

COLUMBIA COLLEGE STUDENT CONDUCT MANAGING BEHAVIOR

NOTE:**Must; Shall; Will:****Should:****May or Could; Can:****Clarification of Terms**These words or phrases indicate actions or activities that are *essential* or *mandatory*.

This word implies that it is highly desirable to perform certain actions or activities, but not essential or mandatory.

These words imply freedom or liberty to follow an alternative to the action or activity being presented in a document.

INTRODUCTION

This document was created to assist Program Managers and staff to deal with students who are not conducting themselves in the manner consistent with college requirements.

The proper conduct of students is described in the college calendar under the heading "General Program Information and Academic Regulations - Student Conduct". Other student conduct regulations are found in the document "Electronic Communication Policy for Students". It may further be described in the individual program section of the calendar. The Student Roles and Responsibilities document (each student is required to sign), and the course syllabus that career program students normally receive at the beginning of each individual course also describe proper student conduct.

There are three stages staff normally proceed through if a student's conduct is not acceptable. It is very unusual at Columbia for a student to proceed through all three stages. The stages include: 1) Informal stage, 2) Formal stage, and 3) Withdrawal stage. Our expectation is to resolve all problems at the Informal Stage. It is extremely unusual for a student to skip or bypass one or more steps or stages. However, depending on the severity of the situation, a student may be asked to withdraw after a first incident. Serious threats, theft, lying, cheating, or malicious property damage are examples of issues where immediate withdrawal may be required.

Columbia College believes in treating all students in a fair and equal manner and the college follows due-process. It expects that, when students do not conduct themselves properly they will first be given verbal warning, then formal warnings, and if that doesn't work they will be asked to withdraw from the course or program.

I. INFORMAL STAGE

Students, especially those who are new to the college, may unknowingly break one of the regulations dealing with proper conduct. When this is observed by a staff member (usually the student's facilitator), it should be quickly, quietly, privately and respectfully dealt with by that staff member.

In most cases, a student, who is made aware that he/she is behaving improperly, will cease such behaviour. When talking to the student about the offense, be careful not to accuse, condemn or belittle the student. Remember that he/she is here to learn and we are here to help him/her learn. Ensure that all information received is interpreted as accurately as possible (eliminate all assumptions). Besides, if you were ill-informed or have misinterpreted a situation, it could become an embarrassment, and we don't want to embarrass our students or ourselves.

As this is an informal stage, no formal reports are required, however, an informal note documenting the incident is to be placed in the student's program file and the incident shared with other staff who interact regularly with the student.

Second Verbal Warning

It is not unusual for staff to give students second verbal warnings related to areas of offense.

It should also be remembered that students, like ourselves, are not perfect individuals. It must be understood that rules were established to be followed and it is our responsibility to ensure that our rules are respected and followed. It is also our responsibility to create a positive, supportive, sincere, and productive learning environment for all staff and students. When college or program rules are not followed, the learning environment can become negative and unproductive (i.e. we are not helping a situation by ignoring or avoiding it). Try not to procrastinate. If a student needs to be talked to a second time, then do so by setting time aside to discuss the incident(s) one on one with those affected. If more than one student is involved it is usually best to meet with them separately.

After a second verbal warning, staff should again note it (document the incident) in the student's program file and inform other staff that a second verbal warning was given for a particular type of offense.

The rule of thumb is to provide students with two warnings for each type of offense. The number of warnings can be affected by the severity of the offense or the student's response to the situation.

The third time an offense occurs, staff should deal with the matter in a formal manner. This requires movement to stage two (Formal Stage).

II. FORMAL STAGE

Very few of Columbia's students need to be dealt with formally regarding their attitude or behavior. When they do, please carefully follow the steps listed in this document.

Most offenses will normally be handled quite effectively through the Informal Stage however, some offenses such as stealing, lying, cheating, willful destruction, or serious physical threats or abuse may require by-passing the Informal Stage and going directly to the Formal Stage or Withdrawal Stage. However, this is unusual.

When an incident occurs it is the affected staff member's responsibility to initiate immediate action. If it is an academic or non-academic offence the staff member is to follow the procedures described in the calendar. To assist the staff member in describing the incident, he/she should fill out an Incident Description Form (see attachment). This document should then be given to the student's Program Manager.

Program Manager's Responsibilities

1. When a Program Manager receives an Incident Description Form he/she should review it thoroughly. Next he/she should review the student's file containing any informal reports of incidents. Following this, he/she should then discuss what he/she has learned with the person who submitted the Incident Description Form as well as any other staff that may help provide insight.

2. Next, the Program Manager should have other witnesses as well as the student(s) who caused the incident to fill out an Incident Description Form, and then thoroughly review their statement(s).
3. Once the Program Manager is satisfied he/she has all the relevant information, he/she should establish a meeting, where applicable, with the Program's Discipline Committee and the student(s). If no Discipline Committee is established, the manager should follow the steps below on his/her own. Prior to the meeting he/she should give the Discipline Committee and student(s) a copy of the initial Incident Description Form. They should also provide the student's and any witness description of the incident. The Program Manager should also tell the Discipline Committee and student(s) in a respectful manner to read the appropriate section of the calendar that deals with that type of offense.
4. The Discipline Committee normally consists of the Program Manager, and two or three other staff members. It will not normally include the staff member who initially completed an Incident Description Form. The committee will be considered a special committee and therefore will follow the roles and responsibilities as described in the college document An Introduction to Committees.
5. The purpose of the Discipline Committee meeting is for the committee to:

- 5.1 Review the incident. This will be done by the Program Manager and committee verbally reviewing each incident report and asking for any points of clarification. The purpose here is not to accuse, defend or debate, but to try to clearly understand the facts as they have been written by each person. At the conclusion of each incident report review, the author of the report may make a statement about the report. Again, the purpose here is not to argue or debate, but to inform. If more than one student has been accused of an offense, they should be met with separately. Each student should also be dealt with separately.

Depending on the situation, the Program Manager may require that the student not attend one or more classes (or labs) until the formal review is concluded. This should only happen in more serious situations.

- 5.2 The Discipline Committee will then meet to determine what action will be taken. If the committee decides to discipline the student, then they should refer to the list of alternatives described in the General Program Information and Academic Regulations - Student Conduct section of the calendar.

A student who admits he/she committed an offense should be dealt with less severely than one who commits an offense but will not admit it. A student who has already been formally disciplined once should receive more severe discipline for a second offence.

If a student has been formally disciplined on two preceding occasions, the Program Manager will normally only conduct an investigation to ensure a third offense was committed. If he/she is satisfied that the incident occurred, he/she will normally proceed by asking the student to formally withdraw from the program. If the student refuses, the Program Manager may be left with no alternative but to suspend or expel the student. (See General Program Information and Academic Regulations - Student Conduct section of calendar for list of other actions or alternative actions.)

- 5.3 Once an appropriate course of action is determined, the Program Manager should invite the student back to the meeting and verbally inform him/her of his/her decision. The decision will then be put in writing and a copy given/mailed to the student and a copy put in his/her file.

III. WITHDRAWAL STAGE

Although Columbia College has one of the highest student completion rates among Alberta's post secondary institutions, a limited number of students each year withdraw or will be asked to withdraw from their program of studies.

The following procedures should be followed by the Program Manager when it is determined after a proper and fair review, that a student must be withdrawn from a course or program of study.

1. The student is normally given the opportunity to formally withdraw. In this case, the student is asked to fill out a Program or Course Withdrawal Form. Once he/she has completed the form, it is to be returned to the Program Manager who then completes his/her section of the form.

The manager then passes it on to the Accounting Department to complete and then passes it on to the Student Services Department.

If any of the Accounting Department or Student Services Department personnel identify any concerns, they are to discuss them with the program manager who will normally deal with their concerns.

Once all concerns are addressed, a copy of the form and any related documents will be kept by the Program Manager in the student's file. Accounting Department or Student Services Department personnel listed above may also keep copies of documents relating to the withdrawal.

2. If the student chooses not to withdraw themselves, they will then be withdrawn by the college. The Program Manager or designate will initiate the process and follow through with other college personnel as listed above.

In the case where the college initiates the withdrawal process, the Program Manager will, in addition to the withdrawal form, send the student a formal letter. Copies of the letter may need to be sent to relevant government, banking, or social services personnel. Please refer to the forms binder in the Administration Office for copies of the Program Withdrawal Form and sample withdrawal letter to the student.

SUMMARY

I. INFORMAL STAGE

- Verbal warning (1,2) by staff member.
- Informal note to student file to document this action.

II. FORMAL STAGE

- Incident Description Form – completed and forwarded to Manager
Manager:
 - 1) - Review Incident Description form.
 - Review student's file.
 - Meet with staff.
 - 2) - Request student and witnesses to complete Incident Description Form.
 - Review all submitted documents.
 - 3) Establish meeting (if applicable) with Discipline Committee.
 - 4) Give copy(ies) of initial Incident Description Form to student.
 - 5) Review incident and documents for clarification (student may/may not attend classes until review is complete).
 - 6) Determine disciplinary action as per College calendar (see Student Conduct).
 - 7) Verbally inform student of and place written copy in file.

III. WITHDRAWAL STAGE

- Manager
 - 1) Student asked to fill out Program or Course Withdrawal form.
 - 2) Completed form sent to Accounting and Student Services.
 - 3) Copies placed in student file.