

GEORGIA RESIDENTS

GEORGIA NONPUBLIC POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION COMMISSION COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

F.I.R.S.T. Institute has an open-door policy. Any concern or complaint a student has should be brought to the immediate attention of the instructor. If the concern or situation is not satisfactorily resolved, an appointment can be scheduled to speak with the Program Director. Extreme circumstances will be referred to the Institute President.

Any student wishing to appeal academic or disciplinary actions may do so in writing which must be submitted directly to the Institute President. Refer to the Appeal Process for additional information regarding this process.

In accordance with Georgia Code Section 20.3.250 (Nonpublic Postsecondary Educational Institutions Act of 1990), the Georgia Nonpublic Postsecondary Education Commission (GNPEC/the Commission) seeks to assure that GNPEC institutions maintain procedures and standards of procedural fairness through which students can bring complaints to the attention of the institution. GNPEC expects that these institutional procedures are applied appropriately and consistently. The Commission requires that students will utilize and complete these institutional procedures in an attempt to resolve any complaint or concern before submitting a complaint to the Commission. If the institution's resolution is not satisfactory, you may appeal to the Commission, but it will not investigate a complaint unless the student has exhausted all available grievance procedures outlined by the institution.

Non-students may bring concerns to the attention of the Commission in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-3-250.14(a).

The Commission's complaint procedures are designed to address issues of non-compliance with the Commission's standards, policies, or procedures. The procedures are not intended to be used to involve the Commission in disputes or matters pertaining to the following:

- a student's admission to or graduation from an institution;
- academic issues including grades, transferability of credits, and/or the application of academic policies;
- fees charged or other contractual financial matters; or
- disciplinary matters or other contractual rights and obligations.

The Commission will not review such areas unless the Commission identifies that the context suggests unethical or unprofessional actions that seriously impair or disrupt the educational services of a GNPEC school.

The Commission has no authority or role regarding issues of employment law or claims of discrimination. Such complaints should be directed to the appropriate state or federal agency.

The Commission will not accept a complaint which is anonymous or in which an attorney is involved.

Matters pertaining to Federal Financial Aid should be addressed to the U.S. Department of Education.

Any student who feels that an institution for which GNPEC is the complaint agent has not adequately addressed a complaint, or who feels that the institution is not in compliance with the Commission's Minimum Standards, may file a formal complaint. In order to be considered, a formal complaint must be submitted in accordance with the Commission's Complaint Procedures by using its online complaint form. The complaint must include documentation of the basis of the complaint and of the final determination from the institution indicating no further institutional review is available. If preliminary findings indicate a violation of GNPEC regulations by the institution or a failure to follow its procedures, the Commission shall attempt to resolve the complaint through mediation. All parties will be notified in writing of the outcome of the investigation.

In order to be reviewed by the Commission, the complaint must be filed within 90 calendar days of the final resolution from the institution, and it must include the following:

Basis for any allegation of noncompliance with GNPEC standards or requirements;

All relevant names and dates and a brief description of the actions forming the basis of the complaint;

Copies of all documents or materials related to the allegations, including institutional responses documentation and/or analysis;

Proof of completion of the institutional complaint or grievance process (for students); and

Desired resolution.

The Commission will not review a complaint that fails to provide complete information or does not address an issue that can be reviewed. In no instance will a complaint be accepted for review that has not completed the process published by the institution (for students).

Upon receipt of a complaint filed in accordance with the aforementioned format, the Commission will forward a copy of the complaint to the school for a response.

Georgia residents who would like to appeal a final decision may by the institute may do so by contacting:

GA GNPEC
2082 East Exchange Place
TUCKER, GA 30084

Phone: (770) 414-3300

Fax: (770) 414-3309

Or by clicking the link below for the GA GNPEC Online Complaint Form:

<https://gnpec.georgia.gov/complaint-forms>