



## Complaint Guidelines/Process

1. Oregon law stipulates every school must have a grievance procedure in place. Students should attempt to resolve any grievances they may have with their school first. Should attempts to resolve these problems with appropriate school officials fail, or should you be dissatisfied with the final outcome of the college complaint process, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC), can then respond to a formal complaint through our agency for any student discrimination/retaliation complaints by connecting with a HECC Complaint Specialist.
2. The Commission investigates and works to resolve complaints against postsecondary institutions related to discrimination as defined by [ORS 659.850](#), and retaliation as defined by [ORS 659.852](#). The process for student discrimination/retaliation complaints is outlined in Oregon Administrative Rules ([OAR](#)) [715-011-005](#) through 715-011-0065, OAR 715-011-0075, OAR 715-011-0080 or OAR 715-011-0085. Complaints against private career schools are defined under [ORS 345.120](#) and [ORS 345.240](#). Students who attend institutions online may also file or have their complaints referred to the proper authority through HECC
3. The Commission cannot investigate or review an anonymous complaint.
4. The Commission cannot offer any legal advice during the complaint investigation. Any information received shall not be interpreted as legal advice or consultation.
5. The Commission does not intervene in student grade disputes, unless the student believes the grade dispute has resulted in or is the result of discrimination or retaliation against the student.

The following agency intake process is used for review of student complaints against Oregon-based public university, community college, private career school or private college, university or online degree program:

1. Student will submit an inquiry to Commission staff.
2. If the institutional complaint process is not exhausted, then the complaint is referred back to the institution.
3. If the institutional complaint process is exhausted, then Commission staff takes complaint information from the individual student. Documentation indicating this has been done must be provided to Commission staff prior to beginning the complainant review process.
4. HECC conducts a fact-gathering investigation with both the student and the institution.
5. The institution submits additional information and suggests appropriate resolution.
6. If resolution acceptable, complaint STOPS HERE. If not resolved, process continues to next step.
7. HECC staff, student and institution negotiate in good faith to resolve the complaint. If necessary, HECC or its designee investigates the complaint, and may recommend mediation.

8. HECC issues letter to student and the institution informing the student of the complaint process findings and determinations.