

Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA)

Complaints Against an Affiliated Institution

Each year, the Commission receives a number of complaints about institutions from faculty, students, and other parties. The Commission has established a clear distinction between individual grievances and complaints that appear to involve broad institutional practices. Where a complaint does raise issues regarding the institution's ongoing ability to meet the Criteria of Accreditation, the Commission forwards the complaint to the institution and requests a formal response.

Instructions for Filing a Complaint with the Commission

Individuals interested in bringing an appropriate complaint to the attention of the Commission should take some time to compile a complete submission as outlined below. There is no complaint form.

1. Write a cover letter directed to the Commission containing a brief narrative of the facts of the complaint. In most cases, such a narrative need be no longer than a few pages.
2. Indicate in your complaint why you believe the issues raised in your complaint are accrediting issues. If possible, please review the Commission's Criteria for Accreditation on the Commission's Web site prior to writing this section. You should also indicate how you believe the Commission can assist you with this matter. Remember that the Commission cannot assist you in understanding your tuition bill, arranging for a refund of tuition, obtaining a higher grade for a course, seeking reinstatement to an academic program, etc.
3. Attach documentation to support your narrative wherever possible. (For example, if you make reference in your complaint to an institutional policy, include a copy of the policy with your complaint.) Helpful documentation might include relevant portions of the catalog, letters or e-mail exchanged between you and the institution, learning agreements, etc.
4. A few reminders--
 - Please type your complaint or print very neatly.
 - Please do not use abbreviations or nicknames (e.g., NMS or USC or U of N).
 - Sign and date the cover letter.
 - Include contact information for future correspondence, with a street address.
 - If you are writing on behalf of someone else (son/daughter or client), be sure to provide that person's consent in writing to allow you to communicate with the Commission on his/her behalf.
5. Mail the letter and its attachments to the Commission's office at 230 South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500, Chicago, IL 60604-1413. The Commission does not have an online complaint system and does not accept complaints via e-mail.

Please note that The Commission will not consider those complaints that are not in writing and do not contain the elements noted here. The Commission's complaint policy precludes it from considering matters more than five years old. The Commission will acknowledge your complaint within thirty days of receiving it and let you know whether your complaint is complete and whether it raises issues that are related to accrediting requirements or whether it is an individual dispute outside the jurisdiction of the Commission's complaint policy.

Email questions to complaints@hlcommission.org.