



# The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

75 Pleasant Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148-4906

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/ops/>

Telephone: (781) 338-6048

TTY: N.E.T. Relay 1-800-439-2370

email: [proprietaryschools@doe.mass.edu](mailto:proprietaryschools@doe.mass.edu)

## Office of Proprietary Schools Filing A Complaint Against a Licensed Proprietary School

### Mail Completed and Signed Form To:

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION,  
OFFICE OF PROPRIETARY SCHOOLS

If you are experiencing a problem with a licensed proprietary school, or a teacher within a licensed proprietary school, please use your school's internal complaint resolution process. Students would be wise to document any communications (names, dates) with the school regarding the complaint, and keep copies of any correspondence with the school regarding the complaint. If you have not implemented the school's complaint procedures, please do so at this time.<sup>1</sup>

If after following the school's internal complaint policy you are unsatisfied with the outcome, or the school does not respond to your complaint within thirty (30) days, students may then file a formal, written complaint with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department). However, if your complaint is of a nature that requires immediate intervention, such as assault or other felonies or misdemeanors, report the incident immediately to your local police department and submit a completed copy of the attached complaint form to the Department. Once the Department receives your complaint, you will receive an acknowledgement letter. The Department will then assign a reviewer to the complaint, who may contact you for additional information. The reviewer will notify the school of your complaint and the school has thirty (30) days from the notification of the complaint to respond to the Department. If the complaint is not under the Department's jurisdiction, you will receive information on additional resources that may be available to you.

All complaints are examined to determine their factual basis. As such, you should be aware that in order to properly evaluate your complaint and assess your records, your name must be revealed to the school during our investigation. The act of filing a complaint does not assure or imply that disciplinary action will be taken against the school. The results of the Department's findings will be communicated to you in writing. Please note that depending upon the nature of your complaint, it may take the Department several weeks or months to complete its investigation. The Department cannot process incomplete or unsigned complaints. Please do not email or fax complaints to the Department as an original signature is required.

### **Complaint Checklist:**

To speed up the complaint process, please submit legible copies (not the originals) of all relative documents supporting your complaint (e.g., enrollment agreement/contracts, records, cancelled checks, etc.). Please be sure to include the following when forwarding this complaint to the Department:

- Completed and signed complaint form
- Copy of student's enrollment agreement (enrollment contract)
- If seeking reimbursement, copies of any payments made to the school, including loan documentation
- Statement of complaint
- Documents
- Keep a signed and dated copy of this complaint and its attachments for your records.**

<sup>1</sup> All private occupational schools licensed by the Commissioner of Education are required to establish a procedure for resolving student complaints. They are required by regulation (603 CMR 3.18(1)) to provide a copy of the complaint procedure to all students and must publish this procedure in the school's catalogue or student handbook. Further, schools are required to keep a written record of all student complaints for a minimum of one year following the graduation or withdrawal of the student.



14. If a student: Are you still at this institution?       Yes       No

If no, please check box which applies:  Graduated       Terminated       Withdrew: \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

If employee of school, please check the box which applies:

Currently Employed--Hiring Date:       Former Employee—Resignation/Termination Date:

**15. Attach a copy of your executed enrollment agreement/contract.**

**16. Payment information:**  
 If your complaint is of a financial nature or you are seeking a refund for any part of your studies, please show how you paid your tuition at this institution and attach all requested documentation as proof of payment. Please use additional sheets, if necessary.

**Loans:** Provide name of lender, loan number(s), amount of loan(s), disbursement date(s); attach copy(ies) of signed and dated promissory note(s) or disclosure statement(s). **Are you in default of this loan?**<sup>3</sup>     Yes     No

**Grants:** Attach copy(ies) of dated grant award letter(s)

**Scholarships:** Attach copy(ies) of dated scholarship award letter(s)

**Cash:** Provide check numbers and attach copies of checks, and/or attach copies of cash payment receipts

**Credit:** Provide copy(ies) of credit card, charge slip, or statement(s) showing charge(s) to the closed school

**Other:** Provide copies of any additional documentation from other sources of payment to the closed school

**17. Statement of Complaint and Supporting Documentation:** Please provide an explanation of your complaint. Include names, dates, and any documentation of reporting your complaint to the school, and any subsequent conversations or meetings with the school in an attempt to resolve this matter. Provide copies of any correspondence regarding your complaint (letters, faxes, emails). If other students experienced the same matter, or witnessed the matter, please attach their notarized statements (notaries are available at most banks and real estate offices).

**Outcomes:** What result from this complaint would satisfy you? (Attach an additional sheet if necessary.)

All complaints are examined to determine their factual basis. The act of filing a complaint does not assure or imply resolution of the complaint or that disciplinary action will be taken against the school. My signature on this form authorizes the Commissioner of Education or his representative(s) authority to:

- secure from the school my student records in order to appropriately review and resolve this complaint;
- refer my application for complaint to other appropriate law enforcement authorities to investigate and/or prosecute, which may include, but is not limited to, the Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General, the United States Department of Education, the school’s accrediting agency, if any, in order to secure resolution to my complaint; and,
- secure a refund on my behalf, if the Department determines that a violation occurred that warrants a refund.

I attest that the information provided herein is true, correct, and complete to the best of my knowledge.

Complainant’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Complainant’s name printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Please use the checklist provided on the cover page of this form to ensure that you are submitting a complete complaint.

<sup>3</sup> Student’s contracts with lenders are legally binding and are separate from the contract you signed with your school. Students are strongly encouraged to make arrangements with the lender for repayment, keeping the lender informed of the status of your complaint. Failure to make such arrangements or payments on your student loan may negatively impact your credit history.