



Highlands College

LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

HANDBOOK

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Highlands College Leadership Institute (HCLI) Handbook

This Student Handbook describes the policies and procedures of HCLI in effect at the time of publication. It is **IMPORTANT** that each student becomes familiar with this and assumes the proper responsibilities concerning them. HCLI certificates are non-credit bearing; therefore, students will not receive college credit for completion. Highlands College will not provide transferable credit to other accredited or post-secondary institutions for non-credit-bearing certificates.

Non-Discrimination Policy

HCLI admits students who are Christians of good character of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship programs, and other school-administered programs.

About Highlands College Leadership Institute

Welcome from the Chancellor

Welcome to the Highlands College Leadership Institute (HCLI)! There is no greater joy than welcoming leaders like you into a season that promises to grow your heart, sharpen your gifts, and fuel your calling.

Your decision to join this program reflects more than a commitment to personal growth; it's a response to a divine calling. Whether your future leads you into full-time ministry or the marketplace, I believe you are here on purpose, for a purpose. God is preparing you to lead with character, excellence, and eternal impact.

At HCLI, we don't just educate; we equip. We believe leadership is not defined by title or position but by influence rooted in service, humility, and spiritual authority. HCLI exists to develop leaders like you who are ready to carry the heart of Jesus into every sphere of culture—whether that's on a church platform, in a corporate boardroom, or out in the community.

As you progress through this program, I encourage you to lean in fully—spiritually, intellectually, and relationally. The challenges you'll face, the disciplines you'll build, and the relationships you'll form will shape the kind of leader you become.

You are part of something bigger than yourself. The world needs the gifts, wisdom, and integrity that you bring. We are honored to walk alongside you as you prepare to lead, serve, and make a difference that lasts far beyond this lifetime.

On behalf of the entire Highlands College Leadership Institute Family, welcome to HCLI. We believe in you and are confident that your best and most impactful days are ahead.

Sincerely,

Chris Hodges

Chancellor, Highlands College

Our Story

Highlands College was founded in 2011 by Chancellor Chris Hodges, founding pastor of Church of the Highlands, to meet the urgent need for well-equipped ministry leaders. His vision was to create a higher education model integrating academic instruction with ministry training, character formation, and spiritual development.

Today, Highlands College offers an accredited four-year program leading to a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree in a ministry-specific field. Every element of the student experience is designed to develop leaders of competence, character, and spiritual maturity, fully equipped to serve the local church and fulfill the Great Commission.

State Licensing and Accreditation

Highlands College is an Alabama non-profit corporation licensed through the state of Alabama's Private School Licensure Division and accredited by the Association for Biblical Higher Education Commission on Accreditation (5850 T.G. Lee Blvd., Ste. 130, Orlando, FL 32822, 407-207-0808) to grant certificates and degrees at the Associate and Baccalaureate levels. HCLI provides its students with the opportunity to earn non-credit-bearing certificates in Christian Leadership, Ministry Training, and Biblical & Theological Studies.

NC-SARA Information

Highlands College is approved by the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) to participate in the SARA initiative. This allows us to offer distance education to students in participating SARA states. For more information about NC-SARA please visit www.nc-sara.org.

Administration

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ronnie Bennett
Duane Donner
Chris Hodges, *Chairman*
Dr. John C. Maxwell
Jana McDonnell
Patricia Oh
Scott Olson
Mark Pettus
Ken Polk, *Vice-Chairman*
Darryl Rosser
Glenn Siddle
Mike Stockard
Dr. Courtney J. Winston

OFFICERS

Kay Hargrave, *Chief Advancement Officer*
Matthew Brumfield, *Chief Financial Officer*
Katie Reeves, *Secretary/General Counsel*
Jordan Williamson, *Chief Operating Officer*

Highlands College Vision

To educate, equip, and empower leaders in a ministry academy model, applying leading-edge methods in world-class facilities where students launch into their calling to expand the Kingdom of God.

Highlands College Mission

Highlands College is a biblical higher education institution that exists to supply the Church with leaders of competence, character, and spiritual maturity, holistically trained to lead lives of eternal impact by fulfilling the Great Commission.

Highlands College Goals

Highlands College will:

- Strengthen the Four Pillars of Ministry Leadership
- Improve and enhance the academy leadership development model.
- Develop student services that propel success.
- Expand educational platforms.
- Refine the implementation-driven operating model.
- Continue to build a world-class training ground for world-changing leaders.
- Fund the future.

Student Learning Objectives

The graduates of Highlands College Leadership Institute will be known for their commitment to:

- The Authority of Scripture
- The Pursuit of a Christ-Centered Life
- The Passion of Lifelong Learning
- The Calling of Ministry Leadership
- The Advancement of the Kingdom

The Four Pillars of Highlands College

Academic Instruction

Highlands College students grow in the highest standards of excellence as they develop their intellect and increase their knowledge of God. Students become lifelong learners across various disciplines, strengthening their understanding of their Christ-centered calling in engaging classroom settings.

Ministry Training

Highlands College equips students to be the hands and feet of Jesus through exceptional hands-on ministry training and empowers students to take ownership in every area of church life. Highlands College gives students leadership training and opportunities to develop the skills needed to make a difference in the world.

Character Formation

Highlands College challenges students to live a life of excellence through living a healthy, active lifestyle and growing in their leadership abilities. Students develop Christ-like character through relationships with mentors and peers during their time at Highlands College.

Spiritual Development

Highlands College students strengthen their devotion to God through the local church, small groups, and relationships with others. Students are discipled by spiritually mature church and academic leaders.

Statement of Faith

Students, Faculty, and Teammates agree with the beliefs expressed in this Statement and commit to living in accordance with these beliefs.

HOLY BIBLE

The Holy Bible, and only the Bible, is the authoritative Word of God. It alone is the final authority in determining all doctrinal truths. In its original writing, it is inspired, infallible, and inerrant. (*I Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:20-21; Proverbs 30:5; Romans 16:25-26*)

TRINITY

There is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These three are coequal and coeternal. (*I John 5:7; Genesis 1:26; Matthew 3:16-17, 28:19; Luke 1:35; Isaiah 9:6; Hebrews 3:7-11*)

JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ is God the Son, the second person of the Trinity. On earth, Jesus was 100% God and 100% man. He is the only man ever to have lived a sinless life. He was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, performed miracles, died on the Cross for mankind, and thus atoned for our sins through the shedding of His blood. He rose from the dead on the third day according to the Scriptures, ascended to the right hand of the Father, and will return again in power and glory. (*John 1:1,14,20:28; I Timothy 3:16; Isaiah 9:6; Philippians 2:5-6; I Timothy 2:5*)

VIRGIN BIRTH

Jesus Christ was conceived by God the Father, through the Holy Spirit (the third person of the Trinity) in the virgin Mary's womb; therefore, He is the Son of God. (*Matthew 1:18,25; Luke 1:35; Isaiah 7:14; Luke 1:27-35*)

REDEMPTION

Man was created good and upright, but by voluntary transgression, he fell; his only hope of redemption is in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. (*Genesis 1:26-31, 3:1-7; Romans 5:12-21*)

REGENERATION

For anyone to know God, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential. (*John 6:44, 65; Matthew 19:28; Titus 3:5*)

SALVATION

We are saved by grace through faith in Jesus: His death, burial, and resurrection. Salvation is a gift from God, not a result of our good works or of any human efforts. (*Ephesians 2:8-9; Galatians 2:16, 3:8; Titus 3:5; Romans 10:9-10; Acts 16:31; Hebrews 9:22*)

REPENTANCE

Repentance is the commitment to turn away from sin in every area of our lives and to follow Christ, which allows us to receive His redemption and to be regenerated by the Holy Spirit. Thus, through repentance, we receive forgiveness of sins and appropriate salvation. (*Acts 2:21; 3:19; I John 1:9*)

SANCTIFICATION

Sanctification is the ongoing process of yielding to God's Word and His Spirit to complete the development of Christ's character in us. It is through the present ministry of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God that the Christian is enabled to live a Godly life. (*I Thessalonians 4:3, 5:23; II Corinthians 3:18, 6:14-18; II Thessalonians 2:1-3; Romans 8:29; Hebrews 2:11*)

JESUS' BLOOD

The Blood that Jesus Christ shed on the Cross for both our sinfulness and our sins, enabling all those who believe to be free from the penalty of sin, which is death. (*I John 1:7; Revelation 1:5, 5:9; Colossians 1:20; Romans 3:10-12, 23, 5:9; John 1:29*)

JESUS CHRIST INDWELLS ALL BELIEVERS

Christians are people who have invited the Lord Jesus Christ to come and live inside them by His Holy Spirit. They relinquish the authority of their lives over to him, thus making Jesus the Lord of their life as well as Savior. They put their trust in what Jesus accomplished for them when He died, was buried, and rose again from the dead. (*John 1:12; John 14:17, 23; John 15:4; Romans 8:11; Revelation 3:20*)

BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

Given at Pentecost, it is the promise of the Father, sent by Jesus after His Ascension, to empower the Church to preach the Gospel throughout the whole earth, one of the signs being speaking in other tongues, along with other gifts. (*Joel 2:28-29; Matthew 3:11; Mark 16:17; Acts 1:5, 8, 2:1-4, 17, 38-39, 8:14-17, 10:38, 44-47, 11:15-17, 19:1-6*)

THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is manifested through a variety of spiritual gifts to build and sanctify the church, demonstrate the validity of the resurrection, and confirm the power of the Gospel. The Bible's lists of these gifts are not necessarily exhaustive, and the gifts may occur in various combinations. All believers are commanded to earnestly desire the manifestation of the gifts in their lives. These gifts always operate in harmony with the Scriptures and should never be used in violation of Biblical parameters. (*Hebrews 2:4; Romans 1:11, 12:4-8; Ephesians 4:16; I Timothy 4:14; II Timothy 1:6-7; I Corinthians 12:1-31, 14:1-40; I Peter 4:10*)

THE CHURCH

The church is the Body of Christ, the habitation of God through the Spirit, with divine appointments for the fulfillment of Jesus' Great Commission. Every person who is born of the Spirit is an integral part of the church as a member of the body of believers. There is a spiritual unity of all believers in our Lord Jesus Christ. (*Ephesians 1:22, 2:19-22; Hebrews 12:23; John 17:11, 20-23*)

SACRAMENT OF WATER BAPTISM

Following faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the new convert is commanded by the Word of God to be baptized in water in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and by full immersion. (*Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; Acts 8:12, 36-38, 10:47-48*)

SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

A unique time of communion in the presence of God when the elements of bread and grape juice (the symbols of Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ) are taken in remembrance of Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross. (*Matthew 26:26-29; I Corinthians 10:16, 11:23-25*)

SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

We believe that because God our Creator established marriage as a sacred institution between one man and one woman, marriage is a covenant only between one man and one woman, as clearly conveyed in God's inerrant Scriptures, including for example in Matthew 19:4-6 where in speaking about marriage Jesus referred to the fact that "he which made them at the beginning made them male and female." (*Genesis 1:27, 5:2*)

SEXUALITY

We believe sexuality and the divinely prescribed boundaries for its expression are covered clearly in the Holy Scriptures, which limit sexual expression to the marital relationship of one man with one woman. Homosexual acts, adultery, bestiality, and all forms of fornication are categorically condemned in the Holy Scriptures. We believe that sexuality is assigned by God at conception, male or female, whatever that may be, and the Holy Scriptures do not permit an individual to alter their sexual identity physically or otherwise.

(*Deuteronomy 23:1; I Corinthians 6:18; I Thessalonians 4:3; Romans 1:26-27; Proverbs 5:3-5, 8-13; 7:21-27; Galatians 5:19; Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 5:18; Matthew 5:27; 19:18; Luke 18:20; Romans 13:9; James 2:11; Leviticus 20:10-21; I Corinthians 10:8; Jude 7*)

HEALING OF THE SICK

Healing of the sick is illustrated in the life and ministry of Jesus and included in the commission of Jesus to His disciples. It is given as a sign, which is to follow believers. It is also a part of Jesus' work on the Cross and one of the

gifts of the Spirit. (*Psalm 103:2-3; Isaiah 53:5; Matthew 8:16-17; Mark 16:17-18; Acts 8:6-7; James 5:14-16; I Corinthians 12:9, 28; Romans 11:29*)

GOD'S WILL FOR PROVISION

It is the Father's will for believers to become whole, healthy, and successful in all areas of life. But because of the fall, many may not receive the full benefit of God's will while on earth. That fact, though, should never prevent all believers from seeking the full benefits of Christ's provision to better serve others.

- **Spiritual** (*John 3:3-11; II Corinthians 5:17-21; Romans 10:9-10*)
- **Mental and Emotional** (*II Timothy 1:7, 2:11; Philippians 4:7-8; Romans 12:2; Isaiah 26:3*)
- **Physical** (*Isaiah 53:4-5; Matthew 8:17; I Peter 2:24*)
- **Financial** (*Joshua 1:8; Malachi 3:10-11; Luke 6:38; II Corinthians 9:6-10; Deuteronomy 28:1-14; Psalm 34:10, 84:11; Philippians 4:19*)

RESURRECTION

Jesus Christ was physically resurrected from the dead in a glorified body three days after His death on the Cross. In addition, both the saved and the lost will be resurrected; they that are saved to the resurrection of life and they that are lost to the resurrection of eternal damnation. (*Luke 24:16, 36, 38; John 2:19-21, 20:26-28, 21:4; Acts 24:15; I Corinthians 15:42; Philippians 1:21-23*)

HEAVEN

Heaven is the eternal dwelling place for all believers in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. All of God's children will reign forever in a new heaven and a new earth. (*Matthew 5:3, 12, 20, 6:20, 19:21, 25:34; John 17:24; II Corinthians 5:1; Hebrews 11:16; I Peter 1:4; Revelation 21:1-5*)

HELL

After living one life on earth, the unbelievers will be judged by God and sent to Hell, where they will be eternally tormented with the Devil and the Fallen Angels. (*Matthew 25:41; Mark 9:43-48; Hebrews 9:27; Revelation 14:9-11, 20:12-15, 21:8*)

SECOND COMING

Jesus Christ will physically and visibly return to earth for the second time to establish His Kingdom. This will occur at a date undisclosed by the Scriptures. (*Matthew 24:30, 26:63-64; Acts 1:9-11; I Thessalonians 4:15-17; II Thessalonians 1:7-8; Revelation 1:7*)

Admission Requirements

HCLI is a part-time extended education program for adult learners to pursue leadership, ministry, and spiritual development. Applicants must meet the following requirements to be accepted into HCLI:

1. Meet the minimum age requirement of 18 years by the first day of class. Age exceptions are allowed on a case-by-case basis.
2. Be a committed follower of Christ.
3. Ensure access to sufficient financial resources to cover tuition, fees, and expenses.
4. Affirm agreement with the Highlands College Statement of Faith.
5. Submit an application and complete all application requirements.

The Admissions Team reviews the application information, and the Admissions Team notifies the applicant of a decision. In some cases, an applicant may be asked to provide additional evidence that they meet these requirements, or the Admissions Committee may apply additional conditions concerning the above entry requirements.

Application Process

The application process consists of a completed online application form with the submission of all program-specific requirements and supporting documentation. The application for admission is on the HCLI website, hcli.highlandscollege.edu. Once the application package, including all required supporting documentation, is complete, the Admissions Committee will review the application and make an admission decision. The Admissions Team will notify applicants of the outcome of their application. Applicants accepted for admission who do not enroll in the application term for which they applied must complete a new application for admission for another application term.

Background Authorization Consent

All applicants are required to pass a Registered Sex Offender check. If there are questions or issues regarding the applicant's background, the Admissions Committee, in partnership with the Security Department, will decide whether the applicant qualifies to enroll.

Student Information Release

HCLI is committed to student safety, growth, and development as individuals prepare for ministry. During a student's enrollment, situations may arise where student information needs to be shared between HCLI

departments and Church of the Highlands leaders (for Church of the Highlands members.) Student privacy is essential, and HCLI seeks to maintain appropriate discretion regarding information sharing.

Technical Requirements

Students are expected to maintain access to a personal computing device that supports required academic software and college systems, including Microsoft 365, the Student Information System (SIS), the Learning Management System (Blackboard), and other institutional platforms required for coursework, communication, and engagement.

Technical Standards

HCLI is a comprehensive, extended education experience designed to equip students for leadership and ministry through both academic and practical development. To fully participate in the program, students must be able to meet the technical standards required for coursework, communication, engagement, and ministry-related activities. These standards reflect the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to successfully participate in HCLI and serve effectively in ministry environments.

All students admitted to HCLI must be qualified to pursue the intended program of study, with or without reasonable accommodation. If a student is unable to meet the required technical standards, even with reasonable accommodation, the student may not be eligible for admission or continued enrollment. Meeting the technical standards does not guarantee admission to HCLI.

These abilities and skills, as determined by HCLI, are as follows:

- **Observation Skills:** A student must be able to use the sense of vision, hearing, and somatic sensation to assimilate information quickly and accurately in the classroom and in ministry training fields (as applicable).
- **Communication Skills:** Students must be able to read, speak intelligibly, and hear sufficiently to have an adequate exchange of information and create rapport with instructors, congregation, and others. A student must be able to read and write English effectively to fulfill academic requirements and maintain accurate records as needed in ministry. Students must be able to accurately interpret verbal and nonverbal communications.
- **Psychomotor Skills:** Students must possess the physical skills, talents, and abilities to perform the essential physical task functions of academics and areas in ministry training (as applicable).

- **Behavior and Social Skills:** Students must possess the physical and emotional health required for the application of their intellectual abilities and the employment of sound judgment appropriately and promptly. Students must display emotional stability, a spirit of teamwork and cooperation, compassion, sensitivity, respect, honesty, reliability, perseverance, and concern for others in order to facilitate interpersonal relationships and provide effective pastoral care while maintaining appropriate professional boundaries. Students must exercise good judgment, accountability, professional integrity, strong interpersonal skills, and the ability to receive and integrate feedback.
- **Cognitive Skills:** These abilities include an aptitude for rapid problem solving, the capacity to independently access, interpret, and respond to academic and ministry information independently, and pastoral scenarios.

Application Denial and Reapplication

The Admissions Team will notify applicants who are not accepted for admission. An applicant denied admission can appeal the decision of the Admissions Committee if they feel additional information might influence the evaluation of their application.

If an applicant wishes to appeal an admission decision, they should submit the following items. The items for an appeal should be submitted via attachments in one email with the applicant's name and "Admission Decision Appeal" in the email's subject line to hcliadmissions@highlandscollege.edu.

1. Submit one to three letters of recommendation from pastors/staff from the church where the applicant currently serves, including their contact information.
2. Submit a typed one-to-three-page essay answering the following questions:
3. Why do you feel called to attend HCLI?
 - Why do you think you will be successful at HCLI?
 - What have you done and are continuing to do to prepare yourself spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically for HCLI?
 - Are there additional factors not included in your initial application that you would like to have reconsidered?

The Admissions Team will notify the applicant by email when all appeal requirements have been received. The Admissions Team will inform the applicant regarding a decision on the appeal within 15 business days of receipt of all appeal documents. Appealing an admission decision does not guarantee acceptance into HCLI. However, the

Admissions Team will consider the items mentioned above to determine if the additional information warrants acceptance. The deadline to submit all items for an admission appeal is the application deadline for each term, which is the first day of the term. Applicants denied admission may reapply five months from the date the prior application was submitted.

Financial Information

Tuition and Fees

New students must pay their tuition upon enrollment. Returning students are invoiced upon course registration. Tuition is due in full before the second night of class. Students may be placed on a financial hold and withdrawn from class if tuition remains unpaid.

Tuition (per term, per certificate)	\$400
Graduation Fee (if applicable)	\$75 (not covered by any scholarships or staff waivers)
Replacement Certificate	\$25

Outstanding Balances

Any student whose account balance is not paid by the second class is placed on a financial hold. This prevents access to Blackboard, future course registration, and the ability to request certificates. Once the account is current, the financial hold will be removed.

Refunds

An HCLI-Highlands student may be eligible for a refund only if the student formally withdraws on or before the Withdrawal deadline, which is the second night of class.

Financial Programs

HCLI does not offer scholarships or participate in federal financial aid programs, such as Title IV or Veterans Administration.

Certificate Programs

Non-Credit Courses and Certificates

HCLI courses and certificate programs are non-credit-bearing and are not intended to provide academic college credit. HCLI provides adult learners with the opportunity to earn a certificate of completion.

Biblical & Theological Studies

The Biblical & Theological Studies certificate is a two-year (eight-term) program that provides theological education for adult learners who want to further deepen their knowledge of the Bible and study of essential Christian beliefs. Biblical & Theological Studies classes follow the academic calendar and meet one night a week for 55 minutes. The Biblical & Theological Studies certificate consists of eight courses designed to address the essential biblical and theological knowledge for a ministry-minded leader.

COURSE COMPLETION PLAN: *(Order of courses is dependent on enrollment)*

- BTC 011 The Story of Scripture
- BTC 012 Christian Beliefs
- BTC 021 Understanding the Bible
- BTC 022 Christian Worldview
- BTC 031 Old Testament Book Study
- BTC 032 Topics in Theology I
- BTC 041 New Testament Book Study
- BTC 042 Topics in Theology II

Upon successful completion of all courses, students will earn a Biblical & Theological Studies Certificate.

Christian Leadership

Christian Leadership is a two-year (eight-term) program designed to strengthen leadership through a Biblical worldview and practical application in everyday life, ministry, and work. Over the course of the program, students develop both personal and organizational leadership skills rooted in Christian principles. Christian Leadership meets one night per week for 55 minutes and serves as a co- or pre-requisite for Ministry Training.

COURSE COMPLETION PLAN: *(Order of courses is dependent on enrollment)*

- CL011-Christian Leadership 1
- CL012-Christian Leadership 2
- CL021-Christian Leadership 3
- CL022-Christian Leadership 4
- CL031-Christian Leadership 5
- CL032-Christian Leadership 6

- CL041-Christian Leadership 7
- CL042-Christian Leadership 8

Upon successful completion of all courses, students will earn a Christian Leadership certificate.

Ministry Training

Ministry Training is an eight-term program focused on hands-on ministry development and practical leadership experience, and upon completion, you will be developed to serve at the highest level of your calling, whether vocationally or as a volunteer.

Students are equipped to grow in their calling and serve effectively in ministry environments through both classroom learning and ministry application.

Ministry placement services are available to HCLI students who are current members of the Church of the Highlands, are enrolled in the Ministry Training Certificate, and who complete the Placement Pathway. Students enrolled in Ministry Training can apply to the Placement Pathway in the fall and spring.

Ministry Training meets one night per week for 55 minutes. Christian Leadership is required as either a co-requisite or a prerequisite for enrollment in the program.

COURSE COMPLETION PLAN: *(Order of courses is dependent on enrollment)*

- MT011- Ministry Training 1
- MT012- Ministry Training 2
- MT021- Ministry Training 3
- MT022- Ministry Training 4
- MT031- Ministry Training 5
- MT032- Ministry Training 6
- MT041- Ministry Training 7
- MT042- Ministry Training 8

Upon successful completion of all courses, students will earn a Ministry Training Certificate.

Student Services

HCLI Student Complaint Resolution Policy

PURPOSE AND COMMITMENT

Highlands College Leadership Institute (HCLI) is committed to providing a Christ-centered, respectful, and responsive environment in which students can express concerns and seek resolution in alignment with biblical values and institutional integrity. This policy outlines the formal process by which students may submit complaints and how HCLI will respond, including complaints involving distance education under the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (SARA).

SCOPE

This policy applies to all HCLI students. For those enrolled in distance education programs under NC-SARA, this policy also addresses the procedures for filing complaints related to online learning experiences provided to students residing in other SARA member states.

I. Informal Resolution: Consistent with Matthew 18:15-17, HCLI encourages students to first resolve concerns informally by communicating directly with the individual(s) involved. Most issues can be resolved through grace-filled dialogue rooted in mutual respect and understanding.

II. Formal Complaint Submission: If the issue is not resolved informally, students may submit a formal complaint within 14 calendar days of the occurrence by completing the *HCLI Student Complaint Form*. Anonymous complaints will be reviewed at the discretion of the College and may not result in a formal investigation if insufficient information is provided.

III. Internal Resolution Process

1. Upon submission, a representative of the Resolution Committee will acknowledge identified submissions within 2 business days.
2. The Committee will review and seek resolution, typically within 10 business days.
3. If needed, the matter will be elevated to the College leadership.
4. A written response will be provided to identified complainants outlining findings and next steps.

The Resolution Committee will make a good-faith effort to address each concern with fairness, clarity, and timeliness. However, submission of a complaint does not guarantee that the requested outcomes will be implemented. The

College reserves the right to determine the appropriate resolution in alignment with institutional policies, accreditation standards, and applicable law.

IV. NC-SARA Complaints

Students enrolled in HCLI distance education from another SARA state may file a SARA-related complaint if it involves:

- Fraud or misrepresentation
- Inaccurate information about tuition, accreditation, job placement, or licensure
- Non-compliance with distance education standards under the C-RAC Guidelines

These students must first exhaust HCLI's internal complaint process. If unresolved, the student may file a complaint with HCLI's SARA State Portal Entity: *Alabama Commission on Higher Education*

- Website: www.ache.edu
- Email: acheinfo@ache.edu
- Phone: 334-242-1998

Complaints related to student grades or conduct violations are not subject to SARA oversight and will be resolved according to HCLI policy.

V. Institutional Transparency and Access

By August 1, 2026, this complaint resolution policy will be posted:

- On the HCLI website
- In the HCLI Student Handbook
- Within the online course catalog or enrollment documentation for distance education students

VI. Record-Keeping and Review

HCLI will maintain a confidential log of all complaints and resolutions for internal review and improvement. A summary of complaint categories and outcomes will be reviewed annually by the Executive Team.

VII. Compliance with Federal and State Requirements

This policy fulfills federal requirements under 34 CFR 600.9(a)(1) and NC-SARA policy sections 4.1 through 4.7.

VIII. Additional Assistance

If you need support completing the form or discerning the appropriate next steps, please contact hcli@highlandscollege.edu.

Highlands College Library

The Highlands College Library partners with faculty and team to provide a core collection of scholarly resources along with various technological services that support the

College's vision and mission and students' educational endeavors. For further information about the Library, including current hours of operation and a list of services provided, students can direct inquiries to library@highlandcollege.edu.

Policies

Student Privacy

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable U.S. Department of Education program. HCLI does not receive funds from the U.S. Department of Education and is not subject to FERPA. However, ethical principles for the confidentiality of student records are important to HCLI. The College has established policies and procedures that align with FERPA regulations.

Class Attendance

Attendance is not collected for HCLI courses.

Grading

At the end of each term, students earn a grade for every course attempted. Grades are calculated on a pass/fail basis.

Grade	Definition
P	Pass = 70% or higher
Fail	Failure = Less than 70%

Grade Appeal

Course assignment grade appeals must be addressed before the end of a course. If a student disagrees with a course assignment grade, the student should email the course instructor to discuss the disagreement before the end of the course.

Grade Dispute

If a student identifies an error in a course assignment grade or wishes to dispute a course grade after the end of the course, the following procedures and time limits apply.

1. The student's request should identify the rationale for the requested review and provide an explanation of why they did not raise the issue during the course.
2. The student should email the course instructor to discuss the assigned course grade and present supporting evidence to the course instructor no later than two weeks after the last day of the term.
3. If the student does not receive a satisfactory explanation or resolution of the course grade in question, the student may then submit a written request for review by email to the Registrar within

one week after the instructor's decision.

4. HCLI Leadership may then meet with the instructor, student, or both before deciding. The decision is final and is not subject to appeal.

Academic Standing

Students must pass their courses to remain in good academic standing.

Credit for Previous Coursework at HCLI

Students may seek to return to HCLI after a break in enrollment and be admitted. The Registrar will review the student's prior coursework and determine if the coursework is acceptable for certificate completion.

Course Registration

HCLI automatically registers students in courses before the start of each term until the program is completed or the student is withdrawn. Students are encouraged to contact the Registrar with questions or concerns regarding the registration process.

Change of Certificate

If a current student wishes to change their program (drop or add an additional program), then a student must submit a Change of Certificate form. The COC form is available in your Student Portal under Additional Resources.

Adding a Program may incur additional tuition and will be due when the student is registered for the courses, payable in the Student Portal.

Course Repeat

Students who earn a final grade of "Fail" in any course must repeat the course and will be charged the normal tuition rate. There is no limit to the number of retakes.

Withdrawal from HCLI

Student enrollment and class registration automatically renews each term until one of the following events occurs:

1. Withdrawal
2. Dismissal
3. Expulsion
4. Non-payment of tuition
5. Prolonged non-attendance and inactivity exceeding 21 days

A student who decides to withdraw from HCLI should complete one of the following:

- Email hcliregistrar@highlandscolllege.edu stating they would like to withdraw and the reason for their withdrawal.

- Submit a Withdrawal Request Form in the Student Portal. The form is located on the left side of the Student Portal page under Additional Resources. Students who withdraw receive a grade of "W."

Judicial Process

Discipline is the responsibility of every member of the community. Self-discipline is the highest form of discipline, which links inextricably with a growing Christian lifestyle. However, when an individual does not execute self-discipline, discipline becomes the college community's responsibility. The following policies and procedures are not inclusive but describe the behavior inappropriate for HCLI students. Disciplinary action may occur if a student is found to violate the values and principles of Highlands College.

Depending on the circumstances and situation, especially those of a more serious nature with an impact of the individual or campus community, HCLI Leadership may need to become involved immediately with the goals of correction, safety, and growth in mind. Many scriptures inform our process, including *Galatians 6:1-5*, *Hebrews 12:7-11*, *Matthew 18:15-17, 21-35*, and *Colossians 3:12-17*.

Infractions

Infractions entail offenses that include but are not limited to the following:

- Any action that violates the Highlands College Statement of Faith
- Any action that violates the HCLI Community Covenant (*for Church of the Highlands members*)

Sanctions

Sanctions are determined by the HCLI Judicial Committee. Sanctions may vary given the nature and severity of the offense.

1. **Warning:** A written notice to the student that the student is violating or has violated institutional regulations.
2. **Suspension:** Temporary separation of the student from HCLI for a definite period, after which the student is eligible to reapply.
3. **Expulsion:** Withdrawal and dismissal of the student from HCLI. The student is not eligible to return.

How to Contact HCLI

GENERAL

hcli@highlandscollege.edu

ADMISSIONS

hcliadmissions@highlandscollege.edu

LIBRARY

library@highlandscollege.edu

REGISTRAR

hcli REGISTRAR@highlandscollege.edu

STUDENT ACCOUNTS

hclistudentaccounts@highlandscollege.edu

TECHNOLOGY

support@hcli.highlandscollege.edu

Office Location and Hours

ADDRESS

3660 Grandview Parkway
Birmingham, AL 35243

BUSINESS HOURS

Monday – Friday
8:30 am – 4:30 pm CST