

Alabama's TWO-YEAR INSTITUTIONS of Higher Education

Student Complaint Process

In 2015, the Alabama Legislature vested oversight of the state's public two-year institutions of higher education (known as the Alabama Community College System (ACCS)) with the Alabama Community College System Board of Trustees. The Alabama Legislature further directed the Board of Trustees to delegate to the System's Chancellor the authority to act and make decisions concerning the management and operation of the community and technical colleges. The Chancellor is assisted in these duties by the staff of the System Office, formerly known as the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education. Consumer and student complaints that are not resolved at the institutional level are thus arbitrated at the state level by the ACCS System Office.

The ACCS is committed to respecting and supporting the work of its member institutions and to providing a quality educational experience for all students. The objective of the student complaint process is to ensure that the concerns and complaints of students are addressed fairly and are resolved promptly. The Alabama Community College System requires each institution to establish its own procedures to address student grievances and complaints. A student must exhaust his/her rights under the institution's official complaint/grievance policy before advancing any complaint to the System Office of Alabama Community College System. Students may file consumer/student complaints with the Alabama Community College System by following these procedures:

- a) If, after exhausting all available institutional processes, a student's complaint remains unresolved, the student may appeal to the Alabama Community College System using the System's official [Student Complaint Form](#), which is contained in this document and also available online at the ACCS website (www.accs.cc). Students may submit completed complaint forms by printing the form, signing it, and then either (1) scanning it and e-mailing it to complaints@accs.edu or (2) mailing it to:

Alabama Community College System
Attention: Division of Academic and Student Affairs
P.O. Box 302130
Montgomery, AL 36130-2130

- b) The Division of Academic and Student Affairs will investigate the complaint within 30 days of receipt.
- c) The institution which is the subject of complaint has 30 days to provide a written response to questions and/or concerns raised during the investigation. Such response may or may not contain a resolution.
- d) The Division of Academic and Student Affairs will adjudicate the matter and write a report or letter to the institution and student detailing corrective action, if any is necessary, or stating that the school has no violation of policies.
- e) If corrective action is needed the institution will have 30 days to comply or develop a plan to comply with the corrective action.
- f) The System Office will monitor the institution's compliance to ensure the completion of any required corrective action.

ALABAMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

STUDENT COMPLAINT FORM



Complainant _____

Address _____

City State Zip Code

Phone _____ Alternate Phone _____

E-mail _____

Institution Name _____

Address _____

City State Zip

Phone Number _____

Program of Study _____

Last Date of Attendance _____

Did you follow the Institution's grievance procedure to resolve your complaint?

No

If no, stop here and refer back to the institution's complaint/grievance process. Please exhaust all steps in the institution's complaint/grievance process before filing a complaint with the System Office of the Alabama Community College System.

Yes

Please continue with this form.

How did you contact the Institution? Please specify who was contacted and on what date(s), if possible.

Phone Call _____ Date _____

In Person _____ Date _____

Letter _____ Date _____

E-mail _____ Date _____

Other _____

(Continue to next page)

What outcome did you seek from the Institution?

Have you contacted another agency or organization about the matter?

Yes

No

If yes, please give name of agency. _____

Have you contacted an attorney?

No

Yes

If yes, please give name of attorney. _____

Describe your complaint in detail. Specify any dates, staff you dealt with, monies owed, balances due, etc. Use additional paper/space as necessary. Attach any documentation which will help describe the problem and substantiate your allegations, such as an enrollment contract, correspondence with or from the institution, etc. Do not submit original documents as they may not be returned.

Certification

I certify that the above information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and grant the ACCS permission to release my name and complaint details to the System Office investigating officer and the institution for response.

Signature of Complainant

Date

Also complete the following FERPA Consent Form and mail both forms to: Alabama Community College System, Attention: Division of Academic and Student Affairs, P.O. Box 302130, Montgomery, AL 36130-2130 or e-mail to complaints@accs.edu.

(Continue to next page)

FERPA (Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act)
CONSENT TO RELEASE STUDENT INFORMATION

I, _____, am a student at, or a former student of, _____ (institution). I have submitted a complaint concerning the above institution to the Alabama Community College System.

I hereby consent to the institution's release of any of my educational records, including personally identifiable information that the institution determines is relevant and necessary to provide to the ACCS System Office in response to my complaint. I also authorize representatives of the institution to discuss the details of my complaint with representatives of the ACCS System Office.

Signature _____ Date _____