Should I file a complaint?

Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC)

The ACCSC complaint process is available to any individual wishing to file a complaint against an ACCSC-accredited school or a school accepted into ACCSC's initial accreditation process.

Any allegation must reasonably suggest that the school is not in compliance with ACCSC standards. The following tips will help ACCSC to effectively and efficiently investigate allegations.

Please note that should ACCSC receive abusive or threatening communication from a complainant toward ACCSC staff or the Commission, ACCSC will not communicate any further with a complainant but will continue to review the received complaint.

ACCSC COMPLAINT INFORMATION

- It is not required to follow a school's complaint process in order to file a complaint with ACCSC.
  - The school's complaint process may lead to a faster and more personal resolution of an issue or concern than ACCSC's process.
- Upon receipt of your complaint, ACCSC will review the complaint, request any additional or needed information, and provide next steps.
- The ACCSC complaint process can take time to complete and ACCSC will keep you informed of your complaint's status. It will be about 90 days between when a complaint is processed and when it is reviewed by the Commission.
  - As part of the process, the Commission provides a copy of the complaint to the school and directs the school to provide a written response to ACCSC, which the Commission then reviews.
- In reviewing the allegations and school's response, the Commission looks to determine whether a school is in compliance with the ACCSC Standards of Accreditation, available here.
  - The Commission is not able to intervene as a personal mediator in cases of disciplinary action/dismissal or in regard to admissions, grades, graduation, fees, or other similar points.
    - Complaints that suggest that a school is out of compliance with ACCSC standards in these areas will be reviewed though the Commission cannot ensure a personal resolution to a situation.
  - The Commission may refer you to another party (such as a state agency or other accreditor) that can more appropriately assist you in resolving your complaint.

ACCSC COMPLAINT PROCESS

1. Complete the ACCSC Complaint Form. ***(If you wish to remain anonymous, please see the anonymous complaints guidance.)***
2. Write a narrative and gather any relevant documents.
3. Send the completed ACCSC Complaint Form[1], detailed narrative, and supporting documents to ACCSC via one of the following methods:

   Email to: complaints@accsc.org

   Mail to: Executive Director
   Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges
   2101 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 302
   Arlington, Virginia 22201

   Fax to: 703.247.4533
4. ACCSC reviews the complaint to ensure it falls within ACCSC's scope, provides a copy of the complaint to the school and directs the school to provide a written response to ACCSC.

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[1] In lieu of the Complaint Form, you may also send via email to complaints@accsc.org, the school and its address and permission for ACCSC to forward your complaint and identity to the school as part of the complaint process.

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a. ACCSC reviews the complaint and school's response(s) and makes a determination regarding the school's compliance with Accrediting Standards. You as the complainant will receive final written correspondence from the Commission regarding the status of your complaint and the Commission's final determination.

ACCSC COMPLAINT TIPS

The following steps are not necessary, however may assist the Commission to more effectively and efficiently investigate your complaint.

1. Writing a detailed narrative:
    a. Include a timeline of events and copies of communications, if applicable;
    b. Describe the areas that you believe the school may be out of compliance; and
    c. Include any relevant school policies;
2. The following supporting documents may help the Commission process and review your complaint:
    a. Emails;
    b. Forms (enrollment agreements, syllabi, course descriptions, school catalog, etc.);
    c. Specific information regarding violated school policies or ACCSC Standards; and
    d. Correspondence from the school;
3. Try to include all information you can with your complaint in one submission. You can submit additional information at a later time, but this will delay the complaint process because the school will need time to respond; and
4. Clearly identify course and program names and faculty or staff names and titles, as they are applicable.
5. *Please note that should ACCSC receive abusive or threatening communication from a complainant, ACCSC will not communicate any further with a complainant but will continue to review the received complaint.*

ANONYMOUS COMPLAINTS

Anonymous Complaints will be reviewed by the Commission in order to determine whether or not to process the complaint.

You may request to remain anonymous. Complaints that are submitted without identifiable information or contact information will be considered anonymous.

Although potentially identifiable information will be redacted before providing your complaint to the school, the Commission cannot guarantee your confidentiality.

- Complaints submitted anonymously are considered to be nameless and have no contact information. Therefore, the sender of the complaint cannot be contacted for additional information and cannot be notified of the Commission's conclusions.
- Complaints submitted anonymously that do not contain sufficient detail and/or do not contain a specific allegation will not be processed.
- Anonymous complaints should contain detailed information, including documentation to support allegations.
- Please ensure that your complaint and documentation do not contain your personally identifiable information.
    - The Commission will redact potentially identifiable information but may not be able to redact all contextually identifiable information. The Commission cannot guarantee your confidentiality.