

District of Columbia (DC) SARA Student Complaint Process

a. Please describe the state's process for handling student complaints about SARA-participating institutions.

Public Complaints

Pursuant to DC Official Code §38-1306(c)(4) complaints may be filed with the Higher Education Licensure Commission (HELC, Commission) against postsecondary educational institutions operating in the District of Columbia. Additionally, the Commission may initiate an investigation:

On its own motion;

After receipt of a complaint that constitutes sufficient grounds for denial, reduction, suspension, or revocation of the license or application of an institution;
or

Based on information obtained from a Commissioner, Commission staff, member, government agency, or other reliable person or entity.

THE HELC COMPLAINT PROCESS

1. A written complaint must be uploaded, mailed, or delivered to the HELC office.
2. The Commission sends written acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint to the complainant.
3. The Commission send written notification to the institution of the complaint and provides the institution the opportunity to provide a written response to the complaint.
4. If the Commission receives a written response from the Institution, a copy of the response may be sent to the complainant along with a request for a written reply.
5. After consideration of a complaint against an institution, the response from the institution, if any, and the written reply of the complainant, if any, the Commission may propose the following actions:

Initiate an investigation;

Mandate corrective actions by the institution and monitor the implementation of the corrective actions;

Deny, suspend and revoke the license of an institution for failure to respond to the Commission;

Dismiss the complaint; or

Upon completion of an investigation, the complainant will receive notice of any proposed actions.

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Consumers who have experienced a violation of the HELC statute or regulations should complete the complaint form below and submit all supporting documents. The form must be signed and dated by the individual making the complaint and should be mailed:

Office of the State Superintendent of Education

Higher Education Licensure Commission

1050 First St. NE, Fifth Floor

Washington, DC 20002

Complaints are made available to the institution/alleged violator so that they may file a response to the allegations. The HELC cannot respond to anonymous complaints. Investigation and resolution of complaints take varying amounts of time. Upon completion of an investigation, the complainant will receive notice of any proposed actions.

b. Web link for the state's SARA Student Complaints Process.

<https://helc.osse.dc.gov/topic/helcadmin/community-stakeholders/public-complaints>

c. Who is the contact person for receiving SARA student complaints?

Contact Name: Dr. Terron Scott

Title: Deputy Director

Agency: DC Higher Education Licensure Commission

Address: 1050 First Street, NE 5th Floor, Washington, DC 20002

Email: terron.scott@dc.gov

Phone: (202) 368-1136

URL: <https://helc.osse.dc.gov/>

d. Clarifying comments: