

## COMPLAINTS FAQ

### What types of complaints does ACAOM address?

The Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (“ACAOM” or “Commission”) will evaluate all complaints that allege non-compliance with its:

- *Eligibility Requirements*
- *Standards and Criteria for Accreditation*
- Required accreditation processes/procedure(s).

The ACAOM [Policy Governing Complaints](#) does not allow the Commission to intervene on behalf of individuals, serve as a mediator, or act as a court of appeal for individuals in cases of disciplinary action or dismissal.

### What specific complaints will ACAOM not address?

ACAOM will not review institutional decisions in such matters as: admission; grade changes; graduation; faculty appointment; promotion or dismissal of faculty, staff or students - unless the context suggests unethical or unprofessional actions that seriously impair or disrupt the educational services of an ACAOM-accredited or pre-accredited program or institution.

### What is the process for filing a formal complaint against a school?

The initial step is to follow the grievance policies of the institution. ACAOM’s Comprehensive Standards and Criteria do require accredited and pre-accredited programs and institutions to have published policies in place for reviewing and responding to student grievances and complaints, that are consistently applied and documented.

**ACAOM’s complaint process may be initiated only after all of the institution’s avenues of resolution have been exhausted and documented, AND the issue at hand is in violation of ACAOM’s Standards and Criteria or Policies.**

To move forward with the formal complaint process, familiarize yourself with ACAOM’s [Policy Governing Complaints](#) which explains the types of issues that fall within ACAOM’s purview. If it is determined that the issue at hand violates ACAOM’s policies or standards, a [complaint form](#) should be completed, SIGNED, and submitted to: [Submissions@acaom.org](mailto:Submissions@acaom.org).

PLEASE NOTE: Based on due process considerations, *only written and signed complaints* will be considered by ACAOM. **ACAOM will take every reasonable precaution to prevent the identity of the Complainant from being revealed to the program/institution; however, ACAOM cannot *guarantee* the confidentiality of the Complainant.**

### I have concerns about student or public safety, or personal or public health. What should I do?

Complaints related to student or public safety should be immediately referred to local law enforcement.

Complaints related to personal or public health concerns (i.e., clean needle technique, disposal of hazardous waste, etc.) should be referred to local or state health departments, and to the state acupuncture licensing board when applicable.

## Can ACAOM take disciplinary action on misconduct or discriminatory behavior by school faculty or staff?

The ACAOM [Policy Governing Complaints](#) does not allow the Commission to intervene on behalf of individuals, serve as a mediator, or act as a court of appeal for individuals in cases of disciplinary action or dismissal. Further, accredited and pre-accredited programs and institutions are expected to comply with applicable Federal, state and local law and regulation, including those that apply to employment and safety.

For complaints and concerns regarding discriminatory behavior, you may wish to consult these external resources:

### A. Following is a partial list of Anti-Discrimination Laws Enforced by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

#### [Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 \(Title VII\)](#)

This law makes it illegal to discriminate against someone based on race, color, religion, national origin, or sex. The law also makes it illegal to retaliate against a person because the person complained about discrimination, filed a charge of discrimination, or participated in an employment discrimination investigation or lawsuit. The law also requires that employers reasonably accommodate applicants' and employees' sincerely held religious practices, unless doing so would impose an undue hardship on the operation of the employer's business.

#### [The Pregnancy Discrimination Act](#)

This law amended Title VII to make it illegal to discriminate against a woman because of pregnancy, childbirth, or a medical condition related to pregnancy or childbirth. The law also makes it illegal to retaliate against a person because the person complained about discrimination, filed a charge of discrimination, or participated in an employment discrimination investigation or lawsuit.

#### [The Equal Pay Act of 1963 \(EPA\)](#)

This law makes it illegal to pay different wages to men and women if they perform equal work in the same workplace. The law also makes it illegal to retaliate against a person because the person complained about discrimination, filed a charge of discrimination, or participated in an employment discrimination investigation or lawsuit.

#### [The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 \(ADEA\)](#)

This law protects people who are 40 or older from discrimination because of age. The law also makes it illegal to retaliate against a person because the person complained about discrimination, filed a charge of discrimination, or participated in an employment discrimination investigation or lawsuit.

#### [Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 \(ADA\)](#)

This law makes it illegal to discriminate against a qualified person with a disability in the private sector and in state and local governments. The law also makes it illegal to retaliate against a person because the person complained about discrimination, filed a charge of discrimination, or participated in an employment discrimination investigation or lawsuit. The law also requires that employers reasonably accommodate the known physical or mental limitations of an otherwise qualified individual with a disability who is an applicant or employee, unless doing so would impose an undue hardship on the operation of the employer's business.

[Sections 102 and 103 of the Civil Rights Act of 1991](#)

Among other things, this law amends Title VII and the ADA to permit jury trials and compensatory and punitive damage awards in intentional discrimination cases.

[Sections 501 and 505 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#)

This law makes it illegal to discriminate against a qualified person with a disability in the federal government. The law also makes it illegal to retaliate against a person because the person complained about discrimination, filed a charge of discrimination, or participated in an employment discrimination investigation or lawsuit. The law also requires that employers reasonably accommodate the known physical or mental limitations of an otherwise qualified individual with a disability who is an applicant or employee, unless doing so would impose an undue hardship on the operation of the employer's business.

[The Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 \(GINA\)](#)

This law prohibits discrimination on the basis of genetic information with respect to health insurance and employment.

**B. Following is a partial list of Anti-Discrimination Laws Enforced by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights (OCR)**

[Title IX](#)

This law protects people from discrimination based on sex in education programs or activities that receive Federal financial assistance.