

Policy on Complaints Against the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

June 2022 June 2023
First Read

Policy

~~The Commission is committed to reviewing in a timely, fair, and equitable manner any complaint against itself. The Commission applies unbiased judgment to said complaints and takes follow-up action, as appropriate, based on the results of its review.~~¹ ~~The purpose of this policy is to provide~~ Individuals may file a complaint against the Commission if they believe the Commission a process whereby individuals who have been aggrieved as a direct result of acts or omissions by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) related to its accreditation functions may file a complaint. Complaints against the ACCJC may be about the ACCJC's ~~lack of~~ is out of compliance with its own published Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies (together Commission's Standards), with federal regulations, ~~and or~~ with accreditation procedures.

In order to be considered a formal complaint against the ACCJC, a complaint must involve issues broader in scope than a concern about a specific institutional action or a specific evaluation team.

Criteria for Review of a Complaint

- Complaint must identify the Commission's Standards or procedures in question.
- Complaint must include substantial evidence to support the allegations.
- Complainant must submit the complaint within 18 months from the date of the alleged occurrence(s) indicating noncompliance with Commission's Standards, federal regulations, or procedures.
- Complaint must be written and submitted through ACCJC's online complaint form <https://accjc.org/forms/complaints-against-the-accjc/>, or mailed in hard copy to the Commission at ACCJC, 428 J Street, Suite 400, Sacramento, CA 95814.
- Complaint must include complainant name, reply address, and signature.

Complaints ACCJC Will Not Review

- ~~The~~ ACCJC does not review complaints seeking to substitute Commission judgements or team ~~judgments~~ recommendations related to institutional reviews or those raising ~~raise~~

¹ § 602.23 (c)(3)

matters about which a member institution has due process procedures as a part of accreditation reviews.²

- An accreditation action not in accord with a complainant's expectation is not in and of itself cause for review of a complaint against the ACCJC.³
- ~~The ACCJC does not review complaints presented primarily to indicate disagreement with accreditation standards, or to indicate comment those concerning the accredited status of a member institution.~~
- ACCJC does not accept anonymous complaints.

~~Complaints against the Commission may be submitted on the agency's website and must state clearly the nature of the complaint and the manner in which the complainant was directly aggrieved by the acts or omissions. The complainant must be clearly identified and the complaint must contain a signature. The complaint must identify the Commission's Standards, or procedure in question and include substantial evidence to support the allegations being made. Should a complaint require Commission consideration and action, ACCJC will notify the complainant will be notified of the timing of the Commission's review.~~

~~Except in extraordinary circumstances, the ACCJC does not consider complaints if the concern alleged occurred more than three years prior to filing the complaint. The ACCJC may elect to consider complaints together if they concern the same circumstances, complainants, or periods of time. The ACCJC does not accept amendments to a complaint.~~

Procedures

The President, ~~or their designee,~~ on behalf of the ACCJC, responds to each complaint made against the ACCJC within 30 working days of receipt of the complaint. ~~(If more time than this is required to complete an investigation its review, ACCJC will notify the complainant is notified within the initial 30 days).~~ Based on the review, ACCJC ; implements corrective action where appropriate or makes recommendations to the Commission to implement the corrections. The President shall report all complaints ; reports the nature and disposition of any complaints to the Chair of the Commission's Executive Committee ; and compiles annually a list, available to the public on request, which summarizes the nature and disposition of any such complaints. Upon advice of counsel, the ACCJC retains the right to withhold public disclosure of information if potential legal action is involved in the complaint.

If the President cannot resolve a complaint filed against the ACCJC, ~~under the provisions of this section is not resolved by the President,~~ or if the President is a direct subject of the complaint, the Commission Chair shall ~~designate one or more persons to review the handling complaint to ensure an unbiased and equitable process and to determine whether corrective action is needed and offer recommendations for improvement.~~ The Commission shall review the Chair's

² Policy on Rights, Responsibilities, and Good Practice in Relations with Member Institutions

³ Please refer to the forms for Third Party Comment, Complaints Against Member Institutions, and for submitting comment on policies and standards (*Policy on Review of Accreditation Standards*) for these kinds of communication.

report ~~of the designated reviewer(s)~~ and the Chair shall notify the complainant and the President of its response.

Any persons involved in the review of complaints must abide by the Commission's Policy on Conflict of Interest for Commissioners, Evaluation Team Members, Consultants, Administrative Staff, and Other Commission Representatives.

~~The~~ ACCJC's disposition of complaints under this policy is final. Complainants do not have a right to appeal the disposition of a complaint.

Timetable for Complaints Against ACCJC

<u>Time</u>	<u>Responsible Party</u>	<u>Action</u>
<u>Within 18 months of occurrence</u>	<u>Complainant</u>	<u>Submit information pertaining to non-compliance</u>
<u>Within 30 working days of receipt</u>	<u>ACCJC President or Commission Chair (if issues of noncompliance pertains to the President)</u>	<u>Responds to complainant; if more time is required to respond, will notify complainant regarding additional time, take corrective action if applicable and notify complainant</u>

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