

## ACHENA Policy for Addressing Student or Faculty/Staff Complaints

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An important function of school accreditation is to protect the rights and interest of students, faculty and staff. ACHENA accreditation standards require schools to establish and make available school policies for accepting, reviewing and making a determination regarding complaints from any member of the school community.

ACHENA accepts and reviews complaints about ACHENA-accredited or candidate programs from students, faculty, staff, other institutions or programs and members of the public that allege violations of ACHENA Eligibility Requirements, accreditation standards, policies or procedures

To be processed, a complaint must:

1. Be written and signed;
2. Identify the individual, group or legal entity making the complaint;
3. Present evidence that the complainant has exhausted internal institutional grievance and review mechanisms available to the complainant;
4. Present evidence that the subject institution/program has violated one or more of ACHENA's Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, policies or procedures within the last 5 years;
5. Describe the status of legal action, if any, related to the complaint;
6. Grant permission to send the complaint in its entirety to the institution.

ACHENA requires that a person follow the school's established policies and procedures for submitting a complaint. Generally, the complaint process will be spelled out in the Student Handbook which should be posted on the school's website. If a person has exhausted the school's complaint process without satisfaction, the complaint may be submitted to ACHENA for consideration.

**Complaints must be addressed to ACHENA President and submitted to [info@achena.org](mailto:info@achena.org).**

ACHENA will acknowledge receipt of each complaint received against an accredited or candidate program within 15 days of receipt. Staff will review the complaint and, if it is found to be appropriate for review, will submit the complaint to the school and request a written response be submitted to ACHENA. After receipt of the school's written response, ACHENA staff may seek an informal resolution without formal action by ACHENA. If a complaint requires formal ACHENA review and action, the complaint record is forwarded to an ACHENA Review Committee, appointed by the president, to consider the complaint. The committee may: 1) Seek additional information from the complainant or the school; 2) Dismiss the complaint as not alleging or establishing a violation of Commission Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation standards, policies or procedures, or 3) Affirm that the complaint record establishes a violation of ACHENA Eligibility Requirements, accreditation standards, policies or procedures and require the institution/program to take remedial action.

If ACHENA determines that the institution or its program is in non-compliance with any ACHENA Eligibility Requirements, accreditation standards, criteria, policies or procedures, ACHENA will instruct the institution to take remedial action and document institution/program action in response to the decision in a follow-up report or as confirmed by a site visit. Depending on the nature and seriousness of the complaint, ACHENA may take other actions. All Complaints will normally be resolved within 90 calendar days.

**For the full policy, see page 29 of the [ACHENA Policies and Procedures Manual](#).**

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