

Student Complaints Concerning ABA Standards and the Program of Legal Education

As an ABA-accredited law school, St. Mary's University School of Law is subject to the ABA Standards for Approval of Law Schools. The ABA Standards may be found at http://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_education/resources/standards.html. Any student at the law school who wishes to bring a formal complaint to the administration of the law school of a significant problem that directly implicates the school's program of legal education and its compliance with the ABA Standards should do the following:

1. Submit the complaint in writing to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. The writing may consist of e-mail, U.S. mail, or fax. Hand delivery is not considered official delivery unless acknowledged in writing by the Associate Dean or the Director.
2. The writing should describe in detail the behavior, program, process, or other matter that is the subject of the complaint, and should explain how the matter implicates the law school's program of legal education and its compliance with a specific, identified ABA Standard(s).
3. The writing must provide the name, official law school e-mail address, a street address and the telephone number of the complaining student, for further communication about the complaint.
4. The administrator to whom the complaint is submitted will acknowledge the complaint within three business days of receipt of the written complaint. Acknowledgement may be made by e-mail, U.S. mail, or by personal delivery, at the option of the administrator.
5. Within two weeks of acknowledgment of the complaint, the administrator, or the administrator's designee, shall either meet with the complaining student, or respond to the substance of the complaint in writing. In this meeting or in this writing, the student should either receive a substantive response to the complaint, or information about what steps are being taken by the law school to address the complaint or further investigate the complaint. If further investigation is needed, when the investigation is completed, the student shall be provided either a substantive response to the complaint or information about what steps are being taken by the law school to address the complaint within two weeks after completion of the investigation.
6. Appeals regarding decisions on, or outcomes of, complaints may be taken to the Dean of the Law School. An appeal must be in writing and must be made within two weeks of the decision, outcome or resolution of the complaint. The Dean's decision should be communicated to the student within two weeks of receipt of the appeal. Any decision made on appeal by the Dean shall be final.
7. A copy of the complaint and a summary of the process and resolution of the complaint shall be kept in the office of the Dean for a period of eight years from the date of final resolution of the complaint.
8. The Law School will not in any way retaliate against an individual who makes a complaint under this section, nor permit any employee or student to do so.