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# **Public and Student Complaints**

## **Policy on Student and Public Complaints Against Institutions**

*Approved Revision January 2013*

2. Within ten days of the receipt of a complaint it will be acknowledged in writing and initially reviewed by the staff of the Commission. Individual complaints, whether acted upon or not by the Commission, will be retained in Commission files.
3. If the Commission staff finds the complaint to be not within the scope of Commission policies and jurisdiction, the complainant will be so notified.
4. If the complaint appears to be within the scope of Commission policies and jurisdiction, and is substantially documented, a copy of the complaint will be forwarded to the institution's chief executive, who will be asked to respond to complaint by addressing a letter and any supporting evidence to the Vice President of the Commission within thirty days.
5. The Commission staff will review the complaint, the response, and evidence submitted by the institution's president, and will determine one of the following:
  - a. That the complaint will not be processed further. The complainant will be so notified within ten days.
  - b. That the complaint has sufficient substance to warrant further investigation. If the Commission decides to investigate a complaint, it will inform the complainant of its decision to investigate at the same time it informs the institution of its intent to investigate.
6. As part of its investigation, the Commission may request information of the institution and may send representatives to visit that institution for purposes of fact-finding. The Commission may also request information of other agencies that accredit the institution or authorize it to operate, and of the U.S. Department of Education. If further investigation is warranted, the time to conduct the investigation may vary considerably depending on the circumstances and the nature of the complaint.
7. The Commission will prepare a Report of the Findings of the Complaint Investigation. Prior to the Commission's disposition of the complaint, the institution will have an opportunity to respond in writing within thirty days to the findings of the investigation.
8. The Commission will consider the Complaint, the Report of the Findings of the Complaint Investigation, and any institutional response to the findings of the investigation in reaching a disposition on the Complaint. Although every effort will be made to expedite a decision, it is not possible to guarantee a specific time frame in which the process will be completed.
9. If the Commission's deliberations conclude that there is credible evidence that the institution is not meeting Accreditation Standards or complying with Commission policies, the Commission may (a) provide directives to the institution to take immediate corrective actions, or (b) invoke any of the sanctions provided for in policy. The Commission will also schedule appropriate monitoring of the institution's subsequent response, including calling for Special Reports and visits by Commission representatives.
10. The decision is final and will be communicated by the Vice President of the Commission to the institution and the complainant. If the complaint was referred to the ACCJC by another agency, the Commission will provide that agency with copies of correspondence that state the outcome of the complaint within ten days of the Commission decision on the disposition of the complaint. The Commission will also provide the U.S. Department of Education notice of the disposition of any complaint that directly or indirectly affects an institution's eligibility for Title IV funds.
11. The Commission will keep a record of student and public complaints against member institutions. Commission staff will report to the Commission annually regarding the status and resolution of student and public complaints against member institutions. At the time of an institution's comprehensive evaluation, a summary of any complaints will be provided to the evaluation team chair for consideration by the evaluation team.

*Adopted June 1972; Revised January 1984, January 1993; Edited October 1997; Revised June 2001; Edited August 2007; Revised January 2013; Edited April 2013*

See Complaint Policy from ACCJC/committees/accreditation/documents/accjc/student-and-public-complaints-against-institutions.pdfNew WindowPrimary w-50Outline