

Vermont State Colleges Complaint Procedure

Summary of Program Integrity Rules

United States Department of Education Regulation 34 CFR 600.9, the “Program Integrity Rule,” was adopted to ensure that students have the opportunity to voice concerns relating to programs offered by postsecondary educational institutions authorized under Title IV of the Higher Education Act, as amended. The regulations require states to provide the opportunity for students to lodge the following types of complaints:

- Allegations of state consumer protection violations, including, but not limited to fraud and false advertising.
- Allegations that state laws or rules addressing the licensure of postsecondary institutions have been violated.
- Allegations regarding the quality of education or other accreditation requirements.

In compliance with Federal Program Integrity Rule, the Vermont State Colleges have listed multiple alternatives for individuals who wish to submit complaints regarding the Vermont State Colleges (VSC). The VSC expect that any student complaint will be filed in accordance with any procedures in place at the institution where the conduct or situation leading to the complaint is alleged to have occurred. In the absence of a procedure, the complaint should be filed with the president of the institution. If the complaint is not addressed in a timely or satisfactory manner, students are encouraged to raise their complaint with the Chancellor of the Vermont State Colleges prior to pursuing the complaint avenues listed below.

Recommended Content of Complaint to Institution or Chancellor

In order to facilitate effective response, initial complaints should include the complainant’s full name, address, and contact information, including email and telephone number. Complaints should specify enrollment status, i.e. whether the complainant is a current, former or prospective student. Complaints should first be filed with the President of the institution. Complaints to the Chancellor should indicate which one of the Vermont State Colleges is in question and whether the grievance has been submitted to the President of the institution for remedy. The description of the complaint should include dates and college officials that were involved or have been contacted. Any supporting documentation, such as emails or other correspondence, should be included in order to help others understand the events leading to the complaint. Last, the complainant should state what, if any, remedy is sought.

Office of the Chancellor Vermont State Colleges

P.O. Box 359
Waterbury, VT 05676
(802) 241-2520
www.vsc.edu

The Office of the Chancellor will review and respond to any complaints lodged by students, in consultation with the president of the college where the conduct leading to the complaint is alleged to have occurred.

For complaints alleging consumer fraud:

**Office of the Vermont Attorney General
Consumer Assistance Program**

146 University Place
Burlington, Vermont 05405
(800) 649-2424 or (802) 656-3183
<http://www.uvm.edu/consumer/>

The Consumer Protection Unit of the Vermont Attorney General's Office investigates and prosecutes violations of Vermont's consumer laws, which prohibit businesses from engaging in unfair or deceptive acts or practices. The Consumer Protection staff represents the State of Vermont, and through the State, the public. If you have a consumer question or would like to file a complaint, please contact the Consumer Assistance Program (CAP).

For complaints regarding state licensing of postsecondary institutions:

Vermont Department of Education

120 State Street
Montpelier, Vermont 05620
(802) 828-3136
<http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/mainboard.html>

The Vermont State Colleges are exempt from the Vermont State Board of Education requirement to apply for a certificate of approval under 16 V.S.A. §176. For certain educational programs, such as teacher preparation programs, specific standards and guidelines exist. If you have questions about state licensing of colleges and programs, please contact the Department of Education.

For complaints regarding quality or accreditation:

**New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC)
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education**

209 Burlington Road, Suite 201
Bedford, Massachusetts 01730
(781) 541-5413
http://cihe.neasc.org/information_for_the_public/comments_amp_complaints

The Commission has two means of hearing from students, faculty, staff, and members of the public about its member institutions: (1) Public Comments and (2) Complaints. Both offer important opportunities for the Commission to hear from individuals about the quality of affiliated institutions. For guidance on filing either a Public Comment or Complaint, please contact NEASC.