

## Student Complaint Process for Distance Education Under SARA

Virginia State University is committed to resolving student complaints in a fair and timely manner. Students enrolled in distance education courses and programs covered by the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) must follow the process outlined below.

### 1 Attempt an informal resolution

Students are expected to first attempt to resolve concerns directly with the appropriate faculty member, staff member, or office involved. Many issues can be addressed at this level without filing a formal complaint. If you are unsure where to start, contact the Office of Distance Education and Professional Studies at [fblack@vsu.edu](mailto:fblack@vsu.edu) for guidance.

### 2 Formal institutional complaint process

If the concern is not resolved informally, follow VSU's formal complaint process in the sequence below. Each step must be pursued before escalating to the next.

- 2a. Submit a complaint through the appropriate academic department or administrative office.
- 2b. If unresolved, escalate to the Department Chair or Program Director.
- 2c. If still unresolved, escalate to the Dean of the respective College.
- 2d. If the complaint remains unresolved, submit a formal complaint through VSU's official reporting mechanism, the [Trojan Care Form](#).
- 2e. Final institutional review is conducted by the Office of the Provost.

*Students must fully exhaust all institutional procedures before proceeding to an external agency.*

### 3 File a SARA complaint with the state agency

If a complaint cannot be resolved through VSU's internal processes, students enrolled in distance education programs under SARA may file a complaint with the appropriate state agency below.

#### **VIRGINIA — SARA** State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV)

[www.schev.edu/students/resources/student-complaints](http://www.schev.edu/students/resources/student-complaints)

Reviews complaints related to distance education offered across state lines under SARA policies.

#### **NC-SARA INFO** National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements

[nc-sara.org/sara-student-complaints-0/](http://nc-sara.org/sara-student-complaints-0/)

#### **CALIFORNIA** Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (BPPE)

[www.bppe.ca.gov/enforcement/complaint.shtml](http://www.bppe.ca.gov/enforcement/complaint.shtml)

California is not a SARA member state. Students residing in California must use the BPPE process rather than SCHEV.

#### IMPORTANT NOTES

##### FILING DEADLINE

Complaints must be submitted within two years of the incident that gave rise to the complaint.

##### SARA COMPLAINT SCOPE

SARA complaints are limited to issues related to distance education delivered across state lines.

##### CALIFORNIA RESIDENTS

California is not a SARA member state. Students residing there must follow the BPPE process above rather than SCHEV.