

# Simpson College Student Grievance Policy

## Simpson College Student Grievance Policy

Beginning July 1, 2011, the U.S. Department of Education regulations to improve the integrity of programs authorized under Title IV of the Higher Education Act (HEA) as amended (the “Program Integrity Rule”) took effect. The Program Integrity Rule requires, among other things, that each college or university authorized to offer postsecondary education in one or more states ensure access to a complaint (grievance) process that will permit student consumers to address the following:

1. Alleged violations of state consumer protection laws that include, but are not limited to, fraud and false advertising;
2. Alleged violations of state laws or rules relating to the licensure of postsecondary institutions; and
3. Complaints regarding the quality of education or other State or accreditation requirements.

**Simpson College, as an institution authorized to provide postsecondary education in the State of Iowa, is committed to full compliance with the Program Integrity Rule.** The College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. **Information about the College’s accreditation can be found at the [HLC website](#).**

Simpson College seeks to resolve all student concerns in a timely and effective manner. Students have the right to file a grievance against Simpson College. Students may file a grievance up to 120 calendar days from the date of the incident. Students may not file anonymously.

A grievance alleges that the College or one of its agents has violated institutional policies, accreditor policies, federal or state laws, or any other agreements joined by Simpson College. Grounds for a grievance include failures in the provision of a program of study or related academic or administrative service, or institutional policies that negatively affect the quality of a student’s learning opportunities. Grievances fall outside of standard College processes (e.g., grade dispute process, conduct appeals, etc.), as outlined in the [Simpson College Academic Catalogue](#), [Student Handbook](#), the [Faculty Handbook](#), or the [Employee Handbook](#), and require that students have already first exhausted established Simpson College processes and mechanisms to address their concern.

## Grievance Resolution Process

Any student who believes they have been subject to unjust actions or denied of their rights is expected to make a reasonable effort to resolve the matter before seeking formal resolution. The student should request a meeting with the parties directly involved, describing the nature of the grievance and a desirable resolution. Both parties are encouraged to try to find a reasonable and satisfactory resolution.

The following offices and resources at Simpson College are available to current and prospective students for the resolving of grievances. These offices provide specific administrative means to address and resolve most, if not all, of the questions and concerns students may have.

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- Registrar's Office (academic concerns): Jody Ragan, [jody.ragan@simpson.edu](mailto:jody.ragan@simpson.edu) , 515-961-1517
- Dean of Students (student affairs concerns): Luke Behaunek, [luke.behaunek@simpson.edu](mailto:luke.behaunek@simpson.edu) , 515-961-1562
- Business Services (financial/billing concerns): Cathy Hoch, [cathy.hoch@simpson.edu](mailto:cathy.hoch@simpson.edu) , 515-961-1398
- Enrollment & Financial Assistance (enrollment & financial aid concerns): Tracie Pavon, [tracie.pavon@simpson.edu](mailto:tracie.pavon@simpson.edu) , 515-961-1630

If the parties involved in the grievance are unable to find a satisfactory resolution and further action is deemed appropriate, students must follow the procedures outlined in the following process:

1. Students wishing to file a grievance against Simpson College may do so by completing the online **Student Grievance Form**. Students can also file a grievance by speaking with one of the following, designated personnel and completing a Student Grievance Form:
  - Academic concerns: Registrar
  - Student Affairs concerns: Dean of Students
  - Financial/billing concerns: Asst. Vice President for Business Services
  - Enrollment/Financial Aid concerns: Asst. Vice President for Enrollment & Financial Assistance

Students' confidentiality will be protected within reason, but officials of the College may require access to students' educational records in order to fully investigate the Grievance. Students who are initiating a grievance against Simpson College must authorize release of information necessary to investigate the grievance.

1. The student will receive, generally within 10 business days, a written response from the designated personnel relevant to their grievance, including a determination of whether the issue/incident constitutes a grievance according to Simpson College's policy and definition. If the issue/incident submitted does not constitute a grievance according to Simpson College's policy and definition, the student will be informed in writing, and the College process will be considered concluded.

If the issue/incident submitted constitutes a grievance, according to Simpson College's policy and definition, the designated personnel will meet with the student and any other relevant parties to discuss the issue/incident which led to the filing of the grievance.

1. Any meetings pertaining to the investigation of the grievance will be conducted as quickly as possible and generally will be concluded within 10 business days of the determination of a grievance.
2. The designated personnel, in consultation with the appropriate Vice President(s), will identify (an) appropriate resolution(s), generally within 10 business days of the close of the investigation. The designated personnel will inform the student in writing of the resolution(s). Decisions regarding resolutions are not subject to internal appeal.
3. The entire process will generally be concluded within 30 business days of the initial receipt of the grievance.
4. Students have the right to obtain legal counsel.

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## Grievances Addressed to External Agencies

If a student believes that the College's administrative procedures outlined above have not adequately addressed concerns identified under the Program Integrity Rule, they may pursue an external process. Students may file a grievance against the College with relevant state and federal agencies including, but not limited to, the Higher Learning Commission, the Iowa College Student Aid Commission, the Iowa Attorney General, and the Office of Civil Rights. Please note that many agencies require students to first exhaust their college's grievance procedures before filing a grievance with the agency.

We recommend that students refer to the individual agency's policies to familiarize themselves with relevant requirements including filing deadlines and whether they must first pursue the College's grievance process.

### Higher Learning Commission (HLC)

230 South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500  
Chicago, Illinois 60604-1411  
Phone: (312) 263.0456  
Toll Free: (800) 621.7440  
Fax: (312) 263.7462

<https://www.ncahlc.org/HLC-Institutions/grievances.html?highlight=WyJjb21wbGFpbnRzIl0=>

*The HLC of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools is an independent body responsible for the accreditation of programs offered by Simpson College. Each year, the Commission receives a number of grievances about institutions from faculty, students, and other parties. The Commission has established a clear distinction between individual grievances and grievances that appear to involve broad institutional practices. Where a grievance does raise issues regarding the institution's ongoing ability to meet the Criteria of Accreditation, the Commission forwards the grievance to the institution and requests a formal response. Grievances may be filed with the Commission at the above link.*

### Iowa Department of Justice

Office of the Attorney General  
Consumer Protection Division  
Hoover State Office Building  
1305 E. Walnut Street  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0106  
Phone: (515) 281-5926  
Toll Free: 888-777-4590

Email: [consumer@iowa.gov](mailto:consumer@iowa.gov)

*The State of Iowa protects its citizens against consumer fraud. You may file a written grievance online or download the file, print it, complete it and mail to the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division.*

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## **Iowa College Student Aid Commission**

430 East Grand Ave, FL 3  
Des Moines, IA 50309-1920  
Phone: (515) 725-3400  
Toll-Free: (877) 272-4456 (Information Service Center)  
Fax: (515) 725-3401

<https://www.iowacollegeaid.gov/StudentComplaintForm>

*Iowa College Aid accepts concerns and grievances from any student attending an Iowa school, regardless of the student's state of residency, and from an Iowa resident attending any school, regardless of its location. Iowa College Aid will review submitted forms and determine the appropriate course of action. Actions may include, but are not limited to: contacting the constituent, contacting the institution in question and/or referral to another agency. In all cases, the constituent will receive written response to his or her request and the request from will be retained for Iowa College Aid's records.*

## **United States Department of Education**

Office for Civil Rights  
Regional Office #5 Office  
500 West Madison St., Ste. 1475  
Chicago, IL 60661  
Phone: 312-730-1560

*Anyone who believes that an education institution that receives federal financial assistance has discriminated against someone on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age, may file a grievance.*

Students may also file a grievance with their home state, or the state in which they are participating in a Simpson College program. A list of links to state processes can be found in this [linked document](#).

## **Non-Retaliation Statement**

Retaliation, or attempts to retaliate, against any individual who files a complaint or grievance is strictly prohibited.

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