

NC-SARA Complaint Resolution Processes

- a) Complaints against an institution operating under SARA go first through the institution's own procedures for resolution of grievances.
- b) Complaints regarding student grades or student conduct violations are governed entirely by institutional policy and the laws of the SARA institution's home state.
- c) If a person bringing a complaint is not satisfied with the outcome of the institutional process for handling complaints, the complaint (except for complaints about grades or student conduct violations) may be appealed, within two years of the incident about which the complaint is made, to the SARA portal agency in the home state of the institution against which the complaint has been lodged. That agency shall notify the SARA portal agency for the state in which the student is located of receipt of that appealed complaint. The resolution of the complaint by the institution's home state SARA portal agency, through its SARA complaint resolution process, will be final, except for complaints that fall under the provisions of (g), below.
- d) While the final resolution of the complaint rests with the SARA portal agency in the home state of the institution against which the complaint has been lodged, nothing precludes the state in which the complaining person is located from also working to resolve the complaint, preferably through that state's SARA portal agency. Indeed, it is expected that SARA states will facilitate the resolution of any complaints brought to their attention.
- e) While final resolution of complaints (for purposes of adjudication of the complaint and enforcement of any resultant remedies or redress) resides in certain cases with institutions (complaints about grades or student conduct violations), or more generally with the relevant institution's home state SARA portal agency (all other complaints), the regional compact(s) administering SARA may consider a disputed complaint as a "case file" if concerns are raised against a participating state with regard to whether that state is abiding by SARA Policies and Standards. The regional compact may review such complaints in determining whether a state under its purview is abiding by the SARA standards. Similarly, a complaint "case file" may also be reviewed by NC-SARA in considering whether a regional compact is ensuring that its member states are abiding by the SARA standards required for their participation in the agreement.
- f) SARA shall develop policies and procedures for reporting the number and disposition of complaints that are not resolved at the institutional level. Such data will create transparency and can be used in determining whether a regional compact is ensuring that its SARA member states and those states' institutions are abiding by the standards required for participation in the agreement.
- g) Nothing in SARA Policies and Standards precludes a state from using its laws of general application to pursue action against an institution that violates those laws.