

2024-2025  
**STUDENT  
HANDBOOK**



**PENNSYLVANIA  
HIGHLANDS  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

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You have reached the Pennsylvania Highlands Community College Student Handbook. The Student Handbook is fully online and contains the most current information available about our academic offerings. Pennsylvania Highlands Community College provides its students with affordable opportunities to gain the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in their work, in their day-to-day lives, and in their pursuit of life-long learning.

- [College Locations](#)
- [Contact Departments/Offices](#)
- [Mission, Vision, & Accreditation](#)

## Students Rights and Responsibilities

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By becoming members of the Pennsylvania Highlands Community College community, students assume the responsibility to observe and help maintain standards of personal behavior that make a positive contribution to the College community. As a Pennsylvania Highlands student, you are expected to:

1. Respect the College's commitment to academic integrity and uphold the values of honesty and responsibility that preserve our community;
2. Behave in a manner that is temperate, civil, and respectful of the rights of others;
3. Behave in a manner that recognizes and respects individual differences, supporting an appreciation for diversity as well as inclusiveness;
4. Do no harm and help to maintain the safety and welfare of the campus community by reporting unusual or dangerous behavior;
5. Recognize that you are a part of the Pennsylvania Highlands community, and demonstrate civic and social engagement and responsibility;
6. Accept personal responsibility for your learning, behavior, and future success

## Student Services

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### Admissions Office

As the first point of contact for new students, the Office of Admissions offers many services which assist students in becoming acclimated to college life. New student outreach programs are also conducted by this office.

### Financial Aid Office

All matriculated (pursuing a degree, certificate, or diploma) students are encouraged to apply for financial aid by completing a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). By completing this application, the student has applied for federal programs that include Federal Pell Grants, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, Federal Direct Loans and Federal Work Study. After the FAFSA is submitted, there is a link to select to complete the PA State Grant Application. Processing time for the FAFSA is generally 3 to 5 days. All students are encouraged to complete the FAFSA by April 1st to ensure full consideration and to complete all necessary financial aid steps prior to the upcoming year's tuition due date. The Financial Aid Office, will notify students via college assigned email if additional information is needed or if their Financial Aid Offer is ready for review. Missing documents and Financial Aid offers can be found by logging into myPeak and selecting the Financial Aid Student Portal.

Students earn their aid by going to classes and doing the work. Grades/attendance are checked after drop/add period and at the end of the semester, then aid adjustments are made accordingly for students who never

attended or stopped attending. In addition, Financial Aid Satisfactory Progress requires students to maintain a 2.0 GPA, 67% successful completion of all attempted credits and program completion within a 150% timeframe. This progress is checked at the end of each semester. Students not making progress will be placed on financial aid "warning" status; however, remain aid eligible. Students not making progress during a subsequent semester will be placed on financial aid "suspension" status and are not aid eligible; however, they will have the opportunity to a one-time appeal process if they had experienced extenuating circumstances.

College scholarship opportunities are available to students who complete the FAFSA and meet individual scholarship criteria. Complete the Pennsylvania Highlands Foundation Scholarship Application and essay by the deadline noted on the website. Scholarship eligibility requirements are referenced in the College Catalog and Financial Aid page ([www.pennhighlands.edu](http://www.pennhighlands.edu)).

## FINANCIAL AID DEADLINES

- **PA State Grant** - All first-time applicants enrolled in a community college; business/trade/ technical school; hospital school of nursing; designated Pennsylvania open-admission institution; or nontransferable two-year program: August 1, (date FAFSA received). All other applicants: May 1, (date FAFSA received).

## Registrar's Office

The Registrar's Office coordinates the registration process for students. All student records are managed and maintained in the Registrar's Office. Students may obtain the following services through this office:

### **Students may obtain the following services through this office:**

- Transcripts
- Enrollment Verification Letters
- Assistance with Grading Problems
- Course Schedule Information
- Name and/or Address Change Forms
- Assistance with Adding, Dropping, or Withdrawing from Classes
- Registration Information
- Repeating a Course
- Auditing a Course
- Graduation Application
- Class Cancellations
- Prerequisite Waivers
- Residency Classification and Verification
- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Contact and Information
- Educational Record Review

## UNDERSTANDING REGISTRATION

Pennsylvania Highlands offers a variety of classes outlined in the Course Schedule, which is produced two times per year for three terms: Fall, Spring, and Summer. Students can register online via the myPEAK portal or by paper form through a College location or the Registrar's Office. Instructions can be found on the online registration page of myPEAK.

Upon enrollment, the student enters into an agreement to abide by the policies, rules, and regulations that govern the institution and expectations for student conduct. The student is responsible for following proper registration procedures and for satisfying the College curriculum and graduation requirements. If a student is interested in transferring, it is the student's responsibility to coordinate the course of study between that

institution and Pennsylvania Highlands. Students who are pursuing a degree, diploma, or certificate are encouraged to work with an academic advisor when scheduling courses each semester. By doing so, the student will ensure that he or she is taking the appropriate courses for completing his or her selected major.

## GRADUATION

Meeting graduation requirements is ultimately the responsibility of the student. Students are encouraged to work with their academic advisors in selecting courses to meet their educational objectives. Students must apply for graduation before the specified deadline for the semester. Application due dates are announced throughout the year and are communicated through the Registrar's Office via the myPEAK portal. Applications are available at all locations and the College's website. Commencement ceremonies are the culmination of the student's program of study. Each spring Pennsylvania Highlands Community College conducts a graduation ceremony at which time faculty, staff, family, and friends come together to recognize the academic achievements of the year's graduates. All eligible degree, diploma, and certificate candidates are encouraged to participate in commencement activities. In order to be eligible to graduate, all students must have:

### **In order to be eligible to graduate, all students must have:**

- Satisfied all requirements for the course of study.
- Taken at least 1/2 of the required coursework at Pennsylvania Highlands.
- Achieved a grade point average of 2.0 or better as required by program of study.
- Fulfilled all of their financial obligations to Pennsylvania Highlands.
- Filed an application for Graduation:
  - *Application Deadline for Fall - November 1*
  - *Application Deadline for Spring - March*
  - *Application Deadline for Summer - June 30*

## Student Accounts Office

The Student Accounts Office coordinates the student billing process for all students. The Student Accounts Office also handles tuition and fee payments, third-party billing, and student refunds.

## Student Activities & Athletics

The Office of Student Activities coordinates and administers a wide variety of programs and activities that provide opportunities for socialization, recreation, leadership, and personal growth both within and beyond the campus community.

## ATHLETICS

Be a part of the team! Athletics are an excellent way for student athletes to continue their careers after high school. Pennsylvania Highlands offers students intercollegiate opportunities including eSports, men's basketball, men's and women's bowling, men's and women's cross country, men's and women's golf, women's softball, and women's volleyball. At Pennsylvania Highlands, you will also find an enthusiastic athletic staff who value academics and athletics and who will be committed to helping you succeed in the classroom and on the playing court.

The Black Bears participate in the Western Pennsylvania Collegiate Conference (WPCC) and the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA).

As a member institution of the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA), Pennsylvania Highlands is governed by the eligibility rules and laws of the NJCAA. The majority of our competitive schedule is with other two-year college opponents as a member of the Western Pennsylvania Collegiate Conference.

## BULLETIN BOARDS

Student bulletin boards can be found at all College locations. All informational flyers must be approved and stamped with an expiration date by the Office of Student Activities and Athletics before being posted. At the Centers, please visit the Center director for assistance with posting information to the bulletin boards.

## STUDENT SENATE

The Student Senate serves as the direct communication vehicle between the student body and the school administration. Since its inception, it has relayed student input on numerous subjects related to the College and has representatives on several college committees. Student Senate representatives also provide input on student activities and suggestions on student life opportunities at Pennsylvania Highlands. The Student Senate is the coordinating body for all student organizations and its membership is comprised of up to two representatives from each student group in addition to senator's at large (those not belonging to a particular organization). The President of the Student Senate is elected annually by a vote of the student population as a whole and serves as a Honorary College Trustee.

## Student Success Center

The Student Success Center offers a variety of services at all locations to help you achieve academic success. All services are provided at no cost and are confidential. Arrangements for services at the sites and for online students may be made by calling the Student Success Center to schedule an appointment via video chat, email, telephone, or inperson.

## ACADEMIC ADVISING/TRANSFER INFORMATION

Student Success Center counselors/advisors assist new students in developing a schedule of classes for your first semester at Penn Highlands. At the start of the first semester at Penn Highlands, you will be assigned to a faculty advisor who will then guide you through the advising and registration process during subsequent semesters. All Academic Advisors at Penn Highlands assist students in understanding course and degree requirements; discuss and clarify educational, career, and life goals; monitor student academic progress; reinforce student self-sufficiency; and direct students with educational or personal concerns to the appropriate college resources.

You are encouraged to get to know your advisor and closely monitor your progress toward your degree requirements by accessing your degree audit on myPEAK or tracking your progress on the advising worksheet for your program. It is your responsibility to make sure you are taking the courses needed to complete your program at Penn Highlands.

If you plan to transfer to a 4-year college/university after completing your degree at Penn Highlands, it is important to begin planning immediately with your faculty advisor or a Student Success Center advisor. Both can assist you in selecting appropriate transferable coursework.

## CAREER PLANNING

The first step in the career exploration process is to understand yourself by identifying your interests, personality, skills, and values through career assessments. By completing an assessment in [Career Coach](#), you can start to link your interests to possible careers that may be a good fit for you. The assessment is also helpful if you are a current Penn Highlands student and want to explore changing majors or other career fields. Our career counselors can help you gather information about career choices and devise a plan to prepare for your career.

The Career Closet is located on the College's Richland Campus and offers a year round supply of new and gently used interview attire. All Penn Highlands students are eligible to receive and keep any clothing chosen to attend job fairs or interviews, free of charge.

## COUNSELING SERVICES

Short-term personal counseling is available to assist you with personal issues and concerns that may negatively affect your academic achievement. Some of the issues with which you may want the counselor's assistance are: stress, anxiety, study habits, family conflicts, coping with grief, and time management. Students may be referred to resources in the community if intensive or on-going support is needed. Appointments are encouraged; drop-ins are also welcome. Counseling services are confidential and can be conducted by phone or Skype for students attending classes at a Penn Highlands location.

## MAKE-UP TESTING

Make-up tests are administered to students at the discretion of the instructor. Students must present a valid Pennsylvania Highlands' student ID at the time of testing. All College test proctors in the Student Success Center and at the other Penn Highlands locations strictly follows the test administration guidelines determined by the instructor. Make-up testing can be coordinated at all locations at the discretion of the instructor.

## 30-MINUTE MATTERS/STUDENT SUCCESS WORKSHOPS

The Student Success Center participates in the 30-Minute Matters series to help students excel inside and outside the classroom. Workshops are tailored to meet the specific needs of students. Watch for the schedule of topics offered each semester. Additional information may be provided in one-on-one sessions by a Student Success Center counselor.

## STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Pennsylvania Highlands Community College is committed to upholding the standards set forth by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, which are designed to eliminate discrimination against individuals with disabilities. Pennsylvania Highlands is committed to making reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities.

Students with a disability wishing to request accommodations must meet either in person, via Skype or by telephone with the Counselor/ADA Specialist. Appropriate documentation from a licensed professional is required to certify that he or she has a disability and to determine reasonable accommodations. The student is encouraged to request accommodations immediately upon admission to the College, as some accommodations, require at least three weeks planning in advance of each semester. Once a student is determined eligible for accommodations and receives an official accommodations plan, the student must meet with each of his or her instructors to inform the instructor of the requested accommodations.

## TUTORING

The College provides tutoring at all sites in English, reading, and math based upon tutor availability. Requests for tutoring in other subjects will be accepted; however, they are filled only when an appropriate tutor is available. Online tutoring is available through Smarthinking, which is accessed at the Library's webpage on the Student Resources tab.

If you need a tutor, please complete a Tutor Request Form, which is available on the Student Success Center tab of myPEAK. After your instructor has signed the request form, you must return the form to the Student Success Center along with a copy of your schedule.

If you would like to become a Penn Highlands tutor, you must have a cumulative GPA of at least 2.8, have earned an A or B in the course in which you wish to tutor, and have a recommendation from an instructor. The application to become a tutor is also found on the Success Center tab of myPEAK.

## College Bookstore

The College Bookstore is located at our Richland Campus. Students may make purchases at the store or online at [www.pennhighlands.bkstr.com](http://www.pennhighlands.bkstr.com). Students attending our various facilities may utilize the online version of our Bookstore. The Bookstore offers new, used, digital, and rent-a-text textbooks. In addition to textbooks, the Bookstore also sells a large variety of supplies, apparel, gift items, and software which may be purchased at an educational discount.

Check out [rent-a-text.com](http://rent-a-text.com) for more information regarding the rental program. Book buy back occurs every day but the greatest values for your books are received during final exam weeks.

Bookstore hours vary. Call 814-262-7912 or 814-262-6453 for current operating hours and additional hours.

## Library Services

The College offers full library services to all students. Library services include access to library materials at campus libraries, an online catalog, complete interlibrary loan services, and remote access to library databases. The College has adopted an information-literacy strategy that incorporates library research in all academic programs. Access to a professional librarian is provided through Ask Here PA available on the [library's webpage](#).

## Public Transportation

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Transportation to and from Pennsylvania Highlands sites may be obtained through the Cambria County Transit Authority. Discounted bus passes may be purchased by full-time students at the Student Accounts Office or by presenting a Pennsylvania Highlands Student ID card at the Bus Stop Shop at the downtown Johnstown Transit Center. Additional information regarding bus service and schedules may be obtained by contacting the Cambria County Transit Authority at 1-877-535-2BUS.

## Student Transportation Policy

Pennsylvania Highlands Community College assigns the safety of our students, employees, and others as a high priority. The College does not permit employees to transport students in personal vehicles or to arrange or coordinate student carpooling. Students participating in off-campus events or activities must make independent arrangements for transportation. In certain instances, such as athletic events or academic field trips, the College may permit the transportation of students in College-owned or leased vehicles.

## Security and Safety Services

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### The Clery Act

The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act is a Federal law that requires colleges to report criminal activity and statistics on their campuses to the federal and state governments. This information is reported annually by Pennsylvania Highlands Community College along with statistics documented by local law enforcement agencies.



[Click here to view a summary of criminal activity reported during the past year at all Penn Highlands' facilities.](#)

*Additional information regarding College Security and Safety may be obtained by contacting the Richland Campus Security Office at 814-262-6427.*

## Reporting Suspicious or Criminal Activity

Pennsylvania Highlands Community College strives to provide a safe environment for all students, employees, and visitors. Students are encouraged to report any activity that appears to be suspicious in nature to a staff member or Security at the Richland Campus. Security Officers are available to assist students with reporting crimes or suspicious activity to law enforcement authorities, as well with obtaining their assistance for emergency situations. Pennsylvania Highlands does not tolerate behavior, either threatened or overt, which is forbidden by law. Such acts, and the resulting disciplinary action, are outlined in the College's Student Code of Conduct.

## Children on Campus

To protect the safety of young visitors and to avoid disruptive behavior, minor children accompanying students or visitors of Pennsylvania Highlands Community College must be under the constant supervision of a parent, guardian, or parent designee while on campus.

Children who are taking part in organized, scheduled activities, minors who have been admitted to Pennsylvania Highlands Community College, and dual enrolled high school students, may be on campus without parent/guardian supervision. Minor children must meet the criteria above to be permitted in classrooms, laboratories, or other areas of instruction.

A child and his or her parent will be asked to leave if the child's presence is determined to be disruptive to the college environment. Finally, it is not appropriate to bring children to campus who are unable to attend school or daycare due to illness.

The College does not allow children to be left unattended on our property due to security and child welfare concerns. Parents who have problems with childcare should visit or contact the Student Success Center.

## College Closing and Delay Procedure for Inclement Weather

Pennsylvania Highlands Community College is a commuter institution and recognizes the commitments that its employees and students make to attend work, classes, and events. In that regard, Penn Highlands will remain open and operational unless extreme weather conditions or other emergencies do not permit it to do so.

In consultation with key administrative staff, the responsibility for the decision to close rests with the College President. In the case of severe weather which limits the College from safely opening, the College will close as a unit. In a localized emergency or weather condition, a campus or center may be closed individually at the direction of the Center Director, in consultation with the College President.

**[To be notified by text message of delays and closings due to inclement weather or other emergency situations, please click here and register for PEAK txt, our emergency notification system.](#)**

It is not the College's intention to place any student or employee into a perilous situation. Therefore individuals must exercise discretion in determining what actions they wish to take in weather or other college-related emergency situations. Employees may use paid leave time to avoid unsafe travel and the College has asked our faculty to provide for a liberal leave policy for students who are unable to travel due to inclement weather. The College does not strictly follow the delays and cancellations of local school districts.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER SITUATIONS

### Snow/Weather Emergency

**All College locations are closed because driving conditions are hazardous.** All classes will be canceled. Instructors are encouraged to find creative ways to make up lost seat time, but cannot require students to meet in a virtual setting.

### Early Dismissal

**In this case, the College has already opened with students and employees present on-site, with the weather situation becoming increasingly dangerous. All classes will be canceled after the early dismissal.** Instructors are encouraged to find creative ways to make up lost seat time, but cannot require students to meet in a virtual setting. If the Richland Campus closes, all locations will also close. However, if the Richland Campus is open, then it is possible that some other locations may close due to inclement weather affecting that individual location.

### Delayed Start: Weather Emergency/Caution

**College remains open but driving conditions may be hazardous in some areas. During a delayed start, employees and students will usually report at 10:00 AM unless otherwise indicated.** If the Richland Campus closes, all locations will also close. However, if the Richland Campus is open, then it is possible that some other locations may close due to inclement weather affecting that individual location.

For students and faculty, if a class is scheduled from:

- 8:00 AM to 9:15 AM and the College start time is delayed until 10 AM – *Do not report.*
- 9:25 AM to 10:40 AM and College start time is delayed until 10 AM – *Report to this class at 10 AM.*
- 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM and College start time is delayed until 10 AM – *Report to this class at 10 AM.*

## INCLEMENT WEATHER DECISION TIMELINES

Notice of closings, delays, or early dismissal sent to students, employees, and the public:

- Before 9:00 PM (the day before) if inclement weather is imminent.
- Between 5:00-5:15 AM if inclement weather is possible, but not imminent.
- A minimum notice of two hours shall be given, if possible, to any changes to the teaching and operating schedule.

## Drug-Free College Environment

The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of drugs and alcohol is prohibited at any College facility or activity under the authority of Pennsylvania Highlands. Any student violating the policy will be disciplined under relevant provisions of the Student Code of Conduct.

Pennsylvania Highlands Community College Policy for a Drug-Free Campus is as follows:

1. The consumption, possession, or sale of any alcoholic beverages and/or illegal drugs at any College facility is prohibited.
2. Appearing at a College facility or at an off-campus event under the influence of alcohol and/or illegal drugs is prohibited.
3. The consumption, possession, or sale of any alcoholic beverages and/or illegal drugs at College-sponsored or College recognized events is prohibited by the College.

4. The procedures for the enforcement of the Drug-Free Campus Policy are as follows: Any College employee who is responsible for monitoring behavior at both College and off-campus events will also be responsible for reporting policy violations to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Services. Students or other individuals witnessing policy violations will report those violations to either the College employee in charge of the event or to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Services.
5. Students who violate the Drug-Free Campus Policies will be subject to the Student Code of Conduct sanctions.

More detailed information about College Policies regarding a Drug-Free College Environment can be found on the College's website.

## Tobacco Regulations

The use of tobacco and all related products, including vaping and electronic cigarettes, is prohibited inside all College facilities. Designated smoking areas are located outside all College campus locations. At the Richland Campus the smoking area is located in parking lot D on the west side of the building. Tobacco and related products may only be used in the area by "smoking permitted" sign and inside personal vehicles. Violation of the tobacco policy may result in disciplinary action.

## Emergency Situations

All emergency situations should be reported to the proper authorities by contacting 911 directly or through Pennsylvania Highlands Community College Security at the Richland facility. To contact Safety and Security in emergency situations, dial x5555 from any campus phone.

## Lost and Found

Pennsylvania Highlands Community College is not responsible for lost or stolen articles. The Office of Security and Safety documents and holds found items for a period of 60 days. The staff in Blair, Ebensburg, Huntingdon, and Somerset will hold found items for the proper owner.

## Student Health Services

Students who become ill or need emergency treatment will be directed to a local facility for care and treatment. The College assumes no responsibility for the medical treatment of students or for costs associated with services rendered or medical transportation.

## Student Identification Cards

Your student ID (called myID) is now located in the myPEAK mobile application. You can find your myID by clicking on the menu icon on the top left of the application and scrolling to myID. If you do not have the myPEAK Mobile App, download it from your phone's app store (Search for myPEAK mobile). ID cards are used for library services, the PEAK Pass student discount program, and many student services.

## Student Parking

The College assumes no responsibility for security of vehicles or their contents, while moving or parked in the Richland Campus parking areas. All employees, students, and visitors use parking facilities at their own risk. Vehicles parked in prohibited parking areas will be ticketed and/or towed. "Reserved Parking" spaces are in effect seven days per week, 24 hours a day.

No person shall park a vehicle attended or unattended overnight without permission from campus security.

Parking tickets shall be paid at the Office of Student Financial Services located at the Richland Campus within fourteen days of issue date. Parking violations will result in a \$15.00 fine unless the violation occurs in a handicapped parking space then the resultant fine will be \$50.00. Tickets not paid within the fourteen days will increase by \$10.00.

An appeal of a parking ticket must be made in writing or email to the head of campus security within fourteen days of receiving the parking ticket. The head of campus security will respond to the appeal via email or letter within fourteen days of receiving the appeal request.

Failure to pay the parking fine will result in a hold being placed on student transcripts.

## Text Messaging System

PeakTXT is the College's text message notification system which is used to disseminate messages of an urgent nature including College facility closings and delays. Messages sent using this system appear on subscribers' cell phones and on the College's home page. All students are encouraged to enroll in this emergency alert program. Visit our website at [www.pennhighlands.edu/PeakTXT](http://www.pennhighlands.edu/PeakTXT) for additional information. The College also uses texting in non-emergency situations through One-Call\_now. Students are automatically registered for this service and they can opt out at any time through myPEAK.

# Student Code of Conduct

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Pennsylvania Highlands Community College is committed to the advancement of learning and to the development of responsible individuals. Each student is considered to be a responsible person and is expected to uphold appropriate standards of behavior. The College expects proper student conduct on-campus and at off-campus functions sponsored by the College. Students who demonstrate an inability to conform to acceptable conduct may lose the right to enjoy the educational, social and recreational opportunities of the College.

Criminal violations which occur on campus or at College-sponsored events may be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency. A student may be subject to the sanctions of the Student Code of Conduct in addition to being subject to action in criminal and/or civil court.

A student engaging in misconduct may be subject to disciplinary sanctions. The types of behavior subject to disciplinary action includes, but is not limited to:

1. Violation of published College policies, rules, or regulations.
2. Violation of federal, state, or local law on College premises or at College-sponsored or supervised activities.
3. Disruption or obstruction of teaching, administration, disciplinary proceedings, or other College activities, including its public service functions on or off campus.
4. Abuse or other conduct which threatens or endangers the safety of any person: (1) physical abuse, (2) verbal abuse, (3) threats, intimidation, and coercion
5. Harassment, sexual harassment, and/or stalking which threatens or endangers the safety of any person.
6. Attempted or actual theft of and/or damage to property of the College or property of a member of the College community.
7. Hazing defined as an act that injures, frightens, endangers or degrades an individual.
8. Conduct which is disorderly, lewd, or indecent; excessive amorous behavior, breach of peace; or aiding or abetting, or procuring another person to breach the peace on College premises or at functions sponsored by or participated in by the College.
9. Failure to comply with the directions of College officials or law enforcement officers acting in the performance of their duties and/or failure to identify oneself to those persons when requested to do so.

10. Unauthorized entry to or use of College premises or property and/or unauthorized possession, duplication, or use of keys to any College premises or property.
11. Use, possession, or distribution of narcotic or other controlled substances except an expressly permitted by law.
12. Use, possession, or distribution of alcoholic beverages.
13. Use, possession or concealment of any firearms, explosives, other weapons, or dangerous chemicals.
14. Gambling in any form. Subject to local statutes, activities such as raffles or drawings that benefit recognized campus organizations may be permitted with proper approval.
15. Intentionally supplying false information to the College and/or alteration of unauthorized use of College documents or instruments of identification.

Students are protected against discrimination by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and against sexual discrimination, including sexual harassment by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

Students who are sexually harassed are encouraged to discuss the matter with the Title IX Coordinator, the Safety and Security Office, or the Deputy Coordinators at the other education centers and should refer to the College's Title IX Policy located on the College's website.

**Pennsylvania Highlands provides the following guidelines and definitions for students, faculty, and staff to better understand consent. This information can be found on our website in our Pennsylvania Highlands Community College Sexual Assault Awareness and Preventive Measures Resource Tool.**

Consent is knowing, voluntary and clear permission by word or action, to engage in mutually agreed upon sexual activity. Since individuals may experience the same interaction in different ways, it is the responsibility of each party to make certain that the other has consented before engaging in the activity. For consent to be valid, there must be a clear expression in words or actions that the other individual consented to that specific sexual conduct.

A person cannot consent if he or she is unable to understand what is happening or is disoriented, helpless, asleep or unconscious for any reason, including due to alcohol or other drugs. An individual who engages in sexual activity when the individual knows, or should know, that the other person is physically or mentally incapacitated has been given consent. It is not an excuse that the individual responding party of sexual misconduct was intoxicated and, therefore, did not realize the incapacity of the other.

Incapacitation is defined as a state where someone cannot make rational, reasonable decisions because they lack the capacity to give knowing consent (e.g., to understand the "Who, what, when, where, why, or how" of their sexual interaction). This includes a person whose incapacity results from mental disability, involuntary physical restraint and/or from the taking of incapacitating drugs.

Consent to some sexual contact (such as kissing or fondling) cannot be presumed to be consent for other sexual activity (such as intercourse). A current or previous dating relationship is not sufficient to constitute consent. The existence of consent is based on the totality of the circumstances, including the context in which the alleged incident occurred and any similar previous patterns that may be evidenced. Silence or the absence of resistance alone is not consent. A person can withdraw consent at any time during sexual activity by expressing in words or actions that he or she no longer wants the act to continue, and, if that happens, the other person must stop immediately.

# Disciplinary Process

## REPORTING AN INCIDENT

The College, itself, and members of the College Community should report violations of College rules, regulations, or policies to the Office of Security and Safety at the time they are observed. Details of the incident or complaint should be reported as outlined below on an Incident Report. The form requires the following information:

- Date, time and location of incident
- Nature of incident
- Individual(s) involved
- Witnesses
- Description of incident
- Immediate action taken
- Signature of person filing the report and the date

The College community encourages the reporting of sex discrimination and Student Code of Conduct violations. Sometimes, victims are hesitant to report to College officials because they fear that they themselves may be charged with policy violations, such as underage drinking at the time of the incident. It is in the best interest of this community that as many victims as possible choose to report to College officials. To encourage reporting, the College pursues a policy of offering victims of sex discrimination and sexual misconduct limited immunity from being charged with policy violations related to the particular incident. While violations to policy cannot be completely overlooked, the College will provide educational options rather than punishment, in such cases.

## GOOD SAMARITAN

The welfare of students in our community is of paramount importance. At times, students on and off-campus may need assistance. The College encourages students to offer help and assistance to others in need. Sometimes, students are hesitant to offer assistance to others, for fear that they may get themselves in trouble (for example, a student who has been drinking underage might hesitate to help take a victim of sexual misconduct to the Office of Safety and Security). The College pursues a policy of limited immunity for students who offer help to others in need. While policy violations cannot be overlooked, the College will provide educational options, rather than punishment, to those who offer their assistance to others in need.

## ADMINISTRATIVE CONFERENCE

The Vice President of Student Services will designate one or more College officers to conduct an investigation of the alleged incident and to hold an administrative conference with each student involved. The administrative conference procedures are as follows:

- The student will be notified that his/her name is mentioned in an incident report.
- A summary of the specific violations will be presented to the student and the student will be given the opportunity to admit to or deny any alleged violations of College rules, regulations, or policies.
  - The conference may result in the charges being disposed of administratively by mutual consent of the parties involved. In these situations, the disposition shall be final and there will be no subsequent proceedings. It is expected that most issues will be resolved informally.
  - If the student admits to the violation, a sanction will be issued at this time.
  - If the student is believed to be responsible but does not accept responsibility, a Judicial Board Hearing will be scheduled.
- An administrative conference will be held and sanctions issued even if the student fails to attend after two notifications.

In situations where the allegations are significant in nature, at the discretion of the Vice President of Student Services, the case may be immediately moved to the pre-board review level to commence judicial board action.

## INTERIM SUSPENSIONS

The Vice President of Student Services or designee may impose an interim suspension prior to a hearing before the Judicial Board. Interim suspension may be imposed only to ensure the safety and well-being of members of the College community or preservation of College property, to ensure the student's own physical or emotional safety and wellbeing, or if the student poses a definite threat of disruption of or interference with the normal operations of the College.

During the interim suspension, students will be denied access to the College, including classes and all other activities or privileges for which the student might otherwise be eligible. In such cases, the necessary notice and hearing shall follow as soon as is practical.

## PRE-BOARD REVIEW

The Vice President of Student Services will designate a hearing Officer to meet with both the accused and complainant students to explain the judicial process and the students' rights and responsibilities. The role of the pre-board review is not to determine accountability, but to assist the student in understanding the hearing process. A student is responsible for participating in the Judicial Board Hearing regardless of whether he or she elects to participate in the pre-board review. As part of the pre-board review, the following processes will occur:

- All charges shall be presented to the accused student in written form.
- A time shall be set for a hearing, not less than five or more than fifteen business days after notification of the parties involved. Both the complainant and the accused student will be notified of the date, time, and location of the judicial board hearing. Maximum time limits for scheduling of the hearing may be extended at the discretion of the Vice President of Student Services.
- The complainant and the accused student will have a maximum of two school days post the pre-board review to submit in writing the names of any witnesses. It is the participants' responsibility to notify approved witnesses of the date, time and location of the hearing.

## JUDICIAL BOARD HEARING

A Judicial Board Hearing is an internal review of the alleged violation(s) of College rules and/or regulations. Its purpose is to determine if violations have occurred. Judicial Board Hearings are held and sanctions issued whether or not the accused and/or the complainant attend.

The Judicial Board will be appointed by the Vice President of Student Services and will consist of ten members: four faculty members, two administrative employees, and four students. One alternate member of each group shall also be appointed. To conduct a hearing, three faculty members, one administrative employee, and two students must be present.

A designee of the Vice President of Student Services will serve as the Hearing Officer and will preside over the hearing. The Hearing Officer will also serve as a resource to the Judicial Board during the deliberation process. The Hearing Officer will review the case with the Judicial Board; will introduce witnesses; will direct the proceeding; will make certain that all relevant materials are reviewed and that non-relevant material is not introduced; and ensure that both the accused and the accuser will have ample opportunity to present the facts of the incident in their own words to the Judicial Board members.

The Judicial Board will assume responsibility for its procedural operation and will conduct hearings according to the following guidelines:

1. Hearings shall be conducted in private.
2. Both the Accused and Complainant will have freedom of harassment from each other and/or their supporters.
3. In cases of sexual assault or other violations of a highly sensitive nature, every effort will be taken to allow both the accused and the accuser the right to question without direct visual contact during the hearing. Freedom from having irrelevant sexual history discussed during the hearing will be granted to both the complainant and accused.
4. Admission of any person to the hearing shall be at the discretion of the chairperson of the Judicial Board.
5. The complainant and the accused have the right to be assisted by any advisor they choose, at their own expense. The advisor may be an attorney. The complainant and/or the accused student are responsible for presenting his or her own case, and therefore, advisors are not permitted to speak or to participate directly in the hearing.
6. The complainant, the accused, and the Judicial Board shall have the privilege of presenting witnesses, and shall have the opportunity to suggest questions for the cross examination.
7. Pertinent records, exhibits and written statements may be accepted as evidence for consideration by the Judicial Board at the discretion of the Hearing Officer.
8. There shall be a single verbatim record of the hearing, such as a tape recording. Only College judicial affairs staff may record judicial meetings or proceedings. No other recordings are permitted. The record shall be the property of the College.
9. Except in the case of a student charged with failing to obey the summons of the judicial body or College official, no student may be found to have violated the Student Code solely because the student failed to appear for the hearing. In all cases, the information in support of the charges shall be presented and considered at the hearing.
10. All procedural questions are subject to the discretion of the Hearing Officer.
11. After the hearing, the judicial board shall meet in closed session to determine by majority vote, whether the student has violated each section of the Student Code of Conduct that the student is charged with violating and will issue the appropriate sanction(s).
12. The Judicial Board's determination shall be made on the basis of whether it is more likely than not that the accused student violated the Student Code.
13. Judicial Board decisions shall be communicated in writing to the students within five (5) business days with a copy submitted to the Office of the Vice President of Student Services for his or her information.

## Sanctions

The following sanctions may be imposed upon a student who is found to have violated the Student Code of Conduct. The Vice President of Student Services will designate one or more College officers to be responsible for determining and issuing appropriate sanctions resulting from both Administrative Conferences and Judicial Board hearings.

- Warning - A notice in writing to the student that the student is violating or has violated College regulations.
- Probation - A written reprimand for violation of specified regulations. Probation is for a designated period of time and includes the probability of more severe sanctions if the student is found to be violating any College regulation during the probationary period.
- Loss of privileges - Denial of specified privileges for a designated period of time.
- Restitution - Compensation for loss, damage, or injury. This may take the form of appropriate service and/or monetary or material replacement.
- Discretionary Sanctions - Examples include but are not limited to: Letter of Apology, Behavioral Contracts, Service to the College or Community, and Referrals for Alcohol and/or Drug Assessment and Education.
- Suspension - Separation of the student from the College for a specified period of time, after which the student may apply to return. Conditions of readmission may be specified.



- Dismissal - Permanent separation of the student from the College.

More than one of the sanctions listed above may be imposed for any single violation. Notices of disciplinary action shall be filed in the student's confidential disciplinary file in the Office of Vice President of Student Services. Upon graduation, such notices other than dismissal may be removed by application to the Vice President of Student Services.

The following sanctions may be imposed upon student groups or organizations:

- Those sanctions listed above in the Student Code.
- Deactivation-Loss of all privileges, including College recognition, for a specified period of time.

## Appeals

Any decision reached by the Judicial Board or through Administrative Conference may be appealed in writing by the students in violation or complainants under the Grounds for Appeals outlined below. The appeal is to the Office of the Vice President of Student Services. Following a review of the appeal, the Vice President of Student Services may do the following: can accept the decision as rendered; issue a modified decision, or refer the appeal to the Judicial Board. The decision of the Vice President of Student Services is final.

Under Appeals: A student dismissed from the College may in addition appeal to an Appellate Board appointed by the Vice President of Student Services.

## GROUND FOR APPEAL

Except as required to explain the basis of new evidence, an appeal will be limited to the review of the verbatim record of the initial hearing and supporting documents for one or more of the following purposes:

1. To determine whether the original hearing was conducted in conformity with prescribed procedures of the Student Code.
2. To determine whether the decision reached regarding the student was based on sufficient information to establish that a violation of the Student Code occurred.
3. To determine whether the sanction(s) imposed were appropriate for the violation of the Student Code which occurred.
4. To consider new information, sufficient to alter a decision, which was not brought out at the original hearing because the information was not known to the person appealing at the time of the original hearing.

## Interpretation and Revision

Any question or interpretation regarding the Student Code of Conduct shall be referred to the Vice President of Student Services or his or her designee. The Student Code of Conduct shall be reviewed periodically as is practicable under the direction of the Vice President of Student Services.

# Academic Integrity Policy

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This policy clarifies College expectations for ethical student behavior relative to course participation and requirements. It also provides definitions, outlines due process rights, and details sanction levels for those found in violation of these expectations.

Actions that may violate the College's Academic Integrity Policy include but are not limited to the following:

- Intentionally presenting inaccurate information and/or forging documents

- Altering or inventing results, data, or conclusions for any assignment
- Altering or making up information or quotations that are passed off as authentic for any assignment
- Forging College personnel's signature or information on any academic document
- Plagiarism
  - Presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e., not citing a source)
  - Using ideas from any source without providing proper citation of the source
  - Excluding a source or misrepresenting a source leading to an improper citation
  - Copying or presenting material word for word from any source without using quotation marks and/or the proper citation of the source
  - Copying and/or altering a few words from a source in order to avoid exact quotation, without providing the proper citation of the source
  - Rewording (i.e., paraphrasing) an idea found in a source without providing proper citation of the source
  - Submitting the same paper or assignment to fulfill separate course requirements, in either the same or different courses
  - Submitting a previously graded paper, assignment, or speech to a different instructor
- Cheating
  - Copying answers from another person or submitting another person's work as one's own
  - Collaborating on any assignment that is intended to be completed individually
  - Submitting as one's own any course assignment created by someone else
  - Using any unauthorized resources while completing an exam, quiz, or assignment
    - Unauthorized resources include (but are not limited to):
      - Notes
      - Electronic devices and applications
      - Solutions manuals
      - Cliff's Notes®, Clegg Study, and other solution publications
      - Anything not permitted by the instructor or proctor
  - Stealing (or having in one's possession without permission) any exams, materials, or property belonging to faculty, staff, or another student
  - Receiving the answers to exam questions or other assignments from an unauthorized source
  - Having another person take a class and/or an assignment for the enrolled student
  - Facilitating academic dishonesty (i.e., helping or attempting to help another to commit a dishonest academic act) including giving another student answers to assignments
  - Doing another student's assignment (excluding collaborative learning assignments or joint assignments approved by the instructor)
    - Some examples may include (but are not limited to):
      - Completing a student's assignment
      - Writing (or re-writing) a major portion of a student's assignment

## **Due Process**

Students are guaranteed the right of due process if they are accused of violating this Academic Integrity Policy.

## **Possible Sanctions for Violating the Academic Integrity Policy**

Students who are found to violate the Academic Integrity Policy may be sanctioned in one or more of the following manners:

- Required education relating to academic integrity
- Assigned a grade of "F" for the class where the infraction occurred and expulsion from that class for the remainder of the semester

- Assigned a grade of "F" for the class where the infraction occurred and expulsion with a grade of "W" from all other classes for the remainder of the semester
- Suspended from the Honors College
- Suspended from the College
- Permanent expulsion from the College
- Ineligible for academic amnesty, academic forgiveness, debt forgiveness, or graduation with honors
- A notation of the violation of the Academic Integrity Policy on the student's official transcripts

## Plagiarism

- Presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e., not citing a source)
- Using ideas from any source without providing proper citation of the source
- Excluding a source or misrepresenting a source leading to an improper citation
- Copying or presenting material word for word from any source without using quotation marks and/or the proper citation of the source
- Copying and/or altering a few words from a source in order to avoid exact quotation, without providing the proper citation of the source
- Rewording (i.e., paraphrasing) an idea found in a source without providing proper citation of the source
- Submitting the same paper or assignment to fulfill separate course requirements, in either the same or different courses
- Submitting a previously graded paper, assignment, or speech to a different instructor

## Cheating

- Copying answers from another person or submitting another person's work as one's own
- Collaborating on any assignment that is intended to be completed individually
- Submitting as one's own any course assignment created by someone else
- Using any unauthorized resources while completing an exam, quiz, or assignment
  - Unauthorized resources include (but are not limited to):
    - Notes
    - Electronic devices and applications
    - Solutions manuals
    - Cliff's Notes®, Chegg Study, and other solution publications
    - Anything not permitted by the instructor or proctor
- Stealing (or having in one's possession without permission) any exams, materials, or property belonging to faculty, staff, or another student
- Receiving the answers to exam questions or other assignments from an unauthorized source
- Having another person take a class and/or an assignment for the enrolled student
- Facilitating academic dishonesty (i.e., helping or attempting to help another to commit a dishonest academic act) including giving another student answers to assignments
- Doing another student's assignment (excluding collaborative learning assignments or joint assignments approved by the instructor)
  - Some examples may include (but are not limited to):
    - Completing a student's assignment
    - Writing (or re-writing) a major portion of a student's assignment

## Violations

Students who are found to violate the Academic Integrity Policy may be sanctioned in one or more of the following manners:

- Required education relating to academic integrity

- Assigned a grade of "F" for the class where the infraction occurred and expulsion from that class for the remainder of the semester
- Assigned a grade of "F" for the class where the infraction occurred and expulsion with a grade of "W" from all other classes for the remainder of the semester
- Suspended from the Honors College
- Suspended from the College
- Permanent expulsion from the College
- Ineligible for academic amnesty, academic forgiveness, debt forgiveness, or graduation with honors
- A notation of the violation of the Academic Integrity Policy on the student's official transcripts

## Appeals

An appeal to review a decision of the Academic Integrity Review Team or Administrative Conference will be granted if one or more of the three situations below are met:

- That a procedural error occurred during the process (someone involved that should not have been, a timeline not met, substantiated bias).
- New evidence that was previously unknown or unavailable.
- Sanctions that step outside of the stated framework for sanctioning.

Student(s) and/or faculty who wish to appeal a decision made by the Academic Integrity Review Team must submit a request for appeal letter to the Vice President for Academic Affairs within five business days of the decision of the Academic Integrity Review Team. This appeal letter must specify which circumstances listed above are the basis for the appeal. All appeals will be reviewed and ruled upon within five business days.

Should an appeal be granted, the case would be reviewed by the Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs.

## Upon Return to College

A student who has been suspended from the College for disciplinary reasons involving violations of the Academic Integrity Policy who later returns to the College and repeats the classes impacted by disciplinary sanctions with satisfactory grades (C or better) will have the student record notations removed provided no further infraction of the Academic Integrity Policy occurs before completion of the student's enrolled program. Any student who has been officially documented for violations of the Academic Integrity Policy will not be eligible for Academic Amnesty, Academic Forgiveness, or graduation honors.

## Academic Standing

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Any time a student's Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) falls below a 2.0, the student is said to be "NOT in Good Academic Standing."

The College will monitor a student's grades and issue notices of warning, probation, or suspension based upon the criteria found within the Student Handbook and College Catalog.

Students who have extenuating circumstances during the term in question, or specific grounds to appeal either their grades or their academic standing may do so as outlined in the Academic Grievance Procedure found in the Student Handbook and College Catalog.

## Standards For Academic Standing

Cumulative Credit Hours Attempted	Cumulative Grade Point Average Below 2.0	
1 - 15	1.50 - 1.99	ACADEMIC WARNING
	1.00 - 1.49	ACADEMIC PROBATION
	0.00 - 0.99	ACADEMIC SUSPENSION
16 - 30	1.75 - 1.99	ACADEMIC WARNING
	1.25 - 1.74	ACADEMIC PROBATION
	0.00 - 1.24	ACADEMIC SUSPENSION
31 and up	1.80 - 1.99	ACADEMIC WARNING
	1.50 - 1.79	ACADEMIC PROBATION
	0.00 - 1.49	ACADEMIC SUSPENSION

## Warning

This status serves to inform students that their performance is below the level required for successful completion of an academic program. Students in this status are strongly urged to seek academic support and assistance. Students who fail to meet the standards for academic standing at the completion of an academic semester or summer session will be placed on academic warning. While on academic warning, students should consider limiting the amount of credits they take during any subsequent semester. Students are removed from warning only when the cumulative GPA is a 2.0 or higher.

## Probation

Students whose grades place them in more serious academic jeopardy will be placed on Probation. While on Academic Probation, a student may schedule no more than twelve credits per semester. Students on Probation are strongly urged to meet with their faculty advisor and/or Student Success Center staff to assess their educational goals, learning strategies and styles, priorities, time management, and other needs.

## Suspension

Students whose grades are significantly below 2.0 will be suspended. Students who are suspended may not matriculate at Pennsylvania Highlands for a period of one semester. Students who are on suspension may enroll in classes as non-matriculated students and receive tutoring services during their suspension.

First semester students at the College whose grades are significantly below 2.0 will be placed on first-year probation. Those students will have one semester to rehabilitate their grade point average prior to suspension.

## Reinstatement following Academic Suspension

A suspended student wishing to be readmitted to the College as a matriculated (degree-seeking) student following a period of suspension must complete an application for reinstatement to the College along with the regular College admission application. The Vice President for Academic Affairs or designee will review the student's academic record, including high school and college transcripts, placement test scores, along with information provided on the Reinstatement Application and make an admission decision or recommendation to admit or not admit based on his/her assessment of the student's ability to benefit from a return to matriculated status. Students who are reinstated following Academic Suspension will be reinstated on Academic Probation.

# Student Grievance Process

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## Formal Process for Academic Matters

The student grievance process is available to students who have concerns regarding academic matters such as violations of College policy. If a student resolution cannot be achieved or differences have not been resolved through discussion with the faculty or staff and the student seeks additional mediation, the student may initiate a formal grievance process.

1. Students must submit a letter to the Deans of Faculty Office within 10 calendar days of the date in which the incident or the complaint occurred. In the case of a final grade discrepancy, the letter should be submitted within 15 calendar days of the release of grades. In the written complaint, the student should describe his or her concerns, the events that led to those concerns, and provide any supporting documentation.
2. The Dean may choose to meet with both the student and the faculty member involved in an attempt to resolve the issue. If the issue is not resolved, the Dean will convene the Academic Grievance Committee.
3. The Academic Grievance Committee will review the written grievance and all documentation. The Committee may or may not interview both the student and the faculty member. A member of the Committee will notify the student in writing of the Committee's decision within 5 working days.
4. If the student remains unsatisfied with the decision issued by the Academic Grievance Committee, the student may make a final appeal to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. This appeal must be in writing and submitted no later than 5 working days from the date of the decision issued by the Academic Grievance Committee. The appeal must specify in detail why the decision of the Academic Grievance Committee was unsatisfactory and must be supported with compelling justification, such as a procedural error (someone was involved who should not have been, a timeline was not met, or substantiated bias) or evidence that was previously unknown or unavailable. Within 10 working days of receipt of the student appeal the Vice President for Academic Affairs will issue a decision regarding the appeal. This decision will either uphold the decision of the Student Academic Appeals Committee or will issue other remedies as the Vice President for Academic Affairs deems appropriate. The decision of the Vice President for Academic Affairs is final.

In the case where a complaint is levied against any member of the Academic Grievance Committee, the Vice President for Academic Affairs will appoint a substitute.

## Formal Process for Non-Academic Matters

The student grievance process is available to students who have concerns regarding non-academic matters such as violations of College policy not related to Code of Conduct violations (transportation policy, admissions, facility use). If a resolution cannot be achieved or differences have not been resolved through discussion with the involved college representative and the student seeks additional mediation, the student may initiate a formal grievance process.

1. Students must submit their complaint in writing to the Director of Student Activities and Athletics within 10 calendar days of the date in which the incident or the complaint occurred. In the written complaint, the student will describe his or her concerns, the events that led to those concerns, and what the student seeks as a possible remedy.
2. Upon receipt of the grievance the Director of Student Activities and Athletics will forward the grievance to the appropriate Director or Dean who will speak with the student and any other persons believed to be a part of the grievance in an effort to establish the facts surrounding the grievance. Within five business

days of receiving the grievance for review and following a thorough review of the grievance, the Director/Dean will provide the student with information regarding the results of the review and inform the student of any action to be taken to remedy the situation and a timeframe in which this remedy will occur.

3. If no amicable solution can be reached by the Director/Dean and the student, the Director of Student Activities and Athletics will convene the Student Grievance Committee. The Student Grievance Committee will review the written grievance provided by the student, all documentation associated with the Director/Deans review of the grievance and any recommended remedies. Upon review of these documents, the Student Grievance Committee will render a written recommendation and will notify the student of this recommendation within 5 business days.

## Appeals

An appeal to review a decision of the Student Grievance Committee will be granted if and only if one or more of the three situations below are met:

- That a procedural error occurred during the process (someone involved that should not have been, a timeline not met, substantiated bias)
- New evidence that was previously unknown or unavailable
- Remedies that impose undue hardship on the parties involved.

Students who wish to appeal a decision made by the Student Grievance Committee must submit a request for appeal letter to the Vice President of Student Services within five business days of the decision of the Student Grievance Committee. This appeal letter must specify which circumstances listed above are the basis for the appeal. All appeals will be reviewed and ruled upon within five business days.

Within 5 working days of receipt of the student appeal the Vice President of Student Services will issue a decision regarding the appeal. This decision will either uphold the decision of the Student Grievance Committee or will issue other remedies. This decision will be given in writing to the student, and the decision of the Vice President of Student Services is final.

## Student Grievance Committee

The Student Grievance Committee will consist of three Director/Dean level administrators from within the Student Services Division. Any Director/Dean that is named in a grievance is not eligible to serve on the Student Grievance Committee for that particular grievance

# Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

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## Definitions

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act was designated to protect the privacy of educational records, to establish the right of students to inspect and review their education records, and to provide guidelines for the correction of inaccurate or misleading data through informal and formal hearings. Students also have the right to file complaints with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Office (FERPA) concerning alleged failures by the institution to comply with the Act.

# Parental Access or Spousal Access to Student Records

Parents may have access to information pertaining to their son's or daughter's educational records and academic status without prior written consent of the student if the student is a dependent under the age of 18. If the student is 18 or older, then the College must receive prior written consent from the student in order to release such information to his or her parents and or spouse. This form is available from the Registrar's Office.

## Ownership of Records

Official student records are established and maintained in a number of administrative offices for a variety of legitimate educational purposes. All records kept concerning students, including those records originating at other colleges or universities, those records required for admission or transfer credit evaluation or those documents supporting student course waivers, are the property of Pennsylvania Highlands Community College.

## Records Policy

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act provides students with certain rights with respect to their education records. They are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the College receives a request for access. Students should submit to the Registrar's Office written requests that identify the record(s) they wish to inspect. The Registrar will make arrangements for access and notify the student of the time and place where the records may be inspected. Proper identification must be presented by the student prior to the inspection of the records. The Registrar will remain present while the student reviews his or her education record. If the Registrar's Office does not maintain the records that are requested, the Registrar shall advise the student of the correct official to whom the request should be addressed.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the student believes are inaccurate or misleading. Students may ask the College to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write to the College official responsible for the record, clearly identify the part(s) of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the College decides not to amend the record as requested by the student, the College will notify the student of the decision and advise the student of his or her right to an appeal process regarding the request for amendment.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception that permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the College in an administrative, supervisory, academic, support staff position or Board of Trustees; or a student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibilities. Another exception can occur in the event of a health and/or safety emergency. A log sheet, indicating the reason for inspection and signed by the official reviewing the file, must be kept in the student's file at all times.
4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by Pennsylvania Highlands Community College to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office



U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202-4605

## Public Information Regarding Students

The College has designated the following student information as public or "Directory Information". Such information may be disclosed by the College at its discretion to individuals, agencies, and institutions for purposes relating to activities approved by and associated with Pennsylvania Highlands Community College. This information may be released without the prior consent of a student:

- Name
- Address
- Phone Number
- College Issued Email Address
- Program of study
- Dates of attendance
- Degrees and awards received
- Participation in officially recognized sports and activities

Currently enrolled students have the right to withhold disclosure of all (not partial) categories of public information. To withhold disclosure, written notification must be received in the Registrar's Office prior to the end of the second week for the semester or summer session in which the withholding of Directory Information is to take effect. Students are cautioned that withholding information can have adverse consequences when we are unable to verify attendance or degrees to agencies, insurance companies, or prospective employers. Former students and alumni are not covered under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. Therefore, the College is not obligated to honor requests for non-disclosure of public information from former students.

## Additional Information

Concerns that have not been addressed in the policy statement above are to be directed to the Registrar's Office.

# Information Technology Policies

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## Acceptable Use of Information Systems

Access to computer systems and networks owned or operated by Pennsylvania Highlands Community College imposes certain responsibilities and obligations and is granted subject to college policies, and local, state and federal laws. Acceptable use is always ethical, reflects academic honesty, and shows restraint in the consumption of shared resources. It demonstrates respect for intellectual property, ownership of data, system security mechanisms, and individuals' rights to privacy and freedom from intimidation, harassment, and unwarranted annoyance unless covered by legal statutes.

The Chief Information Officer is responsible for the enforcement of these guidelines. Any request for use of information systems other than those identified must receive prior written approval.

1. Users of IT resources must comply with all applicable legal requirements.
2. Users are responsible for any activity originating from their accounts. Users shall not share their accounts and passwords

3. Users shall not use IT resources to gain unauthorized access to anything.
4. Disruptive use of college IT resources is not permitted.
5. IT resources shall not be used for commercial purposes without prior approval.
6. Occasional personal use of IT resources by employees is permitted when it does not consume a significant amount of those resources, is otherwise in compliance with this policy, and meets with the approval of the supervisor.
7. The College may monitor the activity, accounts, and devices of any users of IT resources.
8. Users must not augment the college network infrastructure without prior approval.
9. Users must not misuse computing and printing resources, for example, using school's bandwidth (WIFI and/or wired network) for excessive streaming, intentionally modifying College maintained hardware and/or software, or printing documents or web pages that are not solely for classroom and/or business purposes.
10. With the exception of those devices managed by IT, devices are not allowed to be connected directly to the internal corporate network.

Users who violate this policy may be subject to penalties and disciplinary action, including expulsion, dismissal, or revocation of user access. Any violations of the acceptable use of information systems must be reported to the Chief Information Officer.

The Chief Information Officer will investigate the allegations and may disallow network connections by certain computers (including departmental and personal connections); require adequate identification of computers and users on the network; undertake audits of software or information on shared systems where policy violations are possible; take steps to secure compromised computers that are connected to the network; or deny access to computers, the network, and institutional software and databases. The College reserves the right to copy and examine any files or information resident on College systems allegedly related to the unacceptable use. Users are expected to cooperate with the investigations either of technical problems or of possible unauthorized or irresponsible use as defined in these guidelines; failure to do so may be grounds for suspension, termination of employment, or termination of access privileges.

If the infringement is not settled through discussion, the matter involving students will be referred to the Vice President of Student Services; a matter involving faculty will be referred to the Vice President of Student Services, and a matter involving staff will be referred to the immediate supervisor. Violators are subject to disciplinary action as prescribed by College policies. In addition, certain kinds of abuse may result in a civil or criminal action.

## Disclaimer

The College will not be responsible for the loss or corruption of user data files of any kind. A user of the computer facilities at the Pennsylvania Highlands Community College cannot subject its agents and employees, from any suit, claim, or cause of action arising by virtue of the use of the College's computer facilities, including but not limited to, loss of data or damage to any computer outside of the College due to a computer virus. The user agrees to indemnify and hold the College harmless from any suit, claim, or cause of action arising from the user's abuse or misuse of the computer facilities of the College. It is the user's responsibility to backup data at regular intervals and provide computer virus protection for their home and/or office computer.

## Student Email Accounts

Pennsylvania Highlands provides its students with a College email account which enables them to communicate with instructors and to stay current on periodic important announcements. The College requires all students to use this email account. Most contact with current students from the College is only conducted using official College email accounts. Technical issues regarding the use of College email should be reported to the Information Technology Help Desk at 814-262-6470 or via email to [helpdesk@pennhighlands.edu](mailto:helpdesk@pennhighlands.edu).

# Internet Guidelines

Access to the Internet from Pennsylvania Highlands Community College is a privilege, not a right, and abusers may lose access to College computers. All College Internet users must adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Students and employees may access the Internet from designated areas on campus during open lab hours. Class activities take priority over open lab time.
2. Access to the Internet should be used for purposes relative to classroom and work assignments and not for recreational purposes. Unless directly related to a specific class assignment or College activity, the use of chat rooms is specifically prohibited.
3. Access to the Internet may not be used for unethical, illegal, or criminal activities.
4. Access time may be limited due to the number of people online and equipment availability.
5. Downloading files from the Internet to the hard drives of lab PCs or to network storage devices is prohibited unless authorized by a member of the information technology (IT) staff or by an Instructor for the completion of a class assignment.

## myPEAK

myPEAK, the Pennsylvania Highlands Portal, serves as the campus Intranet and is the gateway to student services and employee information needs. The Portal is a web site that facilitates communication within the Pennsylvania Highlands community.

As a Pennsylvania Highlands student, you will have access to your specific student information and student services offered through the portal. Additionally, you will have access to the following items:

- College Academic and Event Calendars
- College Course Schedule
- Online Registration and Student Schedule
- Jenzabar e-Racer
- Advisor & Major Information
- Degree Audit
- Financial Aid Awards
- Account Balances and Online Payments
- Billing Statement
- NSC Enrollment Verification
- Final Grades
- Unofficial Transcript
- College Governance and Activities
- Student Success Services
- Career Planning and Employer Services
- Online Help

## Student Printing Procedures

1. Students are given a printing account, assigned to their computer login, at the beginning of each semester consisting of 250 free pages.
2. Students who require more than 250 pages of printing in a semester may add to their account by purchasing pages in increments of \$1, \$5, or \$10 at \$.05 per page.
3. Additional pages may be purchased from the Student Accounts Office at the Richland Campus or from the secretaries at all College facilities with a valid student ID. Purchased pages are generally added to an account on the next business day.

4. Students receive notice when their account has only 25 pages remaining and are encouraged to add to their accounts as soon as possible to avoid a lag in their ability to print.
5. Pages are nontransferable between printing accounts.
6. Printing accounts are reset at the end of each semester. Unused prints may not be carried over to a future semester.
7. This policy covers all College printers.

## **Non-Discrimination, Harassment, & Retaliation on the Basis of Sex Policy**

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Pennsylvania Highlands Community College affirms its commitment to maintaining a learning environment and workplace free of sexual harassment and sexual misconduct for its students and employees. No student or College employee of either sex shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of or be subjected to discrimination while enrolled as a student with Pennsylvania Highlands Community College.

### **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Sexual harassment is a violation of the Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972. These laws include prohibition of discrimination in employment and educational program and services on the basis of sex.

Sexual harassment includes the offenses of sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking, and is defined as conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

1. Conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the Pennsylvania Highlands Community College, on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct;
2. Unwelcome conduct, determined by a reasonable person, to be so severe, and pervasive, and, objectively offensive, that it effectively denies a person equal access to Pennsylvania Highlands Community College's education program or activity
3. All forms of sexual assault

Any student who believes he or she has been sexually harassed should contact the Title IX Coordinator. Students may also report any allegations of sexual harassment to a College employee who is required to report that allegation to the Title IX Coordinator.

To review the Pennsylvania Highlands Community College Title IX Policy regarding Non-discrimination, Harassment, Retaliation on the Basis of Sex and the College Resolution Process for Alleged Violations of this policy, please click this link.

### **Sexual Assault Victims' Bill of Rights**

- To be treated with respect by College officials.
- To file a formal complaint
- To be provided access to support resources.
- To experience a safe educational and work environment.
- To have an advisor present during any aspect of reporting and/or filing a complaint.
- To refuse to have an allegation resolved through informal procedures.
- To be free from retaliation.
- To interim remedies related to the victims academic or work schedule.
- To have complaints heard in substantial accordance with these procedures

- To reasonable and necessary participation in the process.

Click here to view the Resolution Process for Alleged Violations of the Policy on Non-discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation on the Basis of Sex.

## Disability Discrimination and Section 504 Grievance Procedure

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The College has adopted a grievance procedure, which provides for prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any action prohibited by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Section 504 prohibits discrimination on the basis of a disability in any program. Any students, employees, or third parties shall have the right to file a complaint regarding alleged violations of Section 504 and/or Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Such complaints will be addressed through this grievance procedure.

To view this procedure on the college website, please click this link.

If you require a printed copy of this grievance procedure, please contact:

- Trish Corle, Vice President of Student Services  
Pennsylvania Highlands Community College  
101 Community College Way, Johnstown, PA 15904  
814.262.3841  
[tcorle@pennhighlands.edu](mailto:tcorle@pennhighlands.edu)

## Student Right-To-Know Act

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Student Right-To-Know and Campus Security Acts are federal law that requires institutions of higher education receiving federal financial assistance to make available several key pieces of information:

- To current and prospective students, the college's graduation and/or completion rates for its full-time, degree seeking students.
- To current students and employees, crime statistics and security policy information about the College.

## Photo and Video Disclaimer

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Pennsylvania Highlands Community College retains the right to photograph and/or video-record students, faculty, staff, and guests while on College property or during College-sponsored functions. The images, video, and audio obtained may be used by Pennsylvania Highlands for promotional purposes, including use in any media advertising, College publication, press release, College-affiliated website or social media channel, and all other appropriate materials. Anyone wishing not to participate is advised to either inform the photographer/videographer or the Marketing & Communications Department to remove him or herself from the area in question. Contact the College's Marketing & Communications Department at **814.262.3816** or [marketing@pennhighlands.edu](mailto:marketing@pennhighlands.edu) for further information.

2024-2025  
**STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**DISCOVER YOU**

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