conduct which is directed toward or inflicted upon another person because of his or her race, color, religion, ethnicity, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, or veteran's status and which, because of its severity or pervasiveness, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work or academic performance or creates a hostile or abusive work or learning environment for that individual's work, education, or participation in a [college] activity. Harassment is typically based on stereotyped prejudices and includes, but is not limited to, slurs, jokes, objectionable epithets, or other verbal, graphic, or physical conduct.
that demeans, insults, or intimidates an individual because of his or her race, color, religion, ethnicity, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, or veteran status (UA, 2012).

**Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when (1) submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of employment or academic advancement; (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment or academic decisions; or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance as an employee or student or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or learning environment (UA, 2012).

**Retaliation (Against Sexual Harassment Claims)**

Retaliation against persons who oppose or complain about harassment is strictly prohibited. Retaliation is any action that has the effect of punishing a person for engaging in a legally protected activity, such as alleging harassment, making a harassment complaint, or assisting in a harassment investigation. Examples of retaliatory adverse employment actions include suspension, demotion, or termination. In addition, this policy prohibits retaliation in the form of harassment, intimidation, threats, or coercion, or in the form of any materially adverse harm that would dissuade a reasonable student or employee from filing a harassment complaint or participating in a harassment investigation (UA, 2012).

**Retaliation**

Retaliation against persons who oppose, complain, or file a grievance or any other issue is strictly prohibited on the campus of Lawson State. Retaliation is any action that has the effect of punishing a person for engaging in a legally protected activity, such as making a complaint or appeal or grievance, or assisting in a complaint or appeal or grievance investigation. Examples of retaliatory adverse employment actions include suspension, demotion, or termination. In addition, this policy prohibits retaliation in the form of harassment, intimidation, threats, or coercion, or in the form of any materially adverse harm that would dissuade a reasonable student or employee from filing a complaint, an appeal or grievance or participating in said investigation (UA, 2012).
Social Media Guidelines

Be mindful with using the name of Lawson State in all social media online. Remember, your opinion online is your opinion and does not reflect Lawson State nor (as a student) are you authorized to speak for Lawson State. Thus, in your comments, you have an obligation as a LSCC student to make it clear that your opinions are yours and do not represent the college in any way.

1. Students in using social media should always exercise good judgment and common sense.
2. **Protect your privacy.** Do not share passwords to third parties unless you are working with the technical Help Desk to troubleshoot a technical issue with Student Suite, Email or Blackboard. Releasing of passwords could violate subject you to privacy violations and could also jeopardize the security of your personal records here at Lawson State.
3. **Social Media is Not Private.** Be mindful that you are creating a history via your Social Media sites. Thus, create a positive existence that future colleges or companies would be proud of reading about you. Posting of inappropriate statements to include foul language, sexually explicit photos or videos can damage your reputation. Also note that once you put something on the World Wide Web (associated with your name) it does not truly disappear.
4. **Photo and Video.** Never use individual photos or videos of others online without their express person.
5. **Inappropriate Use Violations.** Violating the Code of Conduct while using social media may result in disciplinary action.
6. **Treat others with respect.** Social media should NEVER be used to assail, attack or seek retribution against others. Remember, everything you do and say can be tracked. Never embarrass yourself or the college. Consider that employers and colleges use social media as well to determine your readiness to enter their college or join their workforce.
7. **Report Inappropriate Incidents Online:** If a student finds themselves on an inappropriate website while on the campus of Lawson State, they should log off and report the incident immediately, so the college can take steps to rid the “pop up” from the system and troubleshoot the problem.
8. **Electronic or Phone (text) stalking or bullying.** Lawson State has a strict harassment. Bullying and stalking fall under harassing behavior. The college makes no distinction between face-to-face bullying, intimidation, assaulting or stalking or online bullying, text harassing, intimidation, assaulting or stalking if it involves two LSCC students or a LSCC employee. Thus, if a student is involved in this type of serious behavior, he or she is subject to disciplinary action.
9. **YouTube, Posting of Video or Creating of a Lawson State Website.** It is a violation to use Lawson State Community College’s name to post unauthorized videos online or websites (using the college’s name in the title). As a student, the college does NOT grant you the right to use the name or likeness of the institution online. Permission to use the name of Lawson State MUST be granted in advance before posting of video or creating of a website. Contact the Public Relations Office for permission. Never create an unauthorized video or website using the name of Lawson State or Lawson State Community College.
NOTE: Lawson State reserves the right to seek all legal remedy in its efforts to remove the unauthorized use of any social media page, video, content or account that uses the college’s name (Lawson State or Lawson State Community College or LSCC). Further, the college will seek to remove all content that is deemed as intentionally inflammatory, baseless, deceitful, or harmful to the institution due to its inaccuracy or flagrant disregard of the truth. In addition, the college will cooperate with law enforcement investigators regarding such approaches to defame or harm the institution and seek legal remedy, if necessary.

Sanctions (Defined)

Sanctions (punishments imposed for acts of academic dishonesty or code of conduct violations) are categorized by levels (based on the severity of the infraction/offense committed by the student or based on whether the infraction has been repeated by a student). Sanctions are categorized by degrees, Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3. Sanctions categorized as Level 1 sanctions are considered less severe punishments in response to violations. If a student repeats an offense, the level of the sanction increases. Some offenses (based on severity) do not have a Level 1 sanction associated with them. In such cases, the college views the offense as being so extreme that the offense is automatically elevated to a Level 2 or Level 3 offense upon execution of the act itself (i.e., paying a third party to complete assignments, bringing a weapon on campus, etc…). In such cases, the student could face suspension.

TYPES OF VIOLATIONS AND RECOMMENDED SANCTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Academic Infractions that could be potentially imposed</th>
<th>Sanctions: Level 1 (L1), Level 2 (L2), Level 3 (L3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cheating Offenses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheating on tests, individual projects and/or individual assignments</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Offense (L1): Zero on the Assignment (L1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; Offense: Administrative Withdrawal or Failure in the Class (L2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; Offense: Suspension (L3) Student sent to a Disciplinary Committee for Due Process Hearing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plagiarism: Submitting work as your own that was created from a secondary source without properly paraphrasing or quoting and crediting the source.</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Offense (L1): Student must successfully complete an online module regarding academic integrity assigned by Dean. Faculty member must demonstrate that he or she has taught the student how not to plagiarize. Student is given a second attempt to submit the work (plagiarized free).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of Academic Infractions that could be potentially imposed</td>
<td>Sanctions: Level 1 (L1), Level 2 (L2), Level 3 (L3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheating Offenses Continued</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Using electronic devices to cheat in any form or measure (in traditional or online classes) | 1<sup>st</sup> Offense: Zero on the Assignment (L1)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Offense: Administrative Withdrawal or Failure in the Class (L2)  
3<sup>rd</sup> Offense: Suspension (L3). Student sent to a Disciplinary Committee for Due Process Hearing. |

| Use of electronic devices or technologies to share information about course work, quizzes or tests in order to support cheating in the classroom | 1<sup>st</sup> Offense: Zero on the Assignment (L1)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Offense: Administrative Withdrawal or Failure in the Class (L2)  
3<sup>rd</sup> Offense: Suspension (L3). Student sent to a Disciplinary Committee for Due Process Hearing. |

| Passing along completed work from one student to another (in person or through electronic means) | 1<sup>st</sup> Offense: Zero on the Assignment (L1)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Offense: Administrative Withdrawal or Failure in the Class (L2)  
3<sup>rd</sup> Offense: Suspension (L3). Student sent to a Disciplinary Committee for Due Process Hearing. |

| Submitting work (as your own) that was not produced 100% by student | 1<sup>st</sup> Offense: Zero on the Assignment (L1)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Offense: Administrative Withdrawal or Failure in the Class (L2)  
3<sup>rd</sup> Offense: Suspension. Student sent to a Disciplinary Committee for Due Process Hearing (L3) |

| 2<sup>nd</sup> Offense: Zero on the Assignment (L1)  
3<sup>rd</sup> Offense: Administrative Withdrawal or Failure in the Class (L2)  
4<sup>th</sup> Offense: Suspension (L3). Behavior is now viewed as a Condo of Student sent to a Disciplinary Committee for Due Process Hearing. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>1st Offense</th>
<th>2nd Offense</th>
<th>3rd Offense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Copying from another student or from an electronic source</td>
<td>Zero on the Assignment (L1)</td>
<td>Administrative Withdrawal or Failure in the Class (L2)</td>
<td>Suspension. Student sent to a Disciplinary Committee for Due Process Hearing (L3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchasing or sharing of work from another student or from an electronic source</td>
<td>Zero on the Assignment and Automatic Academic Probation (L1). Next cheating infraction of any kind can lead to suspension. (L2)</td>
<td>Administrative Withdrawal or Failure in the Class. Plus, suspension. Student sent to a Disciplinary Committee for Due Process Hearing (L3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using “crib notes” or hidden notes during a test or quiz. Sharing of laboratory books to complete graded assignments in person or via electronic means</td>
<td>Zero on the test or quiz or assignment (L1)</td>
<td>Administrative Withdrawal or Failure in the Class (L2).</td>
<td>Suspension. Student sent to a Disciplinary Committee for Due Process Hearing (L3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being in possession of an unauthorized exam in person or via electronic means</td>
<td>Zero on the Test and automatic Academic Probation. (L1) Next cheating infraction of any kind can lead to suspension. (L2)</td>
<td>Administrative Withdrawal or Failure in the Class. Plus, suspension. Student sent to a Disciplinary Committee for Due Process Hearing (L3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forwarding an exam to another student in person or via electronic means</td>
<td>Zero on the Test and automatic Academic Probation (L1). Next cheating infractions of any kind can lead to suspension (L2).</td>
<td>Administrative Withdrawal or Failure in the Class. Plus, suspension. Student sent to a Disciplinary Committee for Due Process Hearing (L3)</td>
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</tr>
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### Code of Conduct Violations that could be potentially imposed

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<th>Violation</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sanctions:</strong> Level 1 (L1), Level 2 (L2), Level 3 (L3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Documents and Policies:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furnishing false or misleading information and/or forging, altering, or misusing college documents, records, or identification cards.</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Offense: Verbal Warning, Probation and/or Suspension (L1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; Offense: Automatic Suspension. Student sent to a Disciplinary Committee for Due Process Hearing (L2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disclosing records, files, or data in violation of the <em>Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974</em> and/or using or attempting to use college computers, computer facilities, or data without proper authorization. Deliberate installation of &quot;viruses&quot; on college computers is included in this provision.</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Offense: Verbal Warning, Probation and/or Suspension (L1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; Offense: Automatic Suspension. Student sent to a Disciplinary Committee for Due Process Hearing (L2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disclosing or otherwise misusing or sharing college computer access codes. Attempting to hack or otherwise illegally access college computers, databases or other electronic or digital devices.</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Offense: Verbal Warning, Probation and/or Suspension (L1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; Offense: Automatic Suspension. Student sent to a Disciplinary Committee for Due Process Hearing (L2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing, issuing, or attempting to negotiate a check on an account that has insufficient funds.</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Offense: Violations of this provision will result in a student being automatically withdrawn from the college unless the check, plus applicable service charges, is immediately paid (L2). Such sanctions warrant a hearing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; Offense: Criminal Prosecution will be sought. All funds must be paid back to the college. Possible suspension. Student sent to a Disciplinary Committee for Due Process Hearing (L3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging in or sponsoring as an individual student or group of students any college activity on or off the campus that represents a clear and present danger to the normal educational process of the college</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Offense: Probation; appropriate secondary sanction as determined by the Dean (i.e., community service, letter of apology, essay). Could range from (L1) to (L3), depending on situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; Offense: Suspension. Student sent to a Disciplinary Committee for Due Process Hearing (L3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambling in any form on campus or at any social function approved by the college</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Offense: Probation; appropriate secondary sanction as determined by the Dean (i.e., community service, letter of apology, essay). Could range from (L1) to (L3), depending on situation.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; Offense: Suspension. Student sent to a Disciplinary Committee for Due Process Hearing (L3).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violating college policies, procedures or regulations concerning registration of student organizations, the use of college facilities, or the time, place, and manner of public expression</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Offense: Verbal Warning (L1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; Offense: Probation (L2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Code of Conduction Violations that could be potentially imposed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Violation</th>
<th>Sanctions: Level 1 (L1), Level 2 (L2), Level 3 (L3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3rd Offense: Suspension. Student sent to a Disciplinary Committee for Due Process Hearing (L3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### College Documents and Policies (Continued):

#### 4. Soliciting and/or selling on campus unless approved by the President

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offense</th>
<th>Sanctions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Offense: Verbal Warning (L1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Offense: Probation (L2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Offense: Suspension. Student sent to a Disciplinary Committee for Due Process Hearing (L3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 5. Entering or occupying college buildings or property without proper authorization or bringing a guest or visitor to the college or to an approved college activity who fails to abide by the rules and regulations of the college. A student is responsible for obtaining a visitor's pass from the Student Services Center lobby for any guest or visitor he/she may bring on campus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offense</th>
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<tr>
<td>1st Offense: Verbal Warning (L1)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Offense: Probation (L2)</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Stealing property of the college or other individuals for personal use</td>
<td>1st Offense: Probation and/or suspension, depending the severity of the offenses. If Probation is selected, an appropriate secondary sanction may be determined by the Dean (i.e., community service, letter of apology, essay). *If a residence hall student, student could be subject to dismissal from the residence hall, depending upon the severity of the incident. (L1) to (L3), depending on situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Offense: Suspension. Student sent to a Disciplinary Committee for Due Process Hearing. *If a residence hall</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### College and Personal Property

Defacing, damaging, or maliciously destroying any college, faculty, or student property or the attempt to do such destruction; Violators may be required to make appropriate financial restitution and can face criminal charges as well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Offense: Probation; appropriate secondary sanction as determined by the Dean (i.e., community service, letter of apology, essay). *If a residence hall student, student could be subject to dismissal from the residence hall, depending upon the severity of the incident. (L1) to (L3), depending on situation</td>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### College and Personal Property (Continued)

Selling stolen property of the college or other individuals to a member of the college community or a visitor to the campus:

1\(^{st}\) Offense: Probation and/or suspension, depending the severity of the offenses. If Probation is selected, an appropriate secondary sanction may be determined by the Dean (i.e., community service, letter of apology, essay). *If a residence hall student, student could be subject to dismissal from the residence hall, depending upon the severity of the incident. (L1) to (L3), depending on situation  

2\(^{nd}\) Offense: Suspension. Student sent to a Disciplinary Committee for Due Process Hearing. *If a residence hall student, student could be subject to dismissal from the residence hall (even if the suspension is not upheld) (L3).  

### Code of Conduct Violations that could be potentially imposed

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</tr>
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</table>

#### College Instruction

Conducting an activity on the part of any individual or group that causes disruption or interference with the teaching-learning environment or the regular operation of the college, including:

1\(^{st}\) Offense: Verbal Warning. Depending on type of disruption, student can be given probation and/or suspension. Depending on situation, a first offense can range from L1 to L2.  

2\(^{nd}\) Offense: Probation. An appropriate secondary sanction may be determined by the Dean (i.e., community service, letter of apology, essay). However, depending on type of disruption, student can be given suspension (L2) to (L3).  

3\(^{rd}\) Offense: Automatic Suspension. Student sent to a Disciplinary Committee for Due Process Hearing (L3).  

Occupying any building or campus areas for the purpose of disruption or interference

1\(^{st}\) Offense: Verbal Warning. However, depending on type of disruption, student can be given probation and/or suspension. *If a residence hall student, student could be subject to dismissal...
<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preventing or attempting to prevent the entrance or exit of students, faculty, administration, staff, or authorized visitors to and from the campus or buildings;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Offense: Automatic 1-year Probation. An appropriate secondary sanction may be determined by the Dean (i.e., community service, letter of apology, essay). However, depending on type of disruption, student can be given a suspension. *If a residence hall student, student could be subject to dismissal from the residence hall, depending upon the severity of the incident (L1) to (L2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Offense: Automatic Suspension. Student sent to a Disciplinary Committee for Due Process Hearing. *If a residence hall student, student could be subject to dismissal from the residence hall (even if the suspension is not upheld) (L3).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failing to obey directions of faculty, administrators, or security officers in situations relating to the regular operation of the college</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>1st Offense: Verbal Warning. However, depending on type of offense committed, student can be given probation and/or suspension. If a residence hall student, student could be subject to dismissal from the residence hall, depending upon the severity of the incident. *If a residence hall student, student could be subject to dismissal from the residence hall, depending upon the severity of the incident (L1) to (L2)</td>
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<td>2nd Offense: Probation. An appropriate secondary sanction may be determined by the Dean (i.e., community service, letter of apology, essay). However, depending on type of offense committed student can be given a suspension. *If a residence hall student, student could be subject to dismissal from the residence hall, depending upon the severity of the incident.</td>
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from the residence hall, depending upon the severity of the incident. (L1) to (L2)

2nd Offense: Probation. An appropriate secondary sanction may be determined by the Dean (i.e., community service, letter of apology, essay). However, depending on type of disruption, student can be given a suspension. *If a residence hall student, student could be subject to dismissal from the residence hall, depending upon the severity of the incident (L2) to (L3)

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<tr>
<td>Displaying any inflammatory or incendiary signs, or gang related</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>paraphernalia, posters or banners, or the distribution of literature, or</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the circulation of petitions or publications proposing any actions to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disrupt the educational process or teaching-learning environment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1st Offense: Verbal Warning. Automatically remove or discard all inflammatory or incendiary signs, or gang related paraphernalia, posters or banners, or literature, or petitions or publications proposing any actions to disrupt the educational process or teaching-learning environment.

*If a residence hall student, student could be subject to dismissal from the residence hall, depending upon the severity of the incident (L1) to (L2)

2nd Offense: Probation. An appropriate secondary sanction may be determined by the Dean (i.e., community service, letter of apology, essay). However, depending on type of offense committed student can be given suspension. Automatically remove or discard all inflammatory or incendiary signs, or gang related paraphernalia, posters or banners, or literature, or petitions or publications proposing any actions to disrupt the educational process or teaching-learning environment.

*If a residence hall student, student could be subject to dismissal from the residence hall, depending upon the severity of the incident (L1) to (L2)

3rd Offense: Suspension. Student sent to a Disciplinary Committee for Due Process Hearing. Automatically remove or discard all inflammatory or incendiary signs, or gang related paraphernalia, posters or banners, or literature, or petitions or
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<td>*If a residence hall student, student could be subject to dismissal from the residence hall (even if the suspension is not upheld). (L2) to (L3)</td>
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<td>Failing to follow department rules, directives of instructors, or failing to carry out assignments</td>
<td>1st Offense: Verbal Warning (L1)</td>
<td>2nd Offense: Probation. An appropriate secondary sanction may be determined by the Dean (i.e., community service, letter of apology, essay) (L2)</td>
<td>2nd Offense: Suspension. Student sent to a Disciplinary Committee for Due Process Hearing (L3)</td>
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<td>Firearm, Drugs and Alcohol</td>
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<td>Possessing, exhibiting, or using firearms of any kind, explosives (including all types of fireworks), live ammunition, obnoxious bombs, chemicals, or weapons already designated as illegal by city, county, state, or federal law. Students are not allowed to be in possession of any type of weapon or firearm while on the physical campus of Lawson State or a college sponsored event. This includes the storage of such weapons or firearms (in vehicles, dormitory or any other physical space).</td>
<td>1st Offense: Automatic Suspension. Leads to a criminal investigation. Student sent to a Disciplinary Committee for Due Process Hearing. *If a residence hall student, automatic suspension from the Residence Hall. (L3)</td>
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<td>Possessing and/or using any illegal or hallucinatory substances and/or drug paraphernalia while on campus and/or involved in any college activity.</td>
<td>1st Offense: Verbal Warning. Completion of (Educational) Drug Dangers 101 Course (L1)</td>
<td>2nd Offense: Probation with up to 20 community hours in a Drug Treatment Facility or possible suspension. *If a residence hall student, student could be subject to dismissal from the residence hall, depending upon the severity of the incident. (L2) to (L3)</td>
<td>3rd Offense: Automatic Suspension. Student sent to a Disciplinary Committee for Due Process Hearing. *If a residence hall student, student could be subject to dismissal from the residence hall (even if the suspension is not upheld) (L3).</td>
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<td>Distributing, transporting, selling illegal or hallucinatory substances and/or drug paraphernalia while on campus and/or while involved in any college activity.</td>
<td>1st Offense: Probation and/or suspension (depending on the severity of the illegal offense; up to 30 community of hours in a Drug Treatment Facility; completion of the Educational Drug Dangers 101 Course. *If a residence hall student, student could be subject to dismissal from the residence hall, depending upon the severity of the incident (L1) to (L3)</td>
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<td>Activity</td>
<td>1st Offense</td>
<td>2nd Offense</td>
<td>3rd Offense</td>
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<tr>
<td>Possessing or consuming, or being under the influence of alcoholic beverages and or illegal drugs while on campus or involved in approved college activities.</td>
<td>1st Offense: Verbal Warning. Completion of (Educational) Alcohol Dangers 101 Course (L1)</td>
<td>2nd Offense: Probation with up to 20 community hours in a Drug Treatment Facility or possible suspension. *If a residence hall student, student could be subject to dismissal from the residence hall, depending upon the severity of the incident (L2) to (L3)</td>
<td>3rd Offense: Automatic Suspension. Student sent to a Disciplinary Committee for Due Process Hearing (L3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Distributing or selling alcoholic beverages and or illegal substances while on campus or involved in while attending approved college activities.</td>
<td>1st Offense: Probation and/or suspension (depending on the severity of the illegal offense; up to 30 community of hours in a Drug Treatment Facility; completion of the Educational Drug Dangers 101 Course. *If a residence hall student, student could be subject to dismissal from the residence hall, depending upon the severity of the incident (L1) to (L3)</td>
<td>2nd Offense: Automatic Suspension. Student sent to a Disciplinary Committee for Due Process Hearing (L3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>College Sponsored Activities that could be potentially imposed</td>
<td>Sanctions: Level 1 (L1), Level 2 (L2), Level 3 (L3)</td>
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<td><strong>Harassment, Assaulting and Bullying</strong></td>
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<td>Harassing a student or students, faculty, staff, administration, or the college as an institution by a student or students, or by a non-student or nonstudents, including threats in any way expressed or implied against persons or property.</td>
<td>1st Offense: Probation and/or suspension (depending on the severity of the harassment and duration; up to 15 community of hours; completion of educational seminar or course on alleged offense. *If a residence hall student, student could be subject to dismissal from the residence hall, depending upon the severity of the incident (L2) to (L3).</td>
<td>2nd Offense: Automatic Suspension. Student sent to a Disciplinary Committee for Due Process Hearing. *If a residence hall student, student could be subject to dismissal from the residence hall, depending upon the severity of the incident (regardless if he or she is suspended) (L3)</td>
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<td>Assaulting physically or abusing any person on campus or at an approved college activity to the extent that such abuse would endanger or threaten the general health or welfare of the person abused or assaulted.</td>
<td>1st Offense: Probation and/or suspension (depending on the severity of physical assault and the conditions surrounding the assault; up to 15 community of hours; completion of educational seminar or course on alleged offense. *If a residence hall student, student could be subject to dismissal from the residence hall, depending upon the severity of the incident (L2) to (L3).</td>
<td>2nd Offense: Automatic Suspension. Student sent to a Disciplinary Committee for Due Process Hearing. *If a</td>
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<td>Conducting or expressing oneself in a loud, indecent, or profane manner on campus, on college-controlled property, or at approved college activities. This would include the use of profanity.</td>
<td>residence hall student, student could be subject to dismissal from the residence hall, depending upon the severity of the incident (regardless if he or she is suspended) (L3).</td>
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<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Offense: Verbal Warning. However, depending on type and severity of the offense committed, student can be given probation and/or suspension (L1) to (L3).</td>
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<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; Offense: Probation with up to 20 community hours. *If a residence hall student, student could be subject to dismissal from the residence hall, depending upon the severity of the incident (L2) to (L3).</td>
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<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; Offense: Automatic Suspension. Student sent to a Disciplinary Committee for Due Process Hearing. *If a residence hall student, student could be subject to dismissal from the residence hall (even if the suspension is not upheld) (L3).</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>College Sponsored Activities that could be potentially imposed</strong></th>
<th><strong>College Sponsored Activities</strong></th>
</tr>
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</table>

### Harassment, Assaulting and Bullying (Continued)

**Bullying:** The repeated and habitual use of force, threat, or coercion to abuse, intimidate or aggressively impose domination or fear over others (online or face-to-face).

1<sup>st</sup> Offense: Probation and/or suspension (depending on the severity of the harassment and duration; up to 15 community hours; completion of educational seminar or course on alleged offense. *If a residence hall student, student could be subject to dismissal from the residence hall, depending upon the severity of the incident (L1) to (L3). |

2<sup>nd</sup> Offense: Automatic Suspension. Student sent to a Disciplinary Committee for Due Process Hearing. *If a residence hall student, student could be subject to dismissal from the residence hall (even if the suspension is not upheld) (L3). |

**Stalking:** The criminal activity consisting of the repeated and unwanted following and harassment of another individual.

1<sup>st</sup> Offense: Probation and/or suspension (depending on the severity of the harassment and duration; up to 15 community hours; completion of educational seminar or course on alleged offense. *If a residence hall student, student could be subject to dismissal from the residence hall, depending upon the severity of the incident (L1) to (L3). |

2<sup>nd</sup> Offense: Automatic Suspension. Student sent to a Disciplinary Committee for Due Process Hearing. *If a residence hall student, student could be subject to dismissal from the residence hall (even if the suspension is not upheld) (L3). |
### Residence Hall Infractions

All students residing in the residence hall are expected to govern themselves as outlined in the Residence Hall Handbook. Additional policies and procedures are outlined in the Residence Hall Handbook, as well as additional sanctions. It is the responsibility of all Residence Hall students to abide by the Residence Hall policies and procedures and rules governing student safety and security as well as all Code of Conduct rules governing all students at Lawson State Community College.

### Definitions of Disciplinary Actions or Sanctions

#### Sanctions (Defined)

Sanctions (punishments imposed for acts of academic dishonesty or code of conduct violations) are categorized by levels (based on the severity of the infraction/offense committed by the student or based on whether the infraction has been repeated by a student). Sanctions are categorized by degrees, **Level 1**, **Level 2** and **Level 3**. Sanctions categorized as **Level 1** sanctions are considered less severe punishments in response to violations. If a student repeats an offense, the level of the sanction increases. Some offenses (*based on severity*) do not have a **Level 1** sanction associated with them. In such cases, the college views the offense as being so extreme that the offense is automatically elevated to a **Level 2** or **Level 3** offense upon execution of the act itself (i.e., paying a third party to complete assignments, bringing a weapon on campus, etc…). In such cases, the student could face suspension.

#### Refusal to Carry Out Sanctions

Some sanctions may require the student to take a short educational course (i.e., Drug Abuse 101) or could require the student to write an essay on a topic (associated with the offense) or require a certain number of community service hours. If a student refuses to complete the requirements of the imposed sanction, the original sanction will move up to the next highest level sanction which will lead to more severe sanction, including suspension or dismissal.

#### Violation of Code of Conduct & Sanctions

A student or group of students deemed to be in violation of the Student Code of Conduct is subject to the imposition of the following restrictions, sanctions and/or action.
1. Warning (Level 1 Sanction):: Used for minor infractions of college regulations and consists of a restatement of the regulation violated with an official warning concerning future behavior. The restriction notifies a student that:

   a. Any further violation of college regulations will subject him/her to further disciplinary action.

   b. He/she must maintain exemplary conduct during the period of restriction.

   c. The restriction is generally for an indefinite period of time, but not less than one academic semester/term.

   d. Termination of the restriction is generally based upon a student's cooperative attitude, academic progress, and positive contributions of service to the college.

2. Community Service (Level 1 Sanction):: Students may, in response to a student code of conduct violation, be required to perform a certain number of community service hours within a specific and targeted time period.

3. Online Courses (Behavioral Remediation)--(Level 1 Sanction):: Students may, in response to a student code of conduct violation, be required to complete specific behavioral remediation courses (i.e., Alcohol 101, Drug Abuse 101, Plagiarism 101, etc...)

4. Written Work (Remedy)-- (Level 1 Sanction): Students may, in response to a student code of conduct violation, may be required to produce written pieces of work that specifically address the infraction and the harm that it caused.

5. Probation (Level 2 Sanction): A strong restriction designed to encourage and require a student to cease and desist from violating college regulations. A student under this restriction is notified in writing. A student on Disciplinary Probation is warned that:

   a. Any further violations on his/her part while under probation will lead to an extension of his/her restriction, Disciplinary Suspension, or Disciplinary Dismissal.

   b. He/she may not hold any office, elective or appointive, in any student organization.

   c. The probation restriction is generally not less than one academic semester/term.

6. Immediate Temporary Suspension (Level 3 Sanction):: Is imposed in a situation when a student's presence poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disrupting the academic process of the teaching-learning environment. Immediate temporary suspension may be imposed in order to ascertain information and resolve conflicts in an effort to avoid official suspension though individual student situations may ultimately result in suspension.
7. Suspension (Level 3 Sanction):: The removal of a student from rolls of Lawson State Community College for a stated period of time, usually not less than one semester/term. At the end of the designated period, a student must make formal application for re-admission.

8. Dismissal (Level 3 Sanction):: The strongest disciplinary restriction. A penalty this severe generally indicates that a student may not return to the college unless he/she is granted special dispensation from the President of the college or his designee. Disciplinary dismissal would apply to a student who is guilty of chronic violations or a major breach of conduct so that rehabilitation possibilities appear to be remote.

The college recognizes the right of both substantive and procedural due process in any matter involving a student misconduct violation where a sanction may be imposed. A student is entitled to a notice, a hearing, and an explanation before receiving a suspension or expulsion from the college.

A student facing suspension or expulsion has the following two options.

**DUE PROCESS RIGHTS OF STUDENTS**

**(1) Option #1: Penalty Without Hearing**

In the event a student wishes to waive the right to a formal hearing or makes voluntary written confession of the allegation and waives the right to a hearing, the violation may be administratively disposed of if:

1. It is in the best interest of the college and the student concerned, and
2. The student concerned consents in writing to administrative disposition.

At a conference with the student in connection with the allegation, he/she shall be advised of his/her rights.

If a student accepts administrative disposition, he/she shall sign a statement that he/she understands the formal charges; his/her rights to a hearing, or to waive the same; the penalty imposed; and his/her waiver of the right to appeal.

In administrative disposition, the penalties imposed shall not differ from those penalties stated in Definitions of Disciplinary Actions. Once a student has been informed of his/her rights and the penalty that could be imposed should a violation be found and has knowingly and voluntarily accepted in writing the authority of the administration to impose the penalty, a student shall have waived the right to request a formal hearing.
(2) **Option 2: Formal Hearing**

In the event a student wishes a formal hearing:

1. Notice of the charges and their implications will be given orally or in writing prior to the hearing.

2. The list of witnesses and their expected testimony will be given to the accused student prior to the hearing or at the hearing itself.

A Disciplinary Committee composed of college faculty, staff and two students will be convened to conduct the hearing. It is the duty of the Disciplinary Committee to hear all evidence presented concerning the alleged misconduct/violation. Because the college is an academic institution and not a court of law, the Disciplinary Committee is not bound by the common laws of evidence or civil procedure. Therefore, hearsay may be used during the hearing. It is the committee’s responsibility to render a fair and impartial decision from the evidence presented and to assure the student received due process in accordance with his/her constitutional rights.

At the hearing, a student has the right to present his/her defense against the charges and to produce other oral testimony or written affidavits of witnesses in his/her behalf. A student may be represented by counsel. If so, the college expects the courtesy of notification. The counsel will be allowed only to advise a student and not to actively participate in the hearing. The college is not required to provide the opportunity for cross-examination but may do so at the discretion of the chief hearing officer. The Disciplinary Committee shall report findings within 72 hours of the hearing. The findings shall be reported to the President or his designee and said person will notify the student of the results of the hearing and the implications of the decision.

**How to Appeal a Formal Hearing:**

Any student who is dissatisfied with the results of the hearing may file an appeal to the Disciplinary Appeal Committee (online) via the Advocate system. To do so, click on the **Current Students** page and click on the **Appeal** button as pictured below. From there, click on the **Disciplinary Appeal** button within the Advocate system (as pictured on the next page).

If a student would like to challenge the findings of the Discipline Appeal Committee, he or she can file an appeal to the President of the College. During the period of the student’s appeal, the student shall not be present on the campus of Lawson State Community College. To complete a President’s Appeal, click on the **Current Student** page and click on the **Appeal** button as pictured below. From there, click on the **President’s Appeal** button within the Advocate system (as pictured on the next page).
How to File an Appeal Online in the Advocate System

Step 1: Click on the Appeal button

Step 2: Select the correct appeal, either Discipline Appeal or President’s Appeal (for Code of Conduct violations)
More about the Appeal Process (and Categories of Appeal)

All students at Lawson State Community College are entitled to due process. Hence, once a sanction is imposed against a student, a student has a right to Appeal the sanction and present their own defense and evidence and challenge the decision reached (regardless if the sanction is a Level 1, Level 2 or Level 3 sanction).

The Appeal Process differs depending on the type of offense committed (either academic dishonesty offense or code of conduct offense) and is divided into two categories of Appeals—

(1) Appeals of Academic Dishonesty Sanctions; and
(2) Appeals of Code of Conduct Sanctions.

### Appealing Academic Sanctions—Categories of Appeals

- **Appealing Level 1 Academic Dishonesty Sanctions.**
- **Appealing Level 2 & 3 Academic Dishonesty Sanctions.**

### Appealing Code of Conduct Sanctions—Categories of Appeals

- **Appealing Level 1 Code of Conduct Violation Sanctions.**
- **Appealing Level 2 & 3 Code of Conduct Violation Sanctions**

### Appealing Level 1 (L1) Academic Dishonesty Sanctions

**How to Appeal Level 1** Unlike discipline issues, students can appeal Level 1 academic dishonesty sanctions.

**Academic Dishonesty Sanctions Imposed:** All LSCC students have due process rights the moment an academic dishonesty sanction is imposed. Appealing an imposed sanction is done completely online through the online Advocate system. Failure to file an Appeal (within 7 business days after a sanction has been issued) indicates acceptance and agreement of the sanction issued and penalty imposed.

A **Level 1 (L1)** academic dishonesty sanction cannot be issued by an instructor unless the following conditions are met.

1. The instructor must report the academic dishonesty offense online via the online Advocate Code of Conduct tracking system within 10 business days
following the documented cheating offense. If not, the sanction cannot be issued against a student.

ii. The instructor must report the cheating offense in writing (via the Advocate Code of Conduct tracking system) and upload evidence, including photographic documents (supporting the claims of academic dishonesty including any witness statements) prior to issuing any sanction against any student, if applicable.

Sanctions issued against cheating are assumed factual if a student does not issue an Appeal. Students have 7 business days to challenge a sanction. Once the 7 business days has lapsed, the sanction can be imposed.

If an appeal is filed, the evidence submitted which includes eyewitness accounts (by the instructor or other students) will be reviewed by the appropriate Dean (Academic or College Transfer), and the sanction will either be upheld or denied (due to lack of evidence) within 10 business days upon receipt of the academic dishonesty charge (online). Phone calls and emails are NOT appropriate; this is a completely online process.

**Submitting an Appeal:**

Appeals cannot be issued outside of the Advocate online system. Students MUST use the Advocate system to submit all Appeals. Click on the Current Students page on the LSCC website to submit your Appeal.

When submitting an Appeal for a Level 1 sanction imposed, the student will need to outline a defense as it relates to the academic dishonesty charge. A student simply stating that he or she does not agree with the sanction or the cheating offense is not enough to turn over a sanction that has been imposed by an instructor. Rather, they will have to provide evidence or witnesses countering the instructor’s assertions that they have been caught cheating.

**NOTE:** Students asserting that they did not know they were committing an academic dishonesty offense is not acceptable, particularly since LSCC publishes its Academic Dishonesty violations publicly. All LSCC students are responsible for reading all policies and procedures, particularly those that govern student behavior and responsibilities on campus and within all academic environments (in class and online). Meaning distance education students are held to the same academic integrity standards as face-to-face (ground) students.

Once an Appeal has been received, the appropriate Dean (Academic or College Transfer) will send the FINAL ruling to the student and faculty member via email only. No phone calls will be issued. Because Level 1 academic sanctions do not involve penalties that require a student to be administratively withdrawn from a course or to be withdrawn from the course or be issued a failing grade in the course or suspension, Appeals cannot be appealed beyond the Dean level.
The Dean’s decision on all Level 1 offenses are final. No other method of Appeal is available at this Level.

To begin a Level 1 Appeal.

1. Go to Lawson State’s main webpage (www.lawsonstate.edu)
2. Click on Current Students
3. Click on the Online Appeal Form icon and follow the prompts to file an Appeal

NOTE: Appeals without evidence will not be successful. You cannot appeal a decision based on your disagreement with the decision. Since sanctions are posed based on evidence submitted, in order to reverse an appeal, you must provide new evidence that would speak to your innocence (i.e., new witnesses, evidence that you wrote the work, etc…).

Appealing Level 1 (L1) Academic Dishonesty Sanctions

How to Appeal Level 1 Academic Dishonesty Sanctions Imposed: All LSCC students have due process rights the moment an academic dishonesty sanction is imposed. Appealing an imposed sanction is done completely online through the online Advocate system. No other Level 1 (L1) academic dishonesty sanction cannot be issued by an instructor unless the following conditions are met.

iii. The instructor must report the academic dishonesty offense online via the online Advocate Code of Conduct tracking system within 10 business days following the documented cheating offense. If not, the sanction cannot be issued against a student. In other words, if an instructor issues a grade of zero on an assignment (because he or she alleges that a student has cheated on an exam), but fails to report the incident to the college officially (for review and approval by the appropriate Dean—either Academic or College), the sanction will not stand and the original grade earned on the exam will stand.

iv. The instructor must report the cheating offense in writing (via the Advocate Code of Conduct tracking system) and upload evidence, including photographic documents (supporting the claims of academic dishonesty including any witness statements) prior to issuing any sanction against any student.
Confiscation of Cheating Evidence: A teacher has the right to confiscate all evidence of cheating from a student (i.e., cheat sheets, crib notes, phones, calculators, etc…) temporarily for up to ONE hour (no more) after the end of the class. It is during this time, that the instructor will be allowed to photograph all evidence of cheating. Once the hour has expired, the instructor must give the student back all evidence of cheating. If a student refuses to give the instructor the evidence (which is viewed as obstruction), then the sanction sought against the student will automatically move the highest level sanction (Level 3) given for the offense committed. Further, such refusal will be used against the student during his or her Due Process hearing.

v. The evidence submitted (by the instructor) will be reviewed by the appropriate Dean (Academic or College Transfer) and the sanction will either be upheld or denied (due to lack of evidence) within 10 business days upon receipt of the academic dishonesty charge (online). Phone calls and emails are NOT appropriate; this is a completely online process.

vi. Submitting an Appeal: If the Level 1 sanction is upheld, the student can challenge the validity of the academic dishonesty charge and the sanction imposed in writing within 10 business days (via the Advocate online appeal process). Appeals submitted after 10 business days will not be considered. Appeals cannot be issued outside of the Advocate online system. Students MUST use the Advocate system to submit all Appeals. Click on the Current Students page on the LSCC website to submit your Appeal.

vii. When submitting an Appeal for a Level 1 sanction imposed, the student will need to outline a defense as it relates to the academic dishonesty charge. A student simply stating that he or she does not agree with the sanction or the cheating offense is not enough to turn over a sanction that has been imposed by an instructor. Rather, they will have to provide evidence or witnesses countering the instructor’s assertions that they have been caught cheating.

NOTE: Students asserting that they did not know they were committing an academic dishonesty offense is not acceptable, particularly since LSCC publishes its Academic Dishonesty violations publicly. All LSCC students are responsible for reading all policies and procedures, particularly those that govern student behavior and responsibilities on campus.

viii. Once an Appeal has been received, the appropriate Dean (Academic or College Transfer) will send the FINAL ruling to the student and faculty member via email only. No phone calls will be issued. Because Level 1 academic sanctions do not involve penalties that require a student to be administratively withdrawn from a course or to be withdrawn from the
course or be issued a failing grade in the course or suspension, Appeals cannot be appealed beyond the Dean level. **The Dean’s decision on all Level 1 offenses are final.** No other method of Appeal is available on this Level.

To begin a **Level 1** Appeal:

4. Go to Lawson State’s main webpage ([www.lawsonstate.edu](http://www.lawsonstate.edu))
5. Click on **Current Students**
6. Click on the **Online Appeal Form** icon and follow the prompts to file an Appeal

**NOTE:** Appeals without evidence will not be successful. You cannot appeal a decision based on your disagreement with the decision. Since sanctions are posed based on evidence submitted, in order to reverse an appeal, you must provide new evidence that would speak to your innocence (i.e., new witnesses, evidence that you wrote the work, etc….)

Receiving a Level 2 (L2) or Level 3 (L3) Academic Dishonesty sanction is a serious infraction. It means you have either received your second charge of cheating as a Lawson State student or the severity of your first academic dishonesty alleged act was viewed as so severe (i.e., getting someone other than you to complete your work online) that a Level 2 charge is being sought against you.

All Level 2 and Level 3 academic dishonesty claims (against the student) warrant a hearing (unless waived by the student). In such cases, students will be given two options:

1. Challenge the sanction issued via a Due Process Hearing
2. Penalty Without Hearing: Waive his or her rights to a Due Process Hearing and accept the sanction.

**How to Issue an Appeal (Level 2):**

If a Level 2 or Level 3 sanction is being sought out against you, and you would like to appeal the sanction (opposed to accepting it) and have a Due Process Hearing, follow these steps to appeal.

To begin a **Level 2 and Level 3** Appeal:

1. Go to Lawson State’s main webpage ([www.lawsonstate.edu](http://www.lawsonstate.edu))
2. Click on **Current Students**
3. Click on the **Online Appeal Form** icon and follow the prompts to file an Level 2 / Level 3 Appeal
**Please note that all students: regular, transfer, transient and dual enrollment students fall under Lawson State’s Code of Student Conduct.

STUDENT RIGHT-TO-KNOW AND CAMPUS SECURITY ACT

The Student Right-To-Know and Campus Security Act of 1990 requires Lawson State Community College to disclose information about student outcomes, campus security, and crime statistics. The college publishes an annual report to faculty, staff, and students to comply with the provisions of the law. This report provides projected graduation rates, program completion rates, licensure requirements, and campus crime statistics.

Copies of this publication are available in the Admissions, Business, and Student Services Offices and are also posted online.