

I.21 Complaints

I.21.1 Complaints against an accredited program

Master's programs in library and information studies that are accredited by the ALA operate in the public interest with due regard for the rights and responsibilities of the faculty, students, and other people related to the implementation of these programs. The COA occasionally receives requests to investigate allegations that an ALA-accredited program is not in compliance with the *Standards for Accreditation*. The COA considers such a request if it provides:

- Documentation of a specific, substantive, and/or continuing violation of one or more of the standards;
- Documented evidence that all appropriate grievance and corrective procedures of the institution in which the accredited program is located have been exhausted;
- A statement that there is no active or pending litigation related to the complaint; and
- The identity of the complainant.

Complaints against accredited programs should be sent to the Director of the Office for Accreditation. The OA Director reviews the complaint and, if the basic requirements have been met, contacts the complainant to obtain permission to reveal his or her identity to the school and to release the complaint to the school. The COA cannot act on an anonymous complaint. The complaint is then forwarded to the school and program with a request for a response **within 30 days**.

Following receipt of the program's response, the COA considers the matter at its next regularly scheduled meeting. The COA's action is limited to determining whether the documentation demonstrates the potential for noncompliance with the standards. If the COA determines that the potential for noncompliance exists, it will then make a decision regarding further action. COA may ask the program for a special report, schedule a comprehensive review, or take other action. Both the complainant and the school are notified in writing of the COA's decision.

At each regularly scheduled meeting of the COA, the OA Director reports on the status of all complaints that have been received or that remain unresolved.

I.21.2 Complaints against the COA

The COA and the Office for Accreditation have an obligation to respond to any complaint against the COA brought by any party involved in the accreditation process and that may arise as part of the accreditation process. Any such complaint should be in writing, signed, and submitted to the Office for Accreditation. The OA Director will, in consultation with the Chair of the COA, determine the facts surrounding the issue and attempt to resolve the matter(s) in a fair and equitable manner. Complaints that cannot be resolved through this process will be considered and acted on at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the COA. The complainant will receive written notice of the COA's decision in this regard.