



## Responding to Complaints Received about Accredited Institutions

**Overview:** AEE, aware of the value of information from the public, will receive complaints against its accredited institutions but pursue only those complaints that bear upon the institution's meeting AEE's accreditation standards. Because the complaint process is intended to pursue only those matters that suggest substantive non-compliance by institutions, AEE shall expect individuals who have a personal dispute with an institution to use other internal and external grievance mechanisms, particularly the institution's internal grievance procedures, to resolve the dispute. In no case will AEE use the complaint process to seek redress or to fashion an individual remedy with an institution on behalf of a complainant.

### Details:

- AEE will consider no complaint that concerns facts or circumstances that took place more than five years from the date the complaint was received by AEE.
- All complaints must be in writing and signed by the complainant although AEE may at its discretion consider other complaints where warranted subject to the requirements in Additional Information (below).
- AEE will acknowledge a complaint promptly and within 30 working days of receipt will advise the complainant whether or not the complaint warrants consideration by AEE.
- If AEE determines a complaint warrants further consideration, AEE will give the institution named in the complaint an opportunity of 30 days to respond to the complaint or to a summary of the complaint if the complainant requests confidentiality of identity or documents, before AEE completes its review and makes a decision regarding the complaint. AEE may require that the institution file a follow-up report or, upon approval by the AEE Accreditation Council, may schedule a focused review to the institution regarding issues raised by the complaint. Such follow-up review may lead to further actions or withdrawal of accreditation following AEE policies and procedures related to such actions.
- AEE reserves the right to reject any complaint that contains defamatory statements.

When AEE receives a complaint(s) about an institution that has an impending site visit and that raises questions about the compliance of the institution with AEE accreditation standards, it will forward the complaint(s), or a summary thereof, to the attention of the leader of the site visit team for consideration instead of, or in addition to, the regular review AEE might undertake regarding a complaint. The review team will notify the Accreditation and Certifications Director of its findings, either in the site visit report, or in a separate memo.

**Additional Information:** In addition to pursuing complaints, AEE may initiate an inquiry in response to any information that gives reason to be concerned about the institution's meeting one or more of AEE's accreditation standards.