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GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
LANSING

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DIRECTOR

Post-Secondary Schools Complaints

Filing a Complaint

The Post-Secondary Schools unit (PSS) within the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity, Office of Employment and Training is responsible for responding to formal complaints against authorized public, independent non-profit and proprietary institutions of higher education providing distance education from Michigan or out-of-state institutions of higher education providing distance education in Michigan pursuant to 2015 PA 45 (Act). PSS also investigate complaints against any other licensed or authorized post-secondary school regulated by PSS. PSS has limited authority over colleges and universities and cannot offer legal advice or initiate civil court cases; PSS staff will review submitted complaints and work with student complainants and institutions.

Before completing a complaint form, please take a moment to read these instructions; they will help you understand PSS's functions.

- **PSS has no authority to investigate discrimination:** If a student believes that an institution has acted in a discriminatory manner, he/she may wish to contact the Michigan Department of Civil Rights (MDCR) at (800) 482-3604. <http://www.michigan.gov/mdcr>
- **PSS has no authority to investigate financial aid issues:** Issues with State of Michigan financial aid should be directed to the Michigan Department of Treasury, Student Financial Services Bureau at (888) 447-2687 or (517) 373-4897. <http://www.michigan.gov/mistudentaid>

Issues with Federal Financial Aid should be directed to the Federal Student Aid Ombudsman Group of the U.S. Department of Education and/or the Federal Student Aid Information Center, at (800) 433-3243 or (800) 4FED-AID.

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/fpg/contacts.html>

- **PSS has no authority to investigate complaints related to course grades, academic sanctions or discipline/conduct matters.**
- **PSS only has authority to investigate entities regulated by acts administered by PSS.** If a student believes that a college or university has violated state or federal law, he/she may wish to contact the Michigan Department of Attorney General, Consumer Protection Division at (517) 373-1140. Attorney General Consumer Complaint/Inquiry Filing Information.

Prior to completing PSS's complaint form, students should attempt to resolve their issues with the institution of higher education they are attending or have attended.

1. If a student has concerns related to classroom situations or administrative actions, he/she should contact the faculty or staff member(s) with whom he/she has an issue. It may be possible to resolve the concerns without the need for formal institutional action.
2. If the student's complaint is not resolved satisfactorily, or if the complaint cannot be resolved by contacting the faculty or staff member(s), the student should file a complaint through his/her institution of higher education's established complaint process. Information on the process can usually be found in the institution's academic catalog, student handbook or website.
3. If the student is unable to resolve the complaint through the institution's complaint process, they can file a complaint with PSS. If a student wishes to complete and submit a complaint, they should complete the PSS complaint form and attach any pertinent additional documentation.

After PSS receives a completed complaint form, staff will review the submitted materials and determine if PSS has authority to investigate. If PSS needs additional information or clarifications, PSS will contact the complainant. If PSS has authority to investigate the complaint, they will forward a copy of the complaint to the institution against which the complaint has been filed and ask for a response within 21 calendar days. After receiving the institution's response, PSS staff will determine whether the institution's student complaint process has been followed and exhausted and what additional steps or follow-up may need to be taken. The Department will inform both parties involved in the complaint of the outcome of the investigation.

WHAT PSS CAN DO:

- PSS investigates complaints against authorized public, independent non-profit and proprietary institutions of higher education providing distance education in or from Michigan, pursuant to the Act. PSS also investigates complaints against any other licensed or authorized post-secondary school regulated by PSS.
- In appropriate cases, PSS can refer matters to the Michigan Department of Attorney General for civil actions or criminal prosecution.
- PSS has the authority to do one or more of the following if it determines that a post-secondary school that holds a license or authorization from PSS violates an act, a rule, or an order that PSS administers:
 - a) Place limitation on the authorization.
 - b) Suspend the authorization.
 - c) Deny an authorization or renewal of the authorization.
 - d) Revoke the authorization.
 - e) Assess an administrative fine.

- f) Order restitution to an aggrieved student who participated in a distance education program.
- g) Impose any other sanction established by the Department by rule.

WHAT PSS CANNOT DO:

- PSS cannot act as a court of law, so we cannot order damages to be awarded, etc. **If you have this type of problem, you should consult an attorney.**
- PSS cannot act as your attorney.
- PSS cannot take action in matters involving financial aid, the internal affairs of public, independent non-profit and proprietary institutions of higher education in Michigan. PSS only has jurisdiction over a participating college or out-of-state college as it relates to the delivery of distance education or complaints against any other licensed or authorized post-secondary school regulated by PSS.

HOW YOU CAN HELP PSS:

- Summarize your complaint using these guidelines. Include how you first learned of the participating college or out-of-state college offering distance education (advertisement, personal contact).
 - a) Tell WHAT happened. Start from the beginning. Be specific as to what was said and who said it.
 - b) Tell WHO was present during these conversations or acts.
 - c) Tell WHEN and WHERE these conversations/acts took place.
 - d) Tell WHEN and WHERE the money and agreements changed hands.
 - e) Tell HOW you know the representations were false.
- Attach photocopies of all documents such as contracts, agreements, certificates, notes, correspondence, legible copies of the front and back of checks involved, advertising, etc. **Documentary evidence is especially important. Please do not send originals; PSS cannot be responsible for their safekeeping.**
- Type or print clearly in ink.

SEND COMPLETED COMPLAINT FORM TO:

State of Michigan
Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity
Employment & Training, Post-Secondary Schools
P.O. Box 30805
Lansing, MI 48933

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