

Student Complaints - www.thecb.state.tx.us/studentcomplaints

Overview: The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) adopted rules codified under Title 19 of the Texas Administrative Code, Sections [1.110 – 1.120](#), on October 25, 2012. The rules create a student complaint procedure to comply with the U.S. Department of Education's "Program Integrity" regulations, which require each state to have a student complaint procedure in order for public and private higher education institutions to be eligible for federal Title IV funds. In December 2011, the Office of Attorney General of Texas issued an opinion stating that THECB has authority under Texas Education Code Section 61.031 to promulgate procedures for handling student complaints concerning higher education institutions.

How to submit a student complaint: After exhausting the institution's grievance/complaint process, current, former, and prospective students may initiate a complaint with THECB by submitting the required forms along with evidence of their completion of their institution's complaint procedures. Complaints may be submitted using one of the following three options:

- Completing the online student complaint form and uploading the required supporting documentation in Portable Document Format (PDF)

To access the online student complaint form, use the "[Contact Us](#)" link to submit an email with "Student Complaint Against a Higher Education Institution" selected as the Contact Reason. After submitting your email, wait a few moments for the online student complaint form to be automatically presented for your use.

- Sending the required [Student Complaint and Release Forms](#) and supporting documentation as PDF attachments by email to studentcomplaints@thecb.state.tx.us

or

- Mailing printed forms and documentation to:

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
Office of General Counsel
P.O. Box 12788
Austin, Texas 78711-2788

Facsimile transmissions of student complaint forms are not accepted.

All submitted student complaint forms must include a signed Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Consent and Release form and THECB Consent and Agreement Form. Submitted complaints regarding students with disabilities shall also include a signed [Authorization to Disclose Medical Record Information](#) form.

The Agency does not handle, investigate, or attempt to resolve complaints concerning actions that occurred more than two years prior to filing a student complaint form with the Agency, unless the cause of the delay in filing the student complaint form with the Agency was the complainant's exhaustion of the institution's grievance procedures.

Former students shall file a student complaint form with the Agency no later than one year after the student's last date of attendance at the institution, or within 6 months of discovering the grounds for complaint, unless the cause of the delay in filing the student complaint form with the Agency was the complainant's exhaustion of the institution's grievance procedures.

Process: The first step in addressing a complaint is to follow your institution's complaint procedures. If your institution is unable to resolve the matter after you have exhausted their complaint and appeal processes, you may file a complaint with this Agency. Once the Agency receives a student complaint form, the Agency may refer the complaint to other agencies or entities as follows: THECB may refer complaints alleging that an institution has violated state consumer protection laws to the Consumer Protection Division of the Office of the Attorney General of Texas for investigation and resolution, and may refer complaints pertaining to a component institution in a university system to the appropriate university system for investigation and resolution. E.g., complaints pertaining to an institution in the University of Texas System, Texas A&M University System, University of Houston System, University of North Texas System, Texas Tech University System, or Texas State University System can be referred to the appropriate university system for investigation and resolution.

Further, if THECB determines that a complaint is appropriate for investigation and resolution, by the institution's accrediting agency or an educational association such as ICUT (Independent Colleges & Universities of Texas, Inc.), the Agency may refer the complaint to the accrediting agency or educational association. THECB has the right to adopt any decision made by the accrediting agency or educational association, and may terminate the referral of the complaint to those entities at any time and proceed to investigate and adjudicate the complaint.

If a student complaint concerns compliance with the statutes and regulations that THECB administers and the complaint has not been referred to another entity, THECB will initiate an investigation. Prior to initiating an investigation, however, the student **must** exhaust all grievance/complaint and appeal procedures that the institution has established to address student complaints and provide documentation to THECB of such exhaustion.

As part of its investigation, THECB will request a response from the institution, and may also contact other persons or entities named in the student's complaint or in the institution's response, in order to ascertain all relevant facts. During its investigation, THECB will, in appropriate cases, attempt to facilitate an informal resolution to the complaint that is mutually satisfactory to the student and institution. In cases in which an informal resolution between the student and the institution is not feasible, THECB will evaluate the results of the investigation of the student complaint and recommend a course of action to the Commissioner. After receiving staff's recommendation, the Commissioner will consider the recommendation regarding the complaint and render a written determination either dismissing the complaint or requiring the institution to take specific actions to remedy the complaint. The Commissioner may also request the Board to review and decide issues that regard institutional integrity.

For the rules governing student complaints – Title 19 of the Texas Administrative Code, Sections 1.110-1.120, please click on the following link:

[http://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac\\$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=5&ti=19&pt=1&ch=1&sch=E&rl=Y](http://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=5&ti=19&pt=1&ch=1&sch=E&rl=Y)