**Complaint Process**

Pursuant to the United States Department of Education’s Program Integrity Rule and UW-River Falls internal policies, an individual may file a complaint. An individual should first utilize the institution’s internal complaint or review policies and procedures.

The following process is for **complaints dealing with academic issues.**  Complaints regarding sex discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual assault should be reported to the Title IX coordinator or the appropriate deputy.  Contact information can be found for complaints related to sex-based discrimination, bias incidents, or general student or employee concerns can be found at <https://www.uwrf.edu/ReportIt/>

Any individual who reasonably believes that a violation has occurred may file a complaint in the following manner:

* Wherever practical (e.g. when safety or other considerations allow), informal resolution of complaints is encouraged (e.g. informal discussion with the staff members, faculty member, administrator, and so on). Note that depending upon the nature of the allegation, the institution reserves the right to file a formal complaint on behalf of the individual.

**Steps in the informal complaint process.**

1. Discuss your concern, in person or in writing, with the individual involved. This should be the first step in almost every case, and if you skip this step, you will probably be asked to return to it. If a satisfactory outcome does not occur, you may choose to proceed to step 2.
2. Discuss the issue with the individual’s supervisor. You may be asked to put your complaint in writing. The Supervisor may involve the faculty member and another administrator. If a satisfactory outcome does not occur, you may choose to proceed to step 3.
3. Discuss the issue with the supervisor’s supervisor. If a satisfactory outcome does not occur, you may choose to proceed to step 4.
4. File a formal complaint following the directions below.

Notes: If an issue involves someone in a leadership role, such as a department chair who is also teaching a course related to the concern, the student should initiate the process with that person first.

* If an informal resolution is not achieved, the individual could choose to drop the complaint. In the event that a formal complaint is filed, the institution shall conduct a review and/or investigation into the allegations. The institution may conduct fact-finding during which the complainant and the institution shall be offered an opportunity to submit any relevant and material evidence and information in support their respective positions. Either party may request the presence of a representative during a meeting and/or investigatory interview of the respective party. However, the parties shall be required to speak on their own behalf at all times during this complaint review process. The parties shall be expected to fully cooperate in this review or investigative process. Failure to do so may lead to dismissal of the complaint in its entirety.

**Steps in the formal complaint process.**

1. The complainant will submit the Complaint Form by hard copy to the Provost’s office. The form must be complete and the complainant signature affirms that the complainant:

* Affirms the truth and accuracy of the report.
* Consents to the institution’s disclosure of any protected or confidential information that may pertain to the complaint for the purpose of review, investigation, and/or resolution of the matter.
* Agrees to be available for additional information and/or questions from the institution in order to properly review the complaint. If the complainant fails to provide requested information as part of this process, the institution may unilaterally dismiss the complaint on the grounds that the complainant has refused to willingly participate in the complaint review process.
* Agrees that if the complainant has filed an external complaint or grievance with either UW-System or an external state agency prior or during the filing of a complaint under this review process, the complainant shall notify the institution in order to avoid a duplication of the investigative process regarding a same or similar complaint.
* Understands that state law may also provide for the public disclosure of any existing record or document that is a part of the complaint review process under the Wisconsin Open Records Law, Wis. Stats. 19.31, unless specifically exempt from disclosure by law.

1. A review shall be completed within a 90 calendar day period once the formal complaint form is received, unless additional time is necessary to properly complete the review or investigation process. No later than 60 calendar days from the conclusion of the review and/or investigative process, the Provost’s office shall issue his or her written decision to the complainant. The decision may include one or more of the following determinations:

* That there was insufficient evidence to find that a violation occurred;
* That the complaint is dismissed due to lack of cooperation or participation on the part of the complainant, or untimely filing;
* A recommended course of action for the institution to assure compliance with applicable laws or rules;
* A directive to the unit, or sub-unit and/or any other remedy or resolution that is deemed appropriate and reasonable in response to the alleged violation;
* A referral of the complaint to another unit within the institution that has authority over the issue; or
* Any other remedy or action that is deemed appropriate and reasonable.

1. The decision of the Provost may be appealed to the Chancellor.
2. A decision of the Chancellor shall not be subject to any further appeal or review within the institution. The complainant may pursue any further claim or complaint through applicable state or federal law or UW System processes.
3. If a resolution is not reached at the institution level, or if a complainant believes that the nature of the complaint or its impact on the system as a whole warrants an immediate review, they should contact Academic Programs and Educational Innovation (APEI) at [afgp@uwsa.edu](mailto:afgp@uwsa.edu) or call 608.262.8778 (<https://www.wisconsin.edu/student-complaints/>).

**Formal Complaint Form**

**Informal** resolution of complaints is encouraged whenever practical. This form is to be used for **formal** complaints.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Your Status (select one):  UWRF student  UWRF staff member  UWRF administrator  UWRF faculty member  Non-UWRF student Nonstudent (identify): | Your Family Name: | Your First Name: |
| Your E-mail: | Your Telephone Number: |
| Location of the incident: | |
| Date of the incident: | |
| Describe the incident, providing as much detail as possible. What is the concern? Who was involved? What evidence exists? | | |
| Describe all individuals, units/departments, with whom this incident has been discussed and the outcome: | | |
| Complainee (Person about whom the complaint is filed, if applicable): | | |
| Complainant Signature[[1]](#footnote-1): | | Date Signed: |
| For Internal Use Only | | |
| Received by: | | Date Receive: |
| Action Taken: | | |
| Resolution/Status: | | Date Resolved: |

Please fill out this form, sign it, and submit it to: Provost Office, University of Wisconsin – River Falls, 116 North Hall, 410 South Third Street, River Falls, WI 54022.

1. The complainant’s signature affirms that the complainant affirms the truth and accuracy of the report, and consents to the institution’s disclosure of any protected or confidential information that may pertain to the complaint for the purpose of review, investigation, and/or resolution of the matter. The complainant also agrees to be available for additional information and/or questions from the institution in order to properly review the complaint. If the complainant fails to provide requested information as part of this process, the institution may unilaterally dismiss the complaint on the grounds that the complainant has refused to willingly participate in the complaint review process. The complainant also agrees that if the complainant has filed an external complaint or grievance with either UW-System or an external state agency prior or during the filing of a complaint under this review process, the complainant shall notify the institution in order to avoid a duplication of the investigative process regarding a same or similar complaint. Finally, the complainant understands that state law may also provide for the public disclosure of any existing record or document that is a part of the complaint review process under the Wisconsin Open Records Law, Wis. Stats. 19.31, unless specifically exempt from disclosure by law. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)