

The logo for Westmoreland County Community College features a stylized mountain range at the top, composed of several vertical bars of varying heights in shades of green and yellow. Below this, the text "WESTMORELAND" is written in a bold, green, sans-serif font. Underneath "WESTMORELAND", the words "COUNTY" and "COMMUNITY" are stacked vertically in a smaller, blue, sans-serif font. To the right of "COUNTY" and "COMMUNITY", the word "COLLEGE" is written in a large, bold, green, sans-serif font, overlapping the other text.

WESTMORELAND
COUNTY
COMMUNITY **COLLEGE**

Ambitious.

Student Handbook

2016-17

ADDENDUM

January 2017

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STUDENT POLICIES

CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT

NOTE: This policy supersedes the Code of Student Conduct published in the 2016-17 Student Handbook, October 2016.

Purpose and Rationale

Westmoreland County Community College (Westmoreland) is a learning-centered college focused on student success thus a positive educational environment is imperative. In order to ensure the health, safety, protection, and positive learning environment, Westmoreland has established the Code of Student Conduct.

Westmoreland holds that the purpose of the policies regarding the student conduct and disciplinary process is to establish guidelines for the educational environment within the college. Further, Westmoreland views the student conduct in a holistic and developmental manner; thereby, seeking educational growth and development throughout the process. Whereas Westmoreland is a learning-centered environment, every member of the campus community should familiarize themselves with the Code of Student Conduct, Student Handbook, and College Catalog.

Statement of Jurisdiction and Authority of Administration of the Code of Student Conduct

The following policies and procedures regarding conduct and disciplinary action are applicable to any Westmoreland location or function, the use of college properties, college-sponsored events and activities on or off campus. Westmoreland reserves the right to take any necessary and/or appropriate steps to protect the safety and well-being of the campus community. While Westmoreland's jurisdiction will generally be limited to conduct occurring on campus properties or at Westmoreland sponsored activities, a student who is charged with a crime as a result of off campus behavior, and who represents a risk to the reputation, health, or safety of the campus community may also be subjected to the Code of Student Conduct disciplinary process. Finally, jurisdiction may be extended when a student, or student organization, commits a prohibited act off campus against a student, faculty, or employee of Westmoreland, or the college itself, when such an act is related to the student or accuser's status within the college.

The vice president of Enrollment Management has been designated by the college president as the person responsible for implementing and enforcing the Code of Student Conduct. In cases where conflicts of interest arise, the vice president of Enrollment Management's designee will coordinate the process.

DEFINITIONS

Student Rights and Responsibilities

All students have the basic right to have the freedom to learn, meaning that they are free to take advantage of the educational opportunities available to them both through the curriculum and co-curriculum. This right is based on mutual respect and responsibility. When a student enrolls at Westmoreland, they agree to abide by all College policies and regulations. The violation of any rule within the Code of Student Conduct could result in disciplinary action. Further, Westmoreland will abide by any and all state, local, and federal laws with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Westmoreland County.

Standards of the Student Code

- I. Westmoreland students are expected to positively contribute to the positive learning environment. Violations of this standard include:**
 - a. Engaging in behavior that is discriminatory, bullying, harassing, or abusive to any individual or groups of individuals on the basis of their gender, gender identity, race, color, creed, religion, ethnicity, age, marital status, military status, national origin, sexual orientation, and/or disability. Violations can occur through various modalities including email, texts, phone calls, social media, and/or in-person.
 - b. Intentionally, or knowingly, engaging in conduct that endangers the life or property of another individual or entity. This includes the threat of harm, attempt of harm, or actual harm to oneself, another person, or the cause for a reasonable fear of such harm. Threatening behavior can include written statements, actions, gestures, etc., and can occur via emails, texts, phone calls, social media, verbally, in writing, and/or in-person.
 - c. Engaging in conduct that is disorderly, lewd, or otherwise disruptive to the learning and/or educational process.
 - d. Engaging in sexual contact with another person without consent. This type of conduct is referred to as sexual assault (Please see Title IX Policy as a cross-reference).
 - e. Stalking (including through social media), dating or domestic violence committed by one student against another that occurs on or off campus that negatively affects the learning environment of the student/s (Please reference Title IX Policy).
 - f. Engaging in any act of hazing, or any other kind of initiation to any student organization or athletic organization.
 - g. Engaging in retaliation of any kind.
 - h. Unauthorized use of electronics or other devices that make audio, visual, or photographic recordings.
 - i. Interfering with the normal operations of the college.
 - j. Interfering with classroom instruction.

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II. Westmoreland students are expected to preserve the health, safety, and welfare of the campus community. Violations of this standard include:

- a. Entering, or remaining, in any lab, classroom, office, building, or campus facility after closing time without proper authorization.
- b. Use, possession, distribution, sale or purchase of illegal substances on college property or at college sponsored events.
- c. Use, possession, sale, or purchase, of alcoholic beverages without following the procedures as outlined in the college's Student Drug and Alcohol Policy.
- d. Use, possession, or sale of illegal drugs (Please reference the college's Student Drug and Alcohol Policy)
- e. Incapacitation due to the use or abuse of alcohol or a controlled substance, or appearing in an intoxicated or altered state on college premises, at college-sponsored events, or while officially representing the college - particularly when there is a danger to self, others, or property.
- f. Smoking in areas of the campus not designated as smoking areas.
- g. Operating a motor vehicle in a reckless manner.
- h. Use, possession, sale, purchase or concealment of any firearms, licensed or unlicensed, including BB/Pellet guns, sling shots, and sharp edged objects which can be used as weapons, explosives or dangerous chemicals.
- i. Theft, willful defacement or willful destruction of college property or personal property of others.
- j. Theft, including, but not limited to intellectual property such as work products and computer software, either physically or through unauthorized invasion of computer files.
- k. Using another person's ID to gain access to the data communications network or the Internet.
- l. Using the data communications network for private or personal business or for any other purpose which is inconsistent with the research or instructional needs of the college.
- m. Failure to identify oneself when requested to do so by a college administrative official, security officer, faculty, or staff member.

III. Westmoreland students are expected to observe the rules, regulations, policies, and procedures of the college and local, state, and federal laws. Violations include:

- a. Knowingly engaging in behavior that is disruptive to the educational process, both inside the classroom and out. Examples of this conduct include conduct that disrupts college activities, such as blocking entrances and exits to classrooms, or conduct that infringes on the rights of others, or organizing such conduct.
- b. Unlawful gambling
- c. Underage possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages.
- d. Possessing, distributing, or using illegal drugs, or prescription drugs not prescribed by a medical doctor for one's use.
- e. Withholding, or intentionally giving false information to a college official.
- f. Forging, altering, or misusing any college document, i.e. transcripts, diplomas, etc.
- g. Violating any federal, state, or local law on or off campus at a college-sponsored event.
- h. Failing to comply with college policies as outlined in the college Catalog and/or Student Handbook.

Procedures for Dealing with Violations to the Code of Student Conduct

The vice president of Enrollment Management, or their designee handles all violations of the Code of Student Conduct.

Reporting a Violation

1. Any student, faculty member, college official, college employee, or member of the campus community may file a charge(s) of misconduct against a student.
2. All alleged violations should be submitted in writing within two weeks of the point in which the violation was known to occur.

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Investigation an Alleged Charge of Misconduct

1. Upon receiving a charge of misconduct, an investigation of the charge will occur.
2. The investigation will typically include an interview with the person within the campus community filing the charges of misconduct, the complainant, or victim, possibly witnesses, and finally, the respondent, or the student who the charges of misconduct were filed against.
3. Temporary Suspension- The vice president of Enrollment Management, or designee may suspend the student from the college for an interim period pending disciplinary proceedings.
 - a. The time period should be clearly defined, i.e., two days, three days, etc.
 - b. The temporary suspension may come immediately effective without prior notice if needed to conduct further investigation of the alleged violation.
 - c. The student suspended on a temporary basis will have an expedited Conduct Hearing (within five business days).
 - i. If insufficient evidence is found prior to the first Conduct Meeting, and further investigation is needed, then the temporary suspension may continue until the next Conduct Meeting.
4. As a result of the investigation, the college may:
 - a. Dismiss the allegations as unfounded, or
 - b. Administer disciplinary act as deemed appropriate based upon the severity of the violations.
 - i. If the investigation yields that disciplinary actions are needed, the respondent will be informed in writing and asked to meet with the vice president of Enrollment Management, or designee for a Conduct Meeting.

Disciplinary Actions

1. As aforementioned, the respondent will be informed of the alleged violation of the Code of student Conduct in writing, and subsequently scheduled for a Conduct Meeting.
2. During the Conduct Meeting, the respondent will have the opportunity to present their side of the alleged violation.
3. All steps will be taken to resolve the charges through mutual agreement and to determine the appropriate disciplinary actions. Steps to resolve the conduct violations could include mediated discussions with students and/or faculty, letters of apology, and letters of corrective action. A written summary will be provided at the conclusion of any mutual agreement.
4. If a mutual agreement is not reached, then the student will receive notification of disciplinary action within three (3) working days.
5. Disciplinary actions can include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Educational Sanctions- A student may be assigned a paper, a project, and/or readings which must be completed within a prescribed timeframe and are designed to help students who violate the Code of Student Conduct reflect and learn from their violations.

- b. Probation- Terms of probation may include restricted access to designated areas of campus (e.g. Cafeteria, Library, etc.) and/or restricted participation in college activities or athletics. If a student violates the restrictions imposed, or becomes involved in any other violations of conduct while on disciplinary probation, additional sanctions may be imposed after a meeting with the vice president of Enrollment Management, up to and including suspension or dismissal from the College. Probationary notice is to be given to the student in writing with the terms of the probation and the rationale carefully detailed.
- c. Written Warning- A Written Warning is a letter from the vice president of Enrollment Management to a student found in violation of the Code of Student Conduct. The specific violation is to be stated in the letter along with a rationale for why it violates the Code of Student Conduct, and it will be copied to the President of the College.
- d. Restitution- Any student found in violation of the Code of Student Conduct that has an associated expense to the college or members of the campus community may be required to make financial restitution to all parties involved. Failure to do so within a given period of time could result in further disciplinary action.
- e. Monetary Fines- Monetary fines could be imposed in cases where deemed necessary.
- f. Community Service- an unpaid service to the benefit of the campus community, or community at large. Failure to comply within a given period of time could result in further disciplinary action.
- g. Dean's Hold- A hold applied to the student's account that prohibits all academic and financial transactions without the consent of the vice president of Enrollment Management.
- h. Mandated referral to an evaluation by psychologist, or mental health professional.
- i. Withdrawal for a Course- The vice president of Enrollment Management, or designee, may choose to withdraw a student from a course or transfer them to another section.
- j. Classroom Removal- A faculty member may temporarily remove a student from class who disrupts the educational environment. If the faculty member removes the student for more than one class session, he/she will submit a written report within 48 hours of the incident for review by the vice president for Enrollment Management. A Conduct Meeting will be scheduled on a priority basis and decisions as to whether or not a student can return to class will be made in consultation with the faculty member.
- k. Suspension- Suspension shall be a specific period of time in which a student is prohibited from enrolling at the institution. Typically, a student who is suspended will receive a "W" for all of his/her courses.
- l. Expulsion- Expulsion is the immediate removal of a student from the college prohibiting future enrollment at the institution. Typically, a student who is suspended will receive a "W" for all of his/her courses.

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Appeal Process

A student who wishes to appeal the decision concerning a violation of the Code of Student Conduct must appeal the decision by filing a written appeal with the Judicial Board within 10 business days of the decision.

Judicial Board: The Judicial Board has been designed to treat adjudicated incidents of violation of the college rules and regulations by students who appeal the decision made by the college. Such incidents exclude behavior that can be defined as academic in nature. Appeals can only be forwarded to the Judicial Board for consideration if there is: (1) additional information not available for initial consideration; (2) extenuating circumstances not made known; (3) an error or irregularity in the Code of Student Conduct process.

The Judicial Board shall consist of five members, which will include three student representatives selected and approved by Student Government Association and one faculty and one staff appointed by the vice president of Enrollment Management.

Procedures: All appeals made in connection with a nonacademic matter will be forwarded to the chairperson of the Judicial Board.

1. The appeal must be presented in written form, and should include all facts. This should include particular dates, times, actions, and people involved.
2. All parties asked to appear at the hearing will be given five business days' notice of the hearing. They will also be given a written statement of charges and the procedure which will be followed in the hearing. In order for a hearing to take place, a quorum of three members must be present with at least one of whom must be faculty and/or staff. The Judicial Board will assume responsibility for its procedural operation which will include electing a chairperson and conducting hearings according to the following guidelines:
 - a. Hearings shall be conducted in private.
 - b. Admission of any person, not a party to the hearing, shall be at the discretion of the chairperson.
 - c. The complainant and/or the accused student are responsible for presenting his or her own case.
 - d. Both the student and complainant shall have the right to present witnesses and shall have the opportunity to cross examine the other's witness.
 - e. Relevant records, exhibits and written statements may be admitted as evidence for consideration by the Judicial Board, at the discretion of the chairperson. These records, exhibits and written statements must be submitted to the chairperson at least three days before the Judicial Board meets.
 - f. Formal rules of civil and criminal procedures, and/or technical rules of evidence, will not be strictly applied in Judicial Board proceedings.
 - g. There shall be a transcript of the hearing, provided by the college, in the form of an electronic recording. No unauthorized recording devices will be permitted in the room. The record shall become the property of the college.
 - h. After the hearing, the Judicial Board shall meet in closed session to determine, by majority vote, whether the student's appeal should be upheld and/or to determine a different sanction.
 - i. All proceedings presented to the Judicial Board should be kept confidential.
 - j. The Judicial Board's decisions and recommended sanctions shall be prepared in writing within five business days and directed to the vice president of Enrollment Management. The decision of the Judicial Board is final.

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Student Email Policy

Westmoreland County Community College (Westmoreland) provides electronic mail (E-Mail) resources to support an environment conducive to teaching and learning; specifically, to assist students in their educational endeavors, to encourage communication and engagement with peers, faculty, and staff, and to provide a primary mode of communication to the Westmoreland community.

A student's Westmoreland e-mail account will serve as the official e-mail account through which the college will communicate when communicating via e-mail.

The following policy is in place to ensure the proper use of Westmoreland student e-mail accounts. Policy violations will be investigated by designated Westmoreland officials, and may result in actions including the loss of computer privileges, or appropriate legal action if acts constitute a civil or criminal offense.

This policy encompasses all use of student e-mail regardless of the platform.

Acceptable Use

- A means of communication between faculty, staff, and students.
- As a method of sending and receiving important notifications and information.
- As a tool for collaboration in the instructional process.

Prohibited Use

- Sending documents that include forgery, plagiarism, or violations of copyright laws.
- Sending or forwarding e-mails that are obscene, abusive, threatening, or otherwise harassing.
- Using the e-mail system to violate a law or regulation, or that encourages illegal activity.
- Knowingly, or recklessly transmitting email messages that contain viruses, worms, spyware or any form of malware.
- Use of e-mail that interferes with other's ability to conduct institutional business.
- Use of e-mail that will effect direct costs to the institution or for commercial purposes and/or personal financial gain.
- Providing a third party with an individual's e-mail address or a list obtained from within the institutional system without express written permissions.

Termination of Student E-Mail

- Westmoreland students will not have their e-mail terminated unless separated from the college due to suspension or expulsion.

Disclosures

- Students have no individual rights to privacy with regard to a student Westmoreland e-mail account.
- The college has the right to review sent or received e-mails at any time for monitoring purposes or for purposes related to institutional business. Westmoreland reserves the right to access and disclose the contents of a student's e-mail without consent of the user to the extent permitted by law. This will occur when Westmoreland believes it has a legitimate business or legal need and after proper authorization has been obtained from the appropriate authority at Westmoreland.
- Westmoreland may monitor e-mail communications at any time, if it is deemed necessary.
- Westmoreland reserves the right to access, review, and disclose the e-mail addresses of students to the extent required by the PA Right to Know laws, and allowed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA).

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