

PROCEDURE:

5.1.1p1. Academic Freedom

Revised: June 18, 2014; June 17, 2015; September 21, 2016; June 21, 2017; August 17, 2021

Last Reviewed: June 18, 2014; June 17, 2015; September 21, 2016; June 21, 2017; August 15, 2018; August 21, 2019; June 17, 2020; August 17, 2021; August 17, 2022; August 15, 2023; August 21, 2024

Adopted: May 15, 2013

I. **PURPOSE**

TCSG and its institutions safeguard and protect the rights of academic freedom by providing faculty and students the right to initiate grievance procedures should they have complaints dealing with the infringement of or personal penalization as the result of the exercise of this freedom.

II. **RELATED AUTHORITY**

TCSG Procedure 5.1.1p. Academic Freedom

State Board Policy 4.4.3. Employee Complaint Resolution

TCSG Procedure 4.4.3p. Employee Complaint Resolution

III. **APPLICABILITY**

This procedure applies to all faculty and students at Ogeechee Technical College.

IV. **DEFINITIONS**

Academic Freedom: The freedom to teach, learn, and express one's ideas about the subject matter without political or institutional restrictions.

V. **ATTACHMENTS**

None.

VI. **PROCEDURE**

Faculty members are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject. Although caution must be used not to introduce teaching matters that have no relation to the instructional field, faculty and students must be able to examine ideas in an atmosphere of freedom and confidence and should feel free to participate as responsible citizens in community affairs. Ogeechee Technical College safeguards and protects these rights of academic freedom by providing faculty and students the right to initiate grievance procedures through the Human Resources department should they have complaints dealing with the infringement of academic freedom or personal penalization as the result of the exercise of this freedom.

Faculty members must fulfill their responsibilities to society and to their profession by manifesting competence, professional discretion, and good citizenship. They will be free from institutional censorship or discipline when they speak or write as citizens. As professional educators, faculty members must be accurate, exercise appropriate

restraint, show respect for the opinions of others, and make every effort to indicate they are not speaking for Ogeechee Technical College.

The principles of academic freedom shall not prevent the institution from making proper efforts to ensure the best possible instruction for all students in accordance with the objectives of the College.

The administration adheres to and upholds these principles and assures that the academic freedom of faculty as described above will not be abridged.

While this complaint resolution process is provided to employees as a mechanism for expressing concerns about employment, it is not intended to alter in any way the employment at-will relationship between the College and its at-will employees.

If a faculty member has cause for complaint regarding academic freedom, the faculty member should follow the procedures below:

- The faculty member should first discuss his/her complaint with an immediate supervisor.
- If a faculty member is uncomfortable discussing the academic freedom concern with the immediate supervisor, the member may contact the next-level supervisor or the Director for Human Resources for assistance in resolving the concern informally. Mediation may be requested and employed within the process of informally resolving the concern.
- If the concern is not resolved informally, the faculty member may file a complaint by following the Technical College System of Georgia's (TCSG) Employee Complaint Resolution Procedure. The purpose of this procedure is to establish a uniform process for the resolution of employment concerns not addressed by the Positive Discipline Policy, the Unlawful Harassment Procedure or other specific complaint resolution process. The process is intended to encourage communication between the parties involved, either directly or through an intermediary, to facilitate a mutual understanding of and appropriately address any policy or safety issues.

If a student has cause for complaint regarding academic freedom, the student should follow the student grievances procedures outlined in the OTC Catalog and Student Handbook.

VII. RECORD RETENTION

All documents associated with the academic freedom complaint will be retained by the Director for Human Resources for a minimum of two (2) years from the date of final resolution. These documents will not be maintained in the official personnel file of the employee.