

SOUTHWESTERN

LAW SCHOOL

Los Angeles, CA

Student Concerns Policy

Administrative policy.

Revision history: Formerly a part of the annually revised Student Handbook; established as a standalone policy August 2022; revised September 2023 after receiving BPPE approval to operate; technical edits made in June 2024.

Related policies: Policy to Prevent Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation; Sexual Misconduct Policy; and Student Honor Code.

Scheduled Review Date: February 2025 (Student Services Office)

A. General Student Concerns

Southwestern Law School takes concerns and complaints regarding the institution very seriously. A student with a concern or complaint not otherwise addressed by a specific Southwestern policy or procedure may meet with the Associate Dean for Student Services or address them in writing to the Associate Dean for Student Services. A written response will generally be provided within 10 to 15 working days after receiving the written complaint. Concerns or complaints by residents regarding The Residences at 7th should be directed to the property manager at housing@swlaw.edu or Ext. 5500.

B. Complaints Implicating ABA Standards (ABA Standard 510)

As an ABA-accredited law school, Southwestern must comply with the American Bar Association Standards and Rules of Procedure for Approval of Law Schools ("ABA Standards"), including ABA Standard 510 regarding student complaints implicating compliance with the ABA Standards. The ABA Standards may be found at http://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_education/resources/standards.html.

1. Filing a complaint

Any Southwestern student who wishes to bring a complaint to the attention of the law school about a significant problem that directly implicates the school's compliance with the ABA Standards should take the following steps:

- a.** Submit the complaint in writing to a Vice Dean. If a Vice Dean is unavailable, the complaint should be submitted to the Associate Dean for Student Services (the Vice Dean or the Associate Dean for Student Services is referred to as the "administrator"). The writing may be submitted

via e-mail, U.S. mail, or by personal delivery.

- b.** The writing should describe in detail the practice, program, or other matter that is the subject of the complaint. The writing should also explain how the matter directly implicates the law school's compliance with one or more specific ABA Standard.
- c.** The writing must provide the student's name, e-mail address, and street address for further communication about the complaint.

2. Addressing a complaint

If the administrator determines that the complaint directly implicates the law school's compliance with an ABA Standard, Southwestern will employ the following process in response:

- a.** The administrator will acknowledge in writing receipt of the student's complaint; acknowledgment may be made by e-mail, U.S. mail, or by personal delivery at the option of the administrator. The administrator, or the administrator's designee, will either meet with the student or respond to the complaint's substance in writing. In this meeting or this writing, the administrator will provide a substantive response to the complaint or information about steps being taken by Southwestern to address the complaint or further investigate the complaint. Usually, a student can expect a meeting or written response to the complaint within three to four weeks of the submission of the complaint.
- b.** Within 60 calendar days of receiving a decision, students may appeal a decision on complaints to the Dean of Southwestern. The appeal must be in writing and explain the basis of the appeal; it should be submitted to the Dean by e-mail, U.S. mail, or by personal delivery. The Dean will either meet with the student or respond to the substance of the appeal in writing. Usually, a student can expect a meeting or written response to the appeal within three to four weeks of the submission of the appeal. The Dean's decision will be final.
- c.** Southwestern will keep a copy of the complaint and a summary of the response and resolution of the complaint in compliance with the ABA Standards.

If the administrator determines that the complaint does not directly implicate the law school's compliance with an ABA standard, the administrator will inform the student in writing.

C. Complaints to the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education

Southwestern is approved to operate by the California Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (BPPE). Approval to operate means the institution complies with the minimum standards in the California Private Postsecondary Education Act of 2009 and the California Code of Regulations.

Anyone, including students, may file a complaint with BPPE if they believe Southwestern has violated the laws and/or regulations governing the school's operation, including

unlicensed activity. Complaints may be filed by using BPPE's [online complaint submission link, here](#) (preferred) or by downloading the [complaint form](#) and mailing it to:

Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education
P.O. Box 980818
West Sacramento, CA 95798-0818 or

calling 888-370-7589.

More information concerning BPPE's complaint procedure can be found at:
<https://bppe.ca.gov/enforcement/complaint.shtml>.

If Southwestern receives notice of a complaint filed with BPPE, it will respond as and when appropriate. Southwestern will cooperate with any BPPE investigation. Southwestern's response may include an investigation. The Dean will determine whether an internal or external investigator should be appointed, and any investigator will coordinate with Southwestern's General Counsel.

D. Complaints by Students Residing Outside of California

Students in Southwestern's Online J.D. Program who reside in a state other than California should refer to [Southwestern's State Student Concern Contact Information](#) chart for additional information on filing complaints.

E. Protection Against Retaliation

Southwestern will not retaliate against nor tolerate any harassment or retaliation directed toward an individual who, in good faith, makes a complaint or cooperates in the investigation of a complaint under this policy.

F. Policy Revisions

Southwestern expressly reserves the right to change or modify any aspect of this policy at any time, with or without prior notice.