

# STATEMENT OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

## Administrative Complaints

Student Affairs views Skidmore students as emerging adults responsible for managing, with our support and guidance, their academic and personal affairs. While we are often inclined toward solving problems for our students, we try instead to help them acquire the information and strategies that they need to explore possible remedies for their concerns. We ask parents to trust this educational effort whenever possible, rather than intervene with an office or program on behalf of students.

When students have questions about College policy or practice, we expect them to review the appropriate policies and handbooks and to pursue their concerns directly with the appropriate office or program. As examples, students should direct questions about housing to the Office of Residential Life and questions related to financial aid to the staff of the Financial Aid Office. Student Affairs staff are available to advise students about appropriate offices and best strategies in most circumstances.

If a student remains dissatisfied with the decision of an office or program, the student can ask the dean or vice president responsible for the area of concern to review the decision or policy. However, the dean or vice president will not change a decision that seems consistent with general principles of fairness, equity, and College policy. In the majority of academic situations, moreover, the faculty exercise final authority for decisions regarding the classroom, course requirements, and academic standards and expectations.

In most complaint-resolution cases, the dean's or vice president's decision is final. If students or parents remain dissatisfied with the decision, they may ask the president to review the practice or policy. Students and parents should write to the president, explaining the circumstances and describing the conversations that have taken place with other college staff. If the appropriate dean or vice president has not yet reviewed the decision, the president's office will generally direct students and parents to the campus office most directly responsible for the area of concern. The president only reviews situations or problems of substantial consequence to students or parents and of broad concern to the college.

## Campus Security Report

Skidmore College's *Annual Campus Safety and Security Report and Annual Fire Safety Report* includes statistics for the previous three years concerning reported crimes that occurred

- on campus;
- in certain off-campus buildings owned or controlled by Skidmore; and
- on public property within, or immediately adjacent to and accessible from the campus.

The report also includes institutional policies concerning campus security, such as policies concerning alcohol and drug use, crime prevention, the reporting of crimes, sexual assault, bias-related crime, and other matters. The Advisory Committee on Campus Security will provide a paper copy of the Annual Security Report, upon request, containing all campus crime statistics as reported to the U.S. Department of Education. You can obtain a copy of this report by contacting Campus Safety (518-580-5567) or on the web at [www.skidmore.edu/campus\\_safety/clery/index.php](http://www.skidmore.edu/campus_safety/clery/index.php) ([http://www.skidmore.edu/campus\\_safety/clery/](http://www.skidmore.edu/campus_safety/clery/)), or

[www.skidmore.edu/campus\\_safety/clery/safety\\_report.pdf](http://www.skidmore.edu/campus_safety/clery/safety_report.pdf) ([http://www.skidmore.edu/campus\\_safety/clery/safety\\_report.pdf](http://www.skidmore.edu/campus_safety/clery/safety_report.pdf)).

## Statement of Nondiscrimination

Skidmore College is committed to being an inclusive campus community and, as an Equal Opportunity Employer, does not discriminate in its hiring or employment practices on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, gender, age, national or ethnic origin, physical or mental disability, military or veteran status, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic information, predisposition or carrier status, domestic violence victim status, familial status or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state, or local laws. This policy further prohibits, domestic violence, sexual violence, and stalking, which need not be based on an individual's protected status.

## The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Policies of Skidmore College

The 1974 Family Education Rights and Privacy Act detailed students' rights of access to their official educational records. The legislation gives current and former students of Skidmore College the right to inspect, review, and copy their own permanent records. At Skidmore, the permanent records covered by the Act include:

- the student's application for admission;
- high school and/or former college transcript(s);
- SAT scores;
- correspondence with the Skidmore Office of Admissions;
- documents pertaining to grade reports;
- dates of attendance;
- approval of leaves of absence;
- correspondence with the Deans;
- senior audits; and
- the materials contained in the student's credentials file.

The Act includes a list of types of records not open to student inspection. These are

- parents' financial statements;
- confidential letters and recommendations written before January 1, 1975;
- letters and recommendations written after January 1, 1975, but specifically designated as confidential;
- ancillary records of instructional, supervisory and administrative personnel;
- confidential law enforcement records; and
- records written by physicians, psychiatrists, psychologists, and other recognized professionals or paraprofessionals.

Students and former students may request a doctor of their choice to review their medical records.

Colleges are allowed to publish "directory information" including the student's photographic image, name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, date and place of birth, major field of study, class year, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, enrollment status, degrees and awards received, and the most recent previous educational institution attended. Faculty and staff members may access student photos and student system ID numbers (not Social Security

numbers) via online class rosters. If any current Skidmore student does not want such directory information to be disclosed, he or she must notify the Registrar's Office in writing of the specific information not to be released. Such notification is necessary within ten days of the first day of classes of the fall semester annually.

Except for parties identified as having legitimate access as defined by the Act (including contractual employees), Skidmore College must obtain the written consent of the student before disclosing personally identifiable information from the educational records. Legitimate access means that

- the information or record requested is relevant and necessary to the completion of tasks associated with the individual's job responsibilities;
- the information sought is to be used within the context of college business; and
- the information is not to be transmitted to a third party.

Student employees, contractual employees, or others identified as having a "legitimate educational interest" must operate under the same restrictions as other staff members.

Specifics related to the disclosure process are available upon request in the Registrar's Office.

Alumni of the Class of 2000 and earlier that had established a non-confidential (or open) credential file while attending Skidmore College may request (via written, fax, or e-mail request) that the Career Development Center forward their credential files (references), in part or in whole, directly to an employer, graduate school, or other party. Confidential references cannot be provided to the requestor in a sealed envelope, as this voids the confidentiality agreement between reference writer and requestor. Alternately, open references in a file can be provided to the requestor, or copies sent on their behalf to employers, graduate schools, etc. There is a \$3 fee, payable by check written to Skidmore College and mailed to the Career Development Center, for every establishment forwarded to, unless the alumna/us had paid the Lifetime Fee of \$75.

A student or former student who believes that information contained in the permanent record is inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of his or her privacy may request that Skidmore amend the record. Such a request must be made in writing and must contain specific information. Details related to this appeal process are available through the Registrar's Office.

In accordance with the Solomon Amendment, Skidmore complies with written requests for lists of enrolled students made by recruiting offices from various branches of the military. The information provided includes:

- name
- anticipated graduation year
- birthdate
- major(s)
- local phone numbers

All of these data elements are considered "directory information."

*(Printed in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Policies.)*

## Policy Pertaining to External or Commercial Requests

As a general practice, Skidmore College does not provide student directory information to external companies using the information for commercial gain. All requests for information must be approved by the Registrar's Office or the Office of Institutional Research, who will act in accordance with FERPA guidelines. The College reserves the right to deny any such requests.

## Regulations Regarding Students Unable to Register or Attend Classes Because of Religious Beliefs

Effective July 30, 1992, the People of New York State, represented in the Senate and Assembly, amended the Education Law as follows:

1. No person shall be expelled from or be refused admission as a student to an institution of higher education for the reason that he or she is unable, because of his or her religious beliefs, to register or attend classes or to participate in any examination, study, or work requirements on a particular day or days.
2. Any student in an institution of higher education who is unable, because of his or her religious beliefs, to attend classes on a particular day or days shall, because of such absence on the particular day or days, be excused from any examination or any study or work requirements.
3. It shall be the responsibility of the faculty and of the administrative officials of each institution of higher education to make available to each student who is absent from school, because of his or her religious beliefs, an equivalent opportunity to register for classes or make up any examination, study, or work requirements that he or she may have missed because of such absence on any particular day or days. No fees of any kind shall be charged by the institution for making available to the said student such equivalent opportunity.
4. If registration, classes, examinations, study, or work requirements are held on Friday after four o'clock post meridian or on Saturday, similar or makeup classes, examinations, study, or work requirements or opportunity to register shall be made available on other days, where it is possible and practicable to do so. No special fees shall be charged to the student for these classes, examinations, study, or work requirements or registration held on other days.
5. In effectuating the provisions of this section, it shall be the duty of the faculty and of the administrative officials of each institution of higher education to exercise the fullest measure of good faith. No adverse or prejudicial effects shall result to any student because of his or her availing himself or herself of the provisions of this section.
6. Any student who is aggrieved by the alleged failure of any faculty or administrative officials to comply in good faith with the provisions of this section, shall be entitled to maintain an action or proceeding in the supreme court of the county in which such institution of higher education is located for the enforcement of his or her rights under this section.
  1. It shall be the responsibility of the administrative officials of each institution of higher education to give written notice to students of their rights under this section, informing them that each student who is absent from school, because of his or her religious beliefs, must be given an equivalent opportunity to register for classes or make up any examination, study, or work requirements which he or she may have missed because of such

absence on any particular day or days. No fees of any kind shall be charged by the institution for making available to each student such equivalent opportunity.

7. As used in this section, the term “institution of higher education” shall mean any institution of higher education, recognized and approved by the Regents of the University of the State of New York, which provides a course of study leading to the granting of a post-secondary degree or diploma. Such term shall not include any institution that is operated, supervised, or controlled by a church or by a religious or denominational organization whose educational programs are principally designed for the purpose of training ministers or other religious functionaries or for the purpose of propagating religious doctrines. As used in this section, the term “religious belief” shall mean beliefs associated with any corporation organized and operated exclusively for religious purposes, which is not disqualified for tax exemption under section 501 of the United States Code.

## Skidmore College Policy on Contact/ Credit Hours

### Unit of Credit

The policy described below follows guidelines set forth by the New York State Department of Education and the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

The unit of credit used at Skidmore College is the semester hour. Consistent with the traditional “Carnegie Unit” accepted by most American colleges and universities,<sup>1</sup> credit represents completion of one 50-minute class period per week over a 15-week semester. In practice, Skidmore schedules a 55-minute class period to ensure compliance. For certain nontraditional and individual academic activities, the college uses a 60-minute class period or its equivalent. In all cases, the college expects two hours of outside work or preparation for every 55-60 minutes spent in class (or its equivalent). One semester hour of credit therefore represents approximately three hours of academic work per week, or 45 hours of academic work per semester.

Activities supervised as a group, such as studio, laboratory, and shop classes for which little outside preparation is expected, usually earn 1 credit for each three hours of attendance. Where such activity involves substantial outside preparation by the student, 1 credit for two hours of attendance is earned.

### Credit/Contact Hour Relationship

*Source of information: State University of New York, Memorandum to Presidents from the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Programs, June 30, 1976. Adjusted to outline Skidmore’s guidelines.*

Semester credit hours are granted for various types of instruction as follows:

**1. Lecture, seminar, discussion**

A semester credit hour is an academic unit earned for fifteen, 55-minute sessions of classroom instruction with a normal expectation of two hours of outside study for each class session. Typically, a 3-credit course meets for three 55-minute sessions per week for 15 weeks for a total of 45 sessions per semester. A typical 3-credit course requires a total of 90 hours of outside work or preparation.

**2. Activity supervised as a group (laboratory, practicum, workshop, group studio)**

A semester credit hour is awarded for the equivalent of 15 periods of such activity, where each activity period is 165 minutes or more in duration with little or no outside preparation expected. Forty-five, 55-minute sessions of such activity would also normally earn 1 credit hour. Where such activity involves substantial outside preparation by the student, the equivalent of 15 periods of 110 minutes duration each will earn 1 credit hour.

**3. Supervised individual activity (independent study, individual studio, tutorial)**

- One credit for independent study (defined as study given initial guidance, criticism, review, and final evaluation of student performance by a faculty member) will be awarded for the equivalent of 45 hours of student academic activity, representing an average of three hours of activity per week over 15 weeks.
- Credit for tutorial study (defined as study that is given initial faculty guidance followed by repeated, regularly scheduled individual student conferences with a faculty member and periodic as well as final evaluation of student performance) will be awarded on the basis of 1 semester hour credit for each equivalent of fifteen 55-minute instructional sessions. The college expects that students will work a minimum of two hours in preparation for each regularly scheduled session.

**4. Full-time independent study (student teaching, practicum)**

If a student’s academic activity is essentially full-time (as in student teaching), 1 semester credit hour may be awarded for each week of work.

**5. Short sessions**

Credit hours may be earned in short sessions (summer sessions, intercessions, etc.) proportionately to those earned for the same activity during a regular term of the institution, normally at no more than one 3-credit course per week of full-time study.

### Flexible Fourth Credit Hours

A 3-credit course requires 90 hours of assigned work over a 15-week semester. Adding a flexible fourth credit hour requires an additional 45 hours of assigned work. Proposals for a flexible fourth credit hour must be submitted to the Curriculum Committee with a rationale and syllabus to account for the additional hours. As with all proposals to the Curriculum Committee, proposals for a fourth credit hour must describe the learning goals and means of assessment for activities required for the fourth hour.

### Online and Blended Learning Courses

Consistent with the college’s expectations for supervised individual activity and the flexible fourth credit hour, online and blended learning courses earn 1 semester hour credit for 45 hours of academic activity. This activity may include but is not limited to:

- real-time lecturing (in class or via streaming technology);
- online learning tutorials, projects, or discussion;
- the preparation required for students to engage in the course; and
- assignments used for the assessment of student learning.

Proposals for online or blended learning courses must be submitted to the Curriculum Committee with a rationale and syllabus to account for the number of hours devoted to academic activity. As with all proposals to the Curriculum Committee, proposals for online or blended learning courses must describe the learning goals and means of assessment for required activities.

## State Authorization for the Provision of Online Education

Skidmore College has been approved to participate in the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA). Federal regulations require that colleges and universities that participate in Title IV funding and offer degree programming through distance or online education to students in other states, must seek approval from those states to offer such programs. As a member of NC-SARA, Skidmore is authorized to offer its online degree courses and programs to residents of all other NC-SARA participating states.

### Complaint Resolution

Skidmore College, as a provider of distance or online education, is required by the United States Department of Education to provide all prospective and current out-of-state students with contact information for the appropriate agency in their home state that handles complaints against institutions offering distance learning within that state.

Students are encouraged to follow Skidmore's student problem resolution process (<https://catalog.skidmore.edu/statement-policies-procedures/>) prior to filing a complaint with a state agency. If resolution is not found within Skidmore:

- New York residents would consult NYSED's complaint procedures (<http://www.nysed.gov/college-university-evaluation/filing-complaint-about-college-or-university> (<http://www.nysed.gov/college-university-evaluation/filing-complaint-about-college-or-university/>))
- Out-of-state students would contact the institution's home state SARA Portal Entity: State Portal Entities (<https://www.nc-sara.org/state-portal-entity-contacts/>).

More information on NC-SARA complaint procedures is available at <https://www.nc-sara.org/student-complaints> (<https://www.nc-sara.org/student-complaints/>).