

# Student Academic Rights, Responsibilities, and Policies

All Bristol students are expected to conduct themselves as mature college students seriously interested in obtaining the best possible education. This includes observing the College's academic rules and regulations, respecting the rights of others, and practicing academic integrity. In return, the College seeks to provide an environment where the freedom to learn and interact can be nurtured and encouraged. To do that, the College respects and defends the rights of free speech and assembly and will protect such rights for all its members.

## **Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is the keystone of teaching, learning, and assessment. Bristol Community College is committed to promoting and supporting this ideal. In fact, it is fundamental to our mission. All students, faculty, staff, and administrators are expected to maintain a high standard of academic honesty and integrity.

College students must assume responsibility for maintaining academic integrity in their work and in the work of others. Students, as colleagues in learning, have a responsibility to document their own work and to report other incidents of academic dishonesty or negligence.

Faculty and staff cooperation is necessary to ensure academic integrity, and they should serve as a model for their students. Syllabi should include their expectations and the college policy, course materials should be cited, and incidents of academic dishonesty should be addressed and reported in a timely fashion.

The administrators at Bristol Community College also share in demonstrating and ensuring academic honesty and integrity. While recognizing that academic freedom is a fundamental right of higher education, it must be supported by academic integrity and honesty. For that reason, the College will not tolerate academic dishonesty or negligence and has established policies and procedures to ensure academic honesty and integrity is maintained and supported.

## **Academic Dishonesty**

A college community must be established on a foundation of truth and academic integrity. Bristol Community College has an obligation not only to promote these high standards of academic honesty, but also to address academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty is demonstrated by cheating, plagiarism, and facilitating academic dishonesty.

- **Cheating** – Includes, but is not limited to: (1) use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; (2) dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; or (3) the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a member of the College faculty or staff. Cheating shall also include the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials, taking credit for work done by another person or doing work for which another person will receive credit, and copying or purchasing other's work or arranging for others to do work under a false name. (Student Handbook)
- **Plagiarism** – Includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes the

unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials. This would also include material that is obtained from the computer. (Student Handbook)

- **Facilitating Academic Dishonesty** - Students who allow their work to be used by other students or who otherwise aid others in academic dishonesty are violating academic integrity.

### **Evaluation and Reporting**

When faculty members have reason to believe and evidence to document that a student is being academically dishonest, the faculty members may handle the matter at the course level. You may also want to discuss the issue with your department chair and/or dean.

If the faculty member wants to document and report an incident of academic dishonesty, the faculty member is responsible to take the following steps:

- Consult with the department chair and/or dean.
- Arrange for a meeting with the student to advise the student of the allegations, to present the evidence, and to make the student aware of the consequences.
- Allow the student to present evidence of innocence, explain extenuating circumstances, and/or provide relevant information.
- Report the incident to your Division Dean using the Academic Dishonesty Form.

The dean will send a copy of the report to the vice president for Academic Affairs who will keep it on file until the student graduates. A copy of the report and a letter explaining the due process procedures will be sent to the student.

### **Academic Penalties**

If the faculty member determines that the student did commit an act of academic dishonesty, the faculty member has the authority to impose any of the following:

- Warning
- Failing grade in the exam, paper, or other assessment. A grade of zero is recommended.
- Revision of work
- Reduction in grade
- Withdrawal from course
- Failing grade in course

### **Due Process**

The above action does not negate the student's right to due process in accordance with the Grade Appeals section of the Student Grievance Procedure as outlined in the Student Handbook and academic calendar. A withdrawal from class is subject to the terms of the Student Code of Conduct.

### **Academic Negligence**

Academic Negligence is demonstrated by failure to do assigned work or by excessive absences. A student guilty of academic negligence may be dropped from a course with a grade of "F" by the faculty member.

### **Classroom Conduct**

Disruptive or distracting classroom behavior is a violation of the College's student Code of Conduct. A faculty member has the right to remove a disruptive student from class, pending a review of the situation by the Vice President of Student Services and Enrollment Management. Any faculty member may, at any time, refer a student to the Vice President of Student Service and Enrollment Management if the student is in violation of the Code of Conduct. The Vice President of Student Services and Enrollment Management may impose disciplinary sanctions against the offending student consistent with the rules and regulations of the Code of Conduct. Please refer to the Code of Conduct section in the Student Handbook for additional information.

### **Disciplinary Action**

The College may take disciplinary action ranging from a warning to suspension or expulsion from the College if a student is determined to have violated College rules and regulations. Refer to the "Disciplinary Sanctions" section of the Student Handbook.

### **Change of Program**

Students may change their program or areas of concentration by completing a Change of Program Form through one of The College's Enrollment Centers. A change of program will result in an update of academic requirements to the current academic catalog. Students changing their concentration within a program may retain the academic requirements of their original catalog year. International students attending Bristol on an F-1 visa must receive approval for program changes from the Registrar's Office. Changes of program are processed for the current semester through the add/drop period. After the add/drop period they will be processed effective for the following semester. Grades already received in courses not applicable to the new program remain when computing the student's G.P.A. on their permanent record.

Transferring into certain programs, such as Culinary Arts, Clinical Laboratory Science, Dental Hygiene, Medical Assisting, Nursing, Occupational Therapy Assistant, and Phlebotomy may be limited by space availability as well as by the competitive nature of these programs. Please refer to the description of the program of interest for additional information on admission requirements and the academic background of competitive applicants. Please contact the Admissions Office, on the Fall River Campus in G Bldg., 774.357.2947, to learn more, including how to apply, schedule an appointment with a counselor or register for the appropriate information session based on your intended program of study.

### **Student Grievance Procedure**

Bristol Community College follows the [Massachusetts Community College Student Grievance Procedure](#), which is available in full on our website.

The Student Grievance Procedure may be used by a student to address alleged abridgment of the student's rights, as stated in the college's Student Handbook and/or Policy Guide. The student Grievant or the Responding Party may consult with the Student Grievance Officer at any time. The college's Student Grievance Officer is the Vice President for Student Services and Enrollment Management. You can find him/her in G225 or at 774.357.2150.

All Grievances, including grade disputes, are ideally resolved through open and cooperative dialogue. Only when such efforts are unsuccessful should the Student Grievance Procedure be invoked as follows:

#### **Level One - Informal Procedure**

The Grievant and the Responding Party should consult with the Student Grievance Officer at this time. The Grievant initiates the informal phase of the Grievance process. The Grievant shall first present his/her complaint orally and informally to the Responding Party. This shall be done in a reasonable period of time, not exceeding thirty (30) calendar days following the instructional period when a grievable act or omission occurs.

The Responding Party must respond to the Grievant's complaint within ten (10) days. Though this phase of the process is informal, the parties may present their positions in writing. If the matter is not resolved informally within ten (10) calendar days from the date a response to the complaint was due, the Grievant may proceed to Level Two.

### **Level Two - Formal Procedure**

Prior to filing a written Grievance at Level Two, a Grievant must consult with the Student Grievance Officer. The Responding Party should also consult with the Student Grievance Officer at this phase of the process.

**Step 1:** The Student Grievance Officer shall notify the parties in writing when a complaint is not resolved informally at Level One.

The Grievant may, within ten (10) calendar days after receipt of the Student Grievance Officer's written notice, file with the Student Grievance Officer a Grievance. The Grievance shall contain the following information: the name and title of the person(s) against whom the Grievance is directed, a statement of all known facts, documents and materials supporting the grievance, a list of individuals who have information pertinent to the grievance, and the relief sought by the Grievant. All supporting documents, if any, shall be attached to the grievance as part of the Grievance. The Grievance shall also state the date it is filed and that it is being filed at "Level Two, Step One."

The Grievance may be filed with the Student Grievance Officer by email, regular mail, certified mail, or in hand. Thereafter, the Student Grievance Officer shall deliver the Grievance, and all supporting documents, if any, to the Responding Party within five (5) calendar days. If the Responding Party is unavailable at the time the Grievance is filed, the Student Grievance Officer shall use reasonable means to deliver the Grievance within a reasonable period of time.

The Responding Party shall forward a written Level Two - Step One response to the Student Grievance Officer within ten (10) calendar days of his/her receipt of the Grievance. The Student Grievance Officer shall deliver the written response to the Grievant within five (5) calendar days of receipt.

**Step 2:** If the Grievance is not resolved to the satisfaction of the Grievant within ten (10) calendar days after his/her receipt of the Step One response, or if no written response is submitted, the Grievant may within ten (10) calendar days after the written response was received or due, request the Student Grievance Officer to forward the Grievance and response, if any, to the supervisor of the Responding Party, with a copy to the Senior Officer of the work area of the Responding Party.

The supervisor shall investigate the Grievance and confer with the Senior Officer. The supervisor shall forward his/her written decision to the Student Grievance Officer, within ten (10) calendar days after receipt of the Step Two Grievance. Thereafter, the Student Grievance Officer shall deliver the decision to the Grievant and the Responding Party within five (5) calendar days.

At any time before the issuance of the Supervisor's Step Two decision, the Senior Officer may request that the parties meet to discuss the issue and attempt to resolve it. Grade appeals do not go beyond this Step (Level Two - Step Two) per the section on Grade Appeals. No new issues or allegations may be raised by either party after Step Two.

**Step 3:** If the Grievance is not resolved to the satisfaction of the Grievant within the period allowed at Level Two - Step Two, the Grievant may request a hearing before a Student Grievance Committee. Such a request must be in writing and presented to the Student Grievance Officer within ten (10) calendar days from the issuance of the Supervisor's Level Two - Step Two decision.

Within ten (10) calendar days of the Student Grievance Officer's receipt of the Grievant's request for a hearing, the Student Grievance Officer shall arrange a hearing before a Student Grievance Committee. The Student Grievance Officer shall use reasonable efforts to schedule the hearing at a time mutually convenient to the parties. At least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the hearing, the Student Grievance Officer shall provide each member of the Committee and all parties to the Grievance with copies of the Grievance, responses to the Grievance, decisions issued, and all relevant supporting documentation and materials. The Committee's make-up and hearing rules are discussed later in this policy.

The Committee shall deliver its findings and recommendations to the Student Grievance Officer within ten (10) calendar days following the hearing. A copy of the Committee's findings and recommendations shall be delivered to the President or his/her designee, within five (5) calendar days of receipt.

Within ten (10) calendar days of the President's receipt of the Committee's findings and recommendations, the President or his/her designee, shall issue a written statement accepting, modifying or rejecting the Committee's recommendations. The decision of the President, or his/her designee, shall be final and binding on all parties.

#### **For Massachusetts Residents and Online Students in Non-SARA Member States and Territories**

After you have exhausted the complaint procedures made available by Bristol Community College, located at **Student Complaints**, if your complaint has not been resolved, you may file a consumer complaint with the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education by using the **consumer complaint form**. The DHE **consumer complaint form** should be used by students who are located in:

- Massachusetts
- Non-SARA Member States or Territories (e.g., California, Guam, etc.)

For Online Students Located in **SARA Member States and Territories**

After you have exhausted the complaint procedures made available by Bristol Community College, located at **Student Complaints**, if your complaint has not been resolved, you may file a complaint with the DHE by using the **SARA complaint form**. The DHE **SARA complaint form** should be used by students who are located in **SARA member states and territories**. This includes all students who are located in SARA member states and territories for the purposes of completing out-of-state learning placements, such as internships, practica, clinical experiences, etc. in SARA member states and territories outside Massachusetts.

Additional information from the DHE's **SARA complaint website** is below:

The SARA complaint process is as follows:

1. Students must first attempt to resolve their complaints using internal administrative procedures offered by the SARA institution.
2. After all administrative remedies have been exhausted with the MA-SARA institution, the student may submit a SARA Complaint via the URL below.
3. The Department shall send a copy of the complaint to the institution that is the subject of the complaint;

4. Within 30 days of the date that the Department sends a copy of the complaint to the institution, the institution must provide a written response to the student and the Department.

### **Underage Student Policy**

#### *Academic Policy on Underage Students Without a High School Diploma*

Students under 16 years of age at the time of registration may take credit courses at Bristol Community College. The purpose of this policy is to support underage students and ensure their success.

### **Requirements**

*An underage prospective student must:*

- Complete the Underage Request to Enroll Application, available through the Enrollment Center, attach all necessary documentation, and obtain the signature of a parent/guardian.
- Submit the completed application to the Vice President of Academic Affairs or his/her designee.
- Meet each semester with the designated Advisor of Underage Students who will interview, advise, and monitor the academic progress of students.

### **Additional Recommendations**

The College strongly recommends the following guidelines. To ensure the most positive and successful experience at Bristol, students should:

- Be 12 years of age or older.
- Complete placement testing to ensure appropriate placement in courses.
- Contact the Learning Commons for assistance if enrolled in developmental classes as a result of placement testing.
- Ordinarily, attend class by him/herself.

Faculty members (or the department chair in a faculty member's absence) will be notified of any underage student who has registered for their class and have the right to express concern if they feel course content may not be appropriate for the student. This concern must be communicated in writing to the Vice President of Academic Affairs. If the vice president determines that the reasons given constitute a compelling factor to limit (with specific parameters) or deny enrollment of the student in the course by the College, that decision will be communicated to the faculty member and the student. Faculty will also be requested to complete and submit a mid-semester and end-of-semester grade check to the designated Advisor of Underage Students.

The College reserves the right to limit or deny enrollment of a student in a course or program based on its case-by-case consideration of a variety of factors, including but not limited to the student's maturity, life experience, placement test scores, and prior education, or the course content, instructional methodology, and risks associated with a particular course or program. Appeals of the College's decisions should be submitted to the Vice President of Academic Affairs.

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) early in the registration process. The ODS will clarify the rights and responsibilities of the student, his/her parent or guardian, and the College. (See "Office of Disability Services" in the college catalog.)

Note: For more information, students should contact the Office of Admissions, by accessing the College's website [BristolCC.edu](http://BristolCC.edu), sending an email to [admissions@BristolCC.edu](mailto:admissions@BristolCC.edu), or calling 508.678.2811, ext. 2516.

## **Home Schooling Policy**

All home-schooled students without a high school diploma or state-approved high school equivalency credential are eligible to apply for admission to a degree or certificate program provided they have successfully completed an approved home-school program in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws or the laws of their home state. If a home-schooled student has not completed an approved home-school program, the student will not be eligible to enroll in a degree or certificate program until he/she has earned a state-approved high school equivalency credential.

So that the College may determine whether a student has participated in an approved home-school program, the student shall submit, with the application for admission, evidence that the home-school program was approved by the student's school district's superintendent or school committee. Additionally, if the home-schooled student is under the age of compulsory attendance, which is sixteen (16) years old in Massachusetts, a letter from the student's school district's superintendent or school committee is required stating that the student is not considered truant and would not be required to attend further schooling or continue to be home-schooled if the student has completed his/her home school program before the age of sixteen (16).

The College reserves the right to limit or deny enrollment of a student under the age of sixteen (16) in a course or program based on its case-by-case consideration of a variety of factors, including but not limited to the student's maturity, life experience, placement test scores, prior education, course content, instructional methodology, and risks associated with a particular course or program.

## **Catalog of Record & Continuous Enrollment Policy**

The catalog year for a student's program (General Education and major curriculum) is the catalog year in effect at the time of matriculation to a degree program or certificate. Matriculation is when a student has been admitted and begins taking classes. Students normally are entitled to graduate under the degree or certificate provisions of the catalog in effect at the time of their enrollment or the catalog in effect at the time of graduation.

Students who change their majors after their initial enrollment have the option of following the major degree program outlined in the catalog in effect at the time of the change of major or the catalog in effect at the time of graduation.

Except for competitive admissions programs, matriculated and registered students in good standing will be allowed to retain their program of study throughout three consecutive semesters (including fall, spring, and summer semesters) with no academic progress. Subsequently, the students will be moved to non-degree status unless they make academic progress by registering and completing at least one course with a grade of D- or higher. Students in competitive admissions programs Dental Hygiene, Clinical Laboratory Science, Medical Assisting, Nursing, Occupational Therapy Assistant, and Phlebotomy must reapply after a break in fall or spring semester attendance. Readmission to these programs will be subject to space availability and the specific readmission policies of the individual programs.

International students are cautioned that USCIS (U.S. Customs and Immigration Services) policies regarding nonenrollment supersede College policies. For information about this policy, contact the Registrar.

## **Active Duty Military Leave Policy**

Bristol Community College will allow military personnel called to active duty (not to include National Guard or Reservist training) to withdraw from their courses without academic or financial penalty. Written or verbal notice of departure must be given to the Office of the Registrar or the Office of the Vice President of Student Services and

Enrollment Management; however, a copy of the order to active service must be provided to either office noted above within three months of release from active service. Readmission to the matriculated program of study at the point of departure is guaranteed, provided the student returns within two semester of discharge from active duty. To maintain eligibility for all other benefits, the cumulative length of absences cannot exceed five years.

### **College Success Seminar 101 Waiver**

Many students are required to take CSS 101 to satisfy this competency. Unless otherwise required by the student's program, a blanket waiver has been approved if the student:

- Already holds an Associate's degree or higher;
- Has earned 30 or more transfer credits;
- Has earned 30 or more Bristol credits with a GPA of 2.5 or better; or
- Has a combination of 30 or more transfer and Bristol credits with a GPA of 2.5 or better.

Students who have earned and have documented one of these credentials are not required to submit a Petition for Waiver. The student must, however, meet all other program requirements and the 60-credit minimum number of credits to graduate.

### **Waiver of Academic Requirement**

Matriculated students (those enrolled in a degree or certificate program) have the right to petition for waivers to the academic requirements of their program. This right, however, does not mean automatic approval of the waiver. To appeal a requirement, contact your advisor and complete the "Petition for Waiver of Academic Requirement" form located within MyBristol (formerly AccessBCC). Petitions should be submitted by the end of the business day on the Monday following the first day of the semester for the course. While the form may be filled out beyond this priority date, there is no guarantee that if it is submitted late that the financial aid office can process dispersals that may be related to financial aid eligibility. For additional information, please contact Academic Advising, 774.357.3044 or Academic Affairs, 774.357.2185.