

# DISTANCE LEARNING COMPLAINT PROCESS

## Student Complaint Procedures: State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA)

Bay Path University is a member of the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) as a SARA member institution (<http://nc-sara.org> (<http://nc-sara.org/>)). The University has reciprocity with other SARA states for its distance education programs. Please visit the NC-SARA website (<http://nc-sara.org/sara-states-institutions/>) for the most current list of states that participate in SARA.

While attending Bay Path University, Bay Path students residing outside of the state of Massachusetts who desire to resolve a grievance should first follow the University's Complaint Policy and Process (<https://www.baypath.edu/about/assessment-accreditation/academic-policies/>).

In the event that a grievance cannot be resolved internally, online students residing in a SARA state may appeal a complaint to the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education for review after exhausting the institution's internal complaint process. SARA complaints must first be submitted internally for resolution in accordance with Bay Path's complaint process (see link above). The Massachusetts Department of Higher Education will not review complaints regarding student grades or student code of conduct violations.

After the conclusion of the Bay Path University student complaint process, students enrolled in distance education courses or online programs who are residents of states other than Massachusetts, and when such state is a SARA participating state, may appeal the University's decision to the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education. SARA complaint forms are available on its website (<https://www.mass.edu/foradmin/sara/complaints.asp>).

### For Online Students Located in SARA Member States and Territories (<https://nc-sara.org/directory/>)

After you have exhausted the complaint procedures made available by Bay Path University (see Complaint Policy (<https://www.baypath.edu/about/assessment-accreditation/academic-policies/>) webpage and above), if your complaint has not been resolved, you may file a complaint with the DHE by using the SARA complaint form (<https://www.mass.edu/foradmin/sara/complaints.asp>). The DHE SARA complaint form (<https://www.mass.edu/foradmin/sara/complaints.asp>) should be used by students who are located in SARA member states and territories (<https://nc-sara.org/directory/>). This includes all students who are located in SARA member states and territories for the purposes of completing out-of-state learning placements, such as internships, practica, clinical experiences, etc. in SARA member states and territories outside Massachusetts.

Additional information from the DHE's SARA complaint website (<https://www.mass.edu/foradmin/sara/complaints.asp>) is below:

The SARA complaint process is as follows:

1. Students must first attempt to resolve their complaint using internal administrative procedures offered by the SARA institution.
2. After all administrative remedies have been exhausted with the MA-SARA institution, the student may submit a SARA Complaint via the URL below.

3. The Department shall send a copy of the complaint to the institution that is the subject of the complaint;
4. Within 30 days of the date that the Department sends a copy of the complaint to the institution, the institution must provide a written response to the student and the Department.

More information about DHE's complaint processes can be found here (<https://www.mass.edu/forstufam/documents/Final%20DHE%20Complaint%20Policy.pdf>).

The Massachusetts Department of Higher Education can also be contacted at:

One Ashburton Place  
Room 1401  
Boston, MA 02108

### For Massachusetts Residents and Online Students in Non-SARA (<https://nc-sara.org/directory/>) Member States and Territories

After you have exhausted the complaint procedures made available by Bay Path University, located at <https://www.baypath.edu/about/assessment-accreditation/academic-policies/>, if your complaint has not been resolved, you may file a complaint with the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education (DHE) by using the general complaint form (<https://www.mass.edu/forstufam/complaints/complaints.asp>). The DHE general complaint form (<https://www.mass.edu/forstufam/complaints/complaints.asp>) should be used by students who are located in:

- Massachusetts
- Non-SARA Member States or Territories (e.g., California, Guam, etc.)

### Appeals to Government Agencies

Please note that the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education (DHE) will accept complaints of any nature (academic, discrimination, harassment, etc.) regardless of the subject, where the student resides, or how they are taking classes. Complaints that are not eligible for review under the SARA Complaint process will be filtered out (i.e. grade appeals) but only after the DHE has determined that the subject of the complaint is ineligible for review under the SARA Complaint process.