What is a UCP complaint?
A complaint under the Uniform Complaint Procedures (UCP) is a written and signed statement by an individual, public agency, or organization alleging a violation of federal or state laws governing certain educational programs.

What agencies are subject to the UCP?
The UCP covers alleged violations by local educational agencies (LEAs) (school districts, county offices of education, and charter schools) and local public or private agencies which receive direct or indirect funding from the State to provide any school programs, activities, or services.

What educational programs and services are covered by the UCP?
- Adult Education
- After School Education and Safety
- Agricultural Vocational Education
- American Indian Education Centers and Early Childhood Education Program Assessments
- Bilingual Education
- California Peer Assistance and Review Programs for Teachers
- Career Technical and Technical Education: Career Technical. Technical Training
- Career Technical Education
- Child Care and Development
- Child Nutrition
- Compensatory Education
- Consolidated Categorical Aid
- Course Periods without Educational Content
- Economic Impact Aid
- Education of Pupils in Foster Care, Pupils who are Homeless, and former Juvenile Court Pupils now enrolled in a school district
- English Learner Programs
- Every Student Succeeds Act / No Child Left Behind (Titles I–VII)
- Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAP)
- Migrant Education
- Physical Education Instructional Minutes
- Pupil Fees
- Reasonable Accommodations to a Lactating Pupil
- Regional Occupational Programs and Centers
- School Safety Plans
- Special Education
- State Preschool
- Tobacco-Use Prevention Education

What issues are not covered by the UCP?
Not all complaints fall under the scope of the UCP. Many concerns are the responsibility of the LEA, including classroom assignments, common core, grades, graduation requirements, hiring and evaluation of staff, homework policies and practices, provision of core curricula subjects, student advancement and retention, student discipline, student records, the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act, the Brown Act, and other general education requirements. The LEA, however, may use its local complaint procedures to address complaints not covered by the UCP.

In addition, the following complaints are referred to other agencies for resolution and not subject to the UCP:
- Allegations of child abuse are referred to County Departments of Social Services, Protective Services Divisions, or appropriate law enforcement agency
- Health and safety complaints regarding a Child Development Program are referred to the Department of Social Services for licensed facilities, and to the appropriate Child Development regional administrator for licensing-exempt facilities
- Employment complaints are sent to the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing
- Allegations of fraud are referred to the responsible Division Director at the California Department of Education (CDE)

How do I file a UCP complaint and how is it processed?
The LEA's UCP complaint policies and procedures provide the information needed to file a local complaint. Each LEA must annually notify its students, employees, parents/guardians, school and district advisory committees, appropriate private school officials and other interested parties of the LEA's UCP complaint policies and procedures, and the opportunity to appeal the LEA's Decision to the CDE. LEAs must provide their complaint policies and procedures free of charge.

What are the responsibilities of the complaint?
- Receives and reviews the UCP complaint policies and procedures from the LEA.
- Files a written complaint by following the steps described in the LEA's UCP complaint procedures
- Cooperates in the investigation and provides the LEA investigator with information and other evidence related to the allegations in the complaint
- May file a written appeal to the CDE within 15 calendar days of receiving the LEA's decision if he or she believes the LEA's decision is incorrect
- Must specify the basis for the appeal and whether the LEA's facts are incorrect and/or the law is misapplied.
- The appeal packet must contain a copy of the original complaint to the LEA and a copy of the LEA's decision
- Where applicable within 35 calendar days of receiving the CDE's decision or report, may submit a request for reconsideration by the Superintendent of Public Instruction at the CDE. The CDE's decision or report will notify the complainant if there is a right to request reconsideration. The request for reconsideration must designate the finding(s), conclusion(s), or corrective action(s) in the CDE's decision or report for which reconsideration is requested, and the specific basis for requesting reconsideration. The request must also state whether the findings of fact are incorrect and/or the law is misapplied.

What are the responsibilities of the LEA?
- Ensures compliance with applicable federal and state laws and regulations
- Adopts UCP complaint policies and procedures consistent with the California Code of Regulations, Title 5 Sections 4600–4687.
- Designates a staff member to be responsible for receiving, investigating and resolving complaints and makes sure the staff member is knowledgeable about the laws/programs he or she is assigned.
- Must give the filing party an opportunity to present information and/or evidence relevant to the complaint
- Protects complainants from retaliation
- Resolves the complaint and completes a written report within 60 calendar days of receipt of the complaint unless extended by written agreement of the complainant
- Must advise the complainant of the right to appeal the LEA's decision to the CDE within 15 calendar days of receiving the decision.

What are the responsibilities of the CDE?
The UCP authorizes the CDE to process appeals of the LEA's decision on UCP complaints, or, in certain specified situations, to intervene directly and investigate the allegations in the complaint. CDE:
- Reviews, monitors, and provides technical assistance to all LEAs regarding the adoption of UCP complaint policies and procedures by the LEA's governing board
- Refers a complaint to the LEA for resolution when appropriate
- Considers a variety of alternatives to resolve a complaint or appeal when
  1. The complainant alleges that, through no fault of the complainant, the LEA fails to act within 60 calendar days of receiving the complaint
  2. The complaint alleges an LEA decision if he or she believes the decision is factually and/or legally incorrect
  3. When requested by the complainant, the CDE determines when direct intervention is applicable
- Requires corrective action by the LEA if noncompliance issues are identified during the investigation
- Provides monitoring and technical assistance to LEAs to ensure resolution of findings of noncompliance.