

Out-Of-State Student Complaints

Columbus State University takes student and consumer complaints very seriously. CSU works with students and consumers to resolve all complaints in an expeditious, fair, and pleasant manner. The complaint process provides students and consumers a path to discuss academic and non-academic concerns or register formal complaints or grievances. This process can also be used to address alleged violations of State consumer protection laws that include but are not limited to fraud and false advertising, alleged violations of State laws or rules relating to the licensure of post-secondary institutions, complaints relating to the quality of education, or other State or accreditation requirements. Post-secondary institutions participating in federal student financial aid programs are required to maintain formal grievance procedures.

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Step 1	<p>Complaints should first be filed internally with the appropriate CSU authority and then, if necessary, to external authorities. Students and consumers are encouraged to resolve issues within the University. Please allow us to help you.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal Process: Most complaints can be resolved within the University itself. This can be done initially by engaging in open communication with the individual directly involved. If the issue is not satisfactorily resolved, the next phase will be to contact the supervisor, department chair or associate dean to investigate the issue and allegations. • Formal Process: If the informal process is unsuccessful in reaching a satisfactory resolution, the student/consumer is then encouraged to complete the Institutional Complaint form to expedite a formal complaint with the University. Once the form is completed it will be submitted to the Office of the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs. <p>Institutional Complaint Form</p> <p>A complaint should be filed during the semester of occurrence but no later than sixty (60) days from the first day of the following academic semester. Once a complaint is received it should be acknowledged within ten (10) business days. It is expected that students/consumers will fully utilize the University's administrative procedures to address concerns and/or complaints in as timely a manner as possible.</p> <p>Additional Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints and Appeals: Additional information on filing academic/nonacademic complaints, specialized complaints (ADA, Equal Opportunity, FERPA, sexual misconduct), and academic/nonacademic appeals and grievances.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Handbook: University policies relating to student rights and responsibilities including complaint/appeal/grievance guidelines. <p>If, after completing the processes outlined in this step, the student/consumer believes their concerns were not adequately addressed under the requirements of the U.S. Department of Education Program Integrity Rules, they may follow the steps below.</p>
Step 2	<p>If a student/consumer feels that the issue was not resolved satisfactorily at the highest level of the University, they may then file a complaint with the appropriate state agency.</p> <p>Georgia</p> <p>Students/consumers living in Georgia may file a complaint with the University System of Georgia.</p> <p>Outside of Georgia</p> <p>For students located outside of Georgia, Columbus State University provides avenues for discussing academic and non-academic concerns and/or resolving complaints or grievances as a participating NC-SARA (The National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements) institution. The following steps provide insight into the out-of-state student complaints process if you have exhausted all available avenues at the University:</p> <p>If a student/consumer feels the issue was not resolved, then students/consumers living outside of Georgia in a SARA state (see map below) may file a complaint with the GA SARA portal agency, the Georgia Nonpublic Postsecondary Education Commission.</p> <p>Upon reviewing the GA-SARA Student Complaint Rules, students may file a complaint by using the GA-SARA Online Student Complaint Form.</p> <p>Further Information on How to File a SARA Student Complaint*:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. File a complaint with your institution. 2. If the complaint is not resolved, proceed by filing a complaint with the state via the institution's SARA State Portal Entity (SPE): GA-SARA. Contact CSU's SPE by using the GA-SARA contact information above or on NC-SARA Institution Directory on the NC-SARA Website. 3. GA-SARA has final authority in SARA complaints and will notify the SPE in the student's state.

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	<p>4. To check the status of complaints, please visit the complaint reports page on the NC-SARA website which are listed by state. SPEs report the status of complaints to NC-SARA quarterly.</p> <p>*For more information and an overview of the SARA Complaint Process, please visit NC SARA Student Complaints.</p> <p>Students/consumers living outside of Georgia in California, a non-SARA state, may file a complaint with their home state regulatory agency:</p> <p>California Department of Consumer Affairs Consumer Information Center 1625 North Market Blvd., Suite N-112 Sacramento, California 95834 Phone: (833) 942-1120</p> <p>For a comprehensive overview of the Out-Of-State Student Complaint process, please visit Academic Online Complaints.</p> <p>More information on NC-SARA can be found by visiting the following webpages:</p> <p>nc-sara.org</p> <p>nc-sara.org/about-nc-sara</p> <p>Should there be any questions regarding NC-SARA or your rights as a student/consumer, or a link not work properly, please contact the State Authorization Office at state_authorization@columbusstate.edu.</p> <p>SARA States</p> <p>States are colored in blue.</p>
Step 3	<p>If the student/consumer is not satisfied with the resolution provided by the University and the state, they may file a complaint with the University accreditation agency. Accrediting agencies will only review issues addressing significant non-compliance with agency standards, policies, or procedures. This is to be considered a last resort effort. If the student/consumer has not followed all of the preceding steps they will be directed by the agency to start with Step 1, at the University. Inquiries related to topics such as admission policies, financial aid opportunities, program information, etc. should be referred directly to Columbus State University at 706-507-8800 or www.columbusstate.edu.</p>

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	<p>Columbus State University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award associate, nexus, baccalaureate, masters, educational specialist, and doctorate degrees. Columbus State University also may offer credentials such as certificates and diplomas at approved degree levels. Questions about the accreditation of Columbus State University may be directed in writing to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, GA 30033-4097, by calling (404) 679-4500, or by using information available on SACSCOC's website (www.sacscoc.org).</p> <p>Visit Columbus State University's Accreditation page for a complete list of institution and program accreditors.</p>