



## **Student Complaints, Grievances, and Appeals: A Brief Guide**

The purpose of this document is to outline avenues by which students may make appeals or lodge complaints or grievances at Rocky Vista University (RVU). This Guide provides some general overview information, while the RVU Student Handbook and Catalog ([www.rvu.edu/handbook/](http://www.rvu.edu/handbook/)) provides more specific details regarding process and procedures. The Guide is intended to address the most common categories of student issues and grievances and provide students with general and/or contact information.

It is RVU campus policy that all students at all times have the right to lodge a complaint or grievance or appeal which they deem important without fear of retaliation of any sort or any other adverse consequence as a result of doing so.

### **Levels of Complaints**

RVU provides opportunity for students to resolve conflicts and/or related complaints using two levels, informal or formal, or both. Students may elect which avenue serves their specific needs most appropriately, although some matters may not be available via the informal process. The recommended general strategy is to first contact the specific individuals or units most directly connected with the issue at hand unless there are good reasons for not doing so, such as issues related to alleged sexual misconduct. The Assistant/Associate Dean of Student Affairs can provide guidance on complaint protocol and potential resolution.

#### **1. Informal:**

The informal resolution process is designed to resolve problems for students having difficulty with other students, staff, or campus procedures short of written complaints, investigation, and disciplinary action. This process may involve mediation or discussion with the respondent and does not involve a written, formal complaint. This process should not be used for complaints involving academic, disability, discrimination, and/or racial or sexual harassment issues.

## 2. Formal:

The formal complaint procedure is designed to resolve problems for students who are having difficulty with other students, faculty, staff, or processes that cannot be resolved through the informal resolution process, or that student chooses to have an investigation and adjudication in a formal setting. This procedure entails a complaint filing and cannot ensure anonymity. Specific procedures are outlined in the appropriate section of the [RVU Student Handbook and Catalog](#). Complaint form: [Student Formal Complaint Form](#) and also in .doc format: [student formal complaint form](#)

### Common Types of Complaints

- 1. Issues about faculty or staff performance or behavior.** If reasonable and appropriate, students should meet with the individual faculty/staff member to discuss and resolve the problem. If unresolved, students can escalate their concerns to the appropriate Department Chairperson or Assistant/Associate Dean (DO Students) or Program Director (MSBS and PA Studies). In cases involving staff (non-faculty) members, students should seek out the Department Supervisor or Director. In all cases, the Assistant/Associate Dean of Student Affairs is available to provide counsel and direction to students.
- 2. Issues wherein the student wishes to remain anonymous with respect to an instructor or staff member or when the student otherwise chooses to avoid directly discussing the problem with that individual.** If, for whatever reason, a student does not want to personally or directly contact an instructor or staff member to discuss a complaint or grievance, the student should meet with the Assistant/Associate Dean of Student Affairs. Students may be directed to the next highest level of responsibility or the Program Director or Department Chair or Department Director.
- 3. Issues about academics: e.g., grades, exam procedures, excused absences, class policies, academic probations, suspensions, etc.** In these instances, students should refer to the appropriate program section in the [RVU Student Handbook and Catalog](#) (e.g., RVUCOM, MSBS, or PA Studies), as slight differences are necessary in procedures for the various programs.
- 4. Issues about violations of the RVU Student Code of Conduct and/or Honor Code.** The policy and procedures for alleged Code of Conduct violations are in the [RVU Student Handbook and Catalog](#).

Notes:

If the faculty or staff behavior in question involves allegations of sexual misconduct (e.g. sexual harassment, sexual assault, or sexual discrimination), students should contact the RVU Title IX Coordinator at: 720-874-2481.

If a student alleges sexual harassment or misconduct by a faculty or staff member and reports it to a mandated reporter, that reporter (faculty/staff excluding mental health counselors) must forward that information, to include the identity of the complainant, to the RVU Title IX Coordinator at: 720-874-2481.

If the allegations involve racial, religious, or age discrimination or other civil rights issues, students may also contact the Colorado Office of Equal Opportunity. If the allegations relate to disabilities, students should contact the Assistant/Associate Dean of Student Affairs, and if necessary, the Colorado Office of Disability Services. Contact information for these agencies is located in the RVU Nondiscrimination and Sexual Misconduct Policy (<http://www.rvu.edu/about/titleix/>).

### **Procedures for Other Types of Complaints**

- 5. Issues concerning transcripts, student records, privacy, credit hours, etc.** The RVU Registrar's Office is the first point of contact to resolve related issues at 720-874-2455.
- 6. Issues about possible crimes and/or criminal activity.** Generally, the student should contact RVU Campus Safety and Security for non-emergency situations: 720-875-2892 (CO) or 435-222-1256 (UT). For emergency situations, always dial 911 first.
- 7. Issues regarding alleged gender discrimination and/or sexual harassment or any sexual misconduct.** Contact the RVU Title IX Coordinator at: 720-874-2481.
- 8. Issues concerning mental or physical health.** Complaints regarding mental health services should be directed to the Assistant/Associate Dean of Student Affairs. Complaints regarding the health clinic can be directed to the Clinic Manager.
- 9. Issues about parking, parking tickets, etc.** Concerns should be directed to the Campus Safety and Security department at 720-875-2892 (CO) or 435-222-1256 (UT).
- 10. Issues related to On-Campus Housing (UT).** RVU does not own or manage the Crimson Cliffs apartments. Complaints should be directed to [housing@crimsoncliffs.net](mailto:housing@crimsoncliffs.net) or 435-222-1255.
- 11. Issues regarding tuition, fees, financial aid, and other charges.** The Office of Student Financial Services (720-874-2442) is the first point of contact for disputes related to financial concerns.

Note:

Any complaint or grievance not mentioned in the above list may be directed to the Office of Student Affairs for further assistance.

### **Appeals**

A student may submit a written appeal in accordance to the specific policy in the Student Handbook. In the event that guidance and counsel is needed, it is recommended that the student meet with the Assistant/Associate Dean of Student Affairs.

### **Retaliation Clause**

Under no circumstances may any party, whether directly or indirectly involved in a complaint, grievance, or appeal, retaliate in any form towards the complainant, respondent, or other involved party.

### **Records**

A record of formal student complaints and grievances are kept by both the Assistant/Associate Dean of Student Affairs and the Compliance Office. Files in regard to sexual misconduct and/or sexual discrimination are confidential and held by the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Compliance.