

WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES
ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS
533 AIRPORT BLVD., SUITE 200
BURLINGAME, CA 94010-2009

PROCEDURES FOR FILING COMPLAINTS

(Excerpt from Commission Bylaws)

A15.1 Complaints Regarding Quality, Integrity, and Effectiveness

Accreditation by the Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges is an expression of confidence that an institution is satisfactorily achieving its objectives and that it meets or exceeds the Commission's standards of quality, integrity and effectiveness. The Commission is concerned with institutional integrity and with performance consistent with Commission standards and policy. While it cannot intervene in the internal procedures of institutions or act as a regulatory body, the Commission can and does respond to complaints regarding allegations of conditions at affiliated institutions that raise significant questions about the institutions compliance with the standard of conduct expected of an accredited institution.

A15.2 Allegations not under ACS Jurisdiction

The ACS does not consider allegations concerning the personal lives of individuals connected with its affiliated institutions. It assumes no responsibility for adjudicating isolated individual grievances between students, faculty, or members of the public and individual institutions. The Commission will not act as a court of appeal in matters of admission, granting or transfer of academic credit, grades, fees, student financial aid, student discipline, collective bargaining, faculty appointments, promotion, tenure, and dismissals or similar matters. With regard to an affiliated institution operated or governed by a religious organization, the Commission will not respond to any complaint regarding the religious nature or programs of the school (e.g., a complaint about the orthodoxy of a religious service, textbook, or class will not be adjudicated by the Commission). If the complainant has instituted or has threatened to institute litigation against the institution, no action under this procedure will be taken by the Commission while the matter is under judicial consideration.

A15.3 Initial Complaint Requirements

Complaints are considered only when made in writing and when the complainant is clearly identified. Substantial evidence should be included in support of the allegation that the institution is in significant violation of the rules of good practice as stated in the Commission's criteria, standards and policies. Such evidence should state relevant and provable facts. The Commission requires that each affiliated institution have in place student grievance and public complaint policies and procedures that are reasonable, fairly administered, and well publicized. A record of all written complaints received by the institution must be maintained and made available for review by ACS upon request. The complainant should demonstrate that a serious effort has been made to pursue all review procedures provided by the institution.

D3.2 Complainant's Responsibilities

It is the complainant's responsibility to do the following:

- a.** State the complaint in the clearest possible terms.
- b.** Provide, in writing, a clear description of the evidence upon which the allegation is based.
- c.** Demonstrate that all remedies available at the institution (grievance procedures, appeal hearings, etc.) have been exhausted. The complainant shall describe what has been done in this regard.
- d.** Attest that the matter in question is not under litigation nor the threat of litigation.
- e.** Acknowledge awareness that Commission staff may send a copy of the complaint to the chief executive of the institution.
- f.** Sign the complaint.