

Conflict and Complaints Procedure

The Department of Psychology and Health studies does not accept sexual harassment, abuse of power, or discrimination on the basis of age, race, religion, gender, sexual preference, or disabilities, by any member of the department (Faculty, student, or staff). The following procedures are intended to help to guide the actions of students, faculty and staff who have concerns about sexual harassment, abuse of power, disrespectful treatment, unfair discrimination, or other serious concerns about their working relationships within the department. We wish to emphasize point #1 below, to the effect that students, faculty, and staff all have several choices about how to handle their concerns, but their choices may be influenced by various university regulations and/or collective agreements.

1. Choice of procedure

- Students may choose to consult the University of Saskatchewan Sexual Harassment Officer, or to follow the university procedure identified for student grievances, or to follow the Department of Psychology and Health Studies procedure presented below.
- Faculty and staff may choose to consult the Sexual Harassment Officer, or to follow the grievance procedures identified in their collective agreement, or to follow the Department of Psychology and Health Studies procedure presented below.

2. Collective responsibility

- It is the responsibility of all members of the Department to monitor their own behaviour to ensure that it is ethical and fair toward subordinates and colleagues, and to take corrective action themselves if they violate these expectations.
- It is the responsibility of all members of the Department to try to take corrective action if they become aware of incidents of sexual harassment, abuse of power, or unfair discriminatory behaviour. Subject to the following procedure, such corrective action might include supporting the person making the complaint in taking action, approaching the alleged offender directly, or informing the Department Head about the problem.
- It is the responsibility of all members of the Department to help to avoid gossip and its damaging consequences, particularly by minimizing discussion of alleged offenses with people who are not directly involved.

3. Department of Psychology and Health studies procedure

- Direct approach - if possible, the person making the complaint (the "complainant") will directly approach the person who is believed to have engaged in offensive or harassing behaviour (the "alleged offender"), discuss the issue informally, and seek a resolution of change in behaviour. In some situations, the complainant may not feel able to approach the alleged offender directly because of 1) the nature of the offence, 2) vulnerability to probable harm, and/or 3) the perception that direct confrontation will produce negative consequences as a result of an unfair power differential between complainant and alleged offender. In these cases, the complainant should discuss the issue with the Head of the department.

- Registering a complaint with the Department Head - if as indicated in a. above, the complainant felt unable to use the direct approach, or if no resolution is reached via the direct approach, then the complainant should talk to the Head of the department about the issue, including a neutral confidential observer in the meeting if desired by either party.
- Complainant's consent - The complainant has the option of either (i) asking that the Head keep the complaint confidential, or (ii) giving permission for the Head to investigate the offense and to take corrective action. The Head will discuss with the complainant the potential outcome and implications of each alternative. In the case of (i), the Head's actions are restricted (by due process requirements) to discussions with the complainant, and no other action can be taken. The Head will hold the information in confidence without written record and, if further complaints are received about the same alleged offender, the Head will then consult with all complaints to see if they wish to proceed with a joint complaint and provide permission for investigation. In the case of (ii) due process and fairness to the alleged offender require that the complainant must make the complaint to the offender to obtain his/her response. The Head will make every effort to ensure that the complainant is making an informed decision about the course of action to be taken and within the requirements of due process will attempt to minimize any consequences of the investigation to the complainant.
- Consultation - The Head may, at his/her discretion and with the complainant's consent, consult with the graduate chair, the executive committee, or others in seeking a resolution to a complaint.
- Discipline - Any disciplinary consequences for the offender will be governed by the appropriate university regulations or collective agreement. Such disciplinary consequences could, subject to the regulations or collective agreement, include a reprimand or imposition of a requirement for corrective action.
- Time frame - If the present procedure for consulting the Department Head about a complaint is invoked, it should be initiated soon after the event. The Department Head should handle the complaint as rapidly as possible given the necessary time for thought and consultation.
- Avoiding gossip - Because of the damaging consequences of gossip, the complainant, the offender, the Head, and persons consulted by the Head are asked to minimize discussion of the complaint with persons not involved in the process.