

Frequently Asked Questions

Regarding the Residential College Disciplinary Board

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1. Who adjudicates alleged disciplinary violations by students?

The Residential College Disciplinary Board (RCDB) adjudicates relatively minor non-academic infractions by undergraduates. That is, if an undergraduate student is charged with a behavioral violation (such as an alcohol or drug violation, theft, or assault), and if the maximum possible penalty is disciplinary probation, the case will be heard by RCDB.

The procedures followed by RCDB are described at *RRR* 2.5.3. The questions that follow are answered with RCDB procedures in mind.

There are several other judicial authorities at Princeton.¹

- The Honor Committee adjudicates alleged violations of the Honor Code relating to in-class examinations.
- The Faculty-Student Committee on Discipline (COD) adjudicates alleged academic integrity violations (other than those violations which fall under the jurisdiction of the Honor Committee). The COD also adjudicates charges of non-academic violations where an undergraduate could, if found responsible, be separated from the University (i.e., where a suspension, suspension with conditions, withheld degree, or expulsion is possible).
- Title IX panels convened by the Vice Provost adjudicate alleged acts of sexual misconduct and other Title IX issues.

2. Who is on the Residential College Disciplinary Board?

RCDB comprises the seven Assistant Deans of Undergraduate Students and Directors of Student Life (DSLs) from the residential colleges and associate/assistant deans of undergraduate students.

Butler.....Joseph Rolón, jrolon@princeton.edu, 609-258-1664
Forbes.....Justin Smith, justin.smith@princeton.edu, 609-258-4825
Mathey.....Darleny Cepin, dcepin@princeton.edu, 609-258-8845
New College West..Garrett Meggs, gmeggs@princeton.edu, 609-258-3281
Rocky Amy Ham Johnson, amyham@princeton.edu, 609-258-2652
Whitman.....Momo Wolapaye, momo@princeton.edu, 609-258-8145
Yeh.....Claire Pinciario, pinciario@princeton.edu, 609-258-2296

3. How are alleged infractions reported?

A majority of alleged infractions come to the attention of the deans and DSLs through reports from the Department of Public Safety (DPS), although they can be received from other community members as well.

4. May one student file a complaint of misconduct against another student?

¹ For more information about the procedures followed by the COD, see *Rights, Rules, Responsibilities* section 2.5.2 and a separate FAQ on this topic, available on the ODUS website. For more information about the Title IX process, see <https://sexualmisconduct.princeton.edu/> and *RRR* section 1.3. For more information about the Honor Committee, see *RRR* section 2.3 or visit www.princeton.edu/honor/. If you are a graduate student, consult section 2.6 of *RRR*.

Yes. If you believe that you have been the victim of, or have witnessed, a violation of University rules and regulations, you are strongly encouraged to contact your director of student life (DSL) or a dean in the Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Students (ODUS). Remember that undergraduates are obliged to report suspected violations of the Honor Code to the chair of the Honor Committee by emailing honor@princeton.edu.

5. Will my report be kept confidential?

If you choose to file a report through your DSL or a dean in ODUS and prefer to remain anonymous, every attempt will be made to accommodate you in this regard. However, your anonymity cannot be guaranteed. If a student is charged with a disciplinary violation, that student will have the right to review all information that will be considered by RCDB when adjudicating the charge, and it may be necessary to disclose your name. Regardless, be assured that no student will have access to documents bearing your name without your written permission.

Note that the University maintains an EthicsPoint hotline where anyone may make an anonymous report: 1-866-478-9804 or princetonuniversity.ethicspoint.com.

6. Who follows up on reports of alleged misconduct? What is that process like? Can I do my own investigation?

If there is a report of possible misconduct on your part, here's what will happen. Your DSL, a University investigator or a dean will reach out to you to discuss the matter. You will be asked to give your account of what happened. If you are aware of any witnesses who may have relevant information or any documents (photos, videos, emails, text messages, etc.) that may be pertinent, you should share them with the person who interviews you either during your interview or afterwards. The person who interviews you will take notes during this meeting, and a summary of the interview will be shared with any student who is charged with a University policy related to this incident. You will also be invited to write a statement in your own words if you are subsequently charged with a policy violation. Your DSL will explain the procedures and standards followed by RCDB.

Your DSL (or, at times, University investigators or deans), working with other members of RCDB as necessary, will interview any other witnesses and collect documents. If you are charged with a violation, you will have an opportunity to review summaries of interviews with those who are charged with violations and any other witnesses. If you prefer that certain information you have shared be redacted or omitted, you may contact the person who interviewed you or Joyce Chen Shueh (jqchen@princeton.edu) to make that request.

You are strongly discouraged from doing any "detective work" yourself. Please refrain from directly contacting potential witnesses, searching for documentary and other information, and discussing the case while it is in progress. This policy helps safeguard the integrity of the information-gathering process and helps prevent the real or perceived experience of pressure,

retaliation, or coercion. Instead, tell your DSL about any witnesses who should be interviewed and any other relevant information, and your DSL will ensure that the information is collected.

7. How long will the information-gathering process take?

The University seeks to conduct disciplinary adjudications with reasonable promptness. The information-gathering process will proceed as quickly as possible. The length of the investigation depends on how many witnesses need to be interviewed, the availability of those witnesses, whether follow-up interviews are required, whether documents need to be collected, and other factors. If you are unsure of the status of the investigation, you should reach out to your DSL with any questions.

8. Who decides whether a student will be charged with a disciplinary violation?

At the conclusion of the information-gathering process, your DSL, in consultation with the co-chairs of RCDB as necessary, will determine whether the University will charge you with one or more violations of University policy. Remember that being charged is not the same thing as being found responsible.

9. How will I know what I am charged with? When can I see the documents?

At the end of the information-gathering process:

- (1) You will be notified in writing of the specific charge(s) that RCDB will consider and the date on which the matter will be decided if you are charged with a violation;
- (2) You will be provided with copies of all documents (i.e., Public Safety reports, witness statements, interview summaries, etc.) that RCDB will refer to in deciding your case. Read these documents carefully, and if anything is missing or incomplete, you feel that other witnesses need to be interviewed, other evidence needs to be collected, you need more time to respond or you have any other questions or concerns, contact your DSL.

If you are alleged to have committed a first violation of the University's policy against sharing copyrighted files—a policy which mirrors the prohibitions in the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA)—then the procedures will be different. In such a case, you will receive an email from your DSL, including documentation of the alleged violation. You will be asked to reply by email with any relevant information. You will not be invited to meet in person with your DSL, although you may request a meeting if you prefer. A first violation involving illegal filesharing is typically met with a Dean's Warning.

10. I have been charged with a violation of University policy. I have been told the case will be heard by RCDB. What do I do next?

A student whose case will be heard by RCDB should do the following:

- (a) **Meet with your DSL.** Your director of student life can help you with many things, including:
 - Questions about the charge(s) that will be heard by RCDB;
 - Information about RCDB standards and procedures;
 - Documents that will be provided to the members of RCDB (you will be provided with copies of any such documents);
 - Additional documents, statements or other information that should be considered by RCDB in deciding your case;
 - Resources and support that may be available to you during and after the process.
- (b) **Review *Rights, Rules, Responsibilities*,** especially the passages that describe the misconduct you are alleged to have committed. Look at section 2.5.3 for a description of the RCDB process.
- (c) You are encouraged to **write a statement that addresses the charge.** Your statement will be provided to the members of RCDB.
- (d) **If you are a student athlete,** consider telling your coach what you are going through. Your coach can be a great source of support. If you are found responsible, the assistant and associate directors of athletics will be informed of your penalty if you are issued a term of disciplinary probation and your coach will be updated, but coaches prefer to hear from you first.
- (e) **Consider making an appointment at Counseling and Psychological Services** or with another confidential counselor (e.g., the chaplains, SHARE, the University Ombuds officer) for confidential support and guidance. CPS can be reached at 258-3285.
- (f) **Talk to your parents.** It is easier for parents to hear about a disciplinary matter before it is resolved, rather than after the fact.

11. Will I be present when the case is decided?

No; students do not attend RCDB meetings. Instead, your DSL will present all relevant information, including circulating and reviewing all documents that were collected during the inquiry (copies of which you will have received and considered in advance). The Board will also review any statement that you provide.

12. How does RCDB make decisions?

After your DSL has presented your case, RCDB members will first consider the question of whether there is **clear and persuasive evidence** of the violation(s) of University policy with which you have been charged. This decision is made by majority vote.

If you are found responsible for one or more violations, RCDB will consider the **appropriate penalty**. If a student is found responsible for a violation of University policy, there will always be a sanction. RCDB has the authority to issue Dean's Warnings, Reprimands or a term of disciplinary probation (with or without censure).

RCDB may add to these penalties by assigning campus service hours, removing students from University housing or relocating them within University housing, restricting students' access to space, resources, and activities, or assigning educational programming.

Penalty decisions will be made with reference to a student's previous disciplinary record (if any), the seriousness of the violation, and sanctions imposed in comparable cases in the past. Decisions are made by majority vote.

13. Will I be suspended? What is disciplinary probation? What happens if I am given a Dean's warning?

If your infraction is adjudicated by the Residential College Disciplinary Board, then you will **not** be separated from the University.

If you receive a Dean's Warning it will be kept on file only until you graduate; it will not become part of your permanent record at the University.

A Reprimand, a stronger admonition than a Dean's Warning, will not become part of your permanent record unless there is a subsequent infraction, at which point the Reprimand will be formally recorded on your permanent record. Both a Dean's Warning and a Reprimand may be taken into account in judging the seriousness of any future violation.

Disciplinary probation is a serious admonition, assigned for a specific amount of time, which appears on your permanent record at the University (but not on your transcript).

For further explanation of penalties, see *RRR* section 1.1.7.

14. How do I learn about what happened in past disciplinary cases?

There is an annual discipline report available for students to review on the ODUS website at <https://odus.princeton.edu/community-standards/committees>. The report breaks down the

violations of *Rights, Rules, Responsibilities* into categories and then describes what penalties were assigned for those infractions.

15. How will I be notified of the outcome?

Your DSL will follow up with you after the conclusion of the meeting to provide you with the decision. If found responsible, you will receive a letter explaining the infraction and your assigned penalty. The letter will be sent electronically.

16. Who else will be informed about the outcome?

Disciplinary records are highly confidential. Only Princeton University officials with a professional need to know, such as your residential college staff, will be informed about the outcome. With very few exceptions (e.g., in cases implicating Title IX or physical assault), disciplinary records are not disclosed to other students. Disciplinary records are not disclosed to outside parties without the student's written consent.

Your parents will be notified if you have been found responsible and if a subsequent violation is likely to lead to a separation.

17. Can I appeal the decision?

Yes. If found responsible, you may appeal to the dean of undergraduate students. Your appeal must be initiated within one week of your notification of the decision. You will submit your appeal in writing.

The dean may consider appeals on the following grounds:

- (1) there exists substantial relevant information that was not presented, and reasonably could not have been presented, to the dean or the RCDB;
- (2) the imposed penalty does not fall within the range of penalties imposed for similar misconduct; or
- (3) a procedural irregularity occurred in the adjudication of the incident in question.

The dean may reduce a penalty or send a case back to the Board to consider the substantial relevant information that was not presented or to correct a procedural irregularity. Note that the dean will not engage in "a review of substantive issues of fact" or make "a new determination of whether a violation of rules has occurred." (*RRR* 2.5.3) The dean's decision is final.

18. What resources and accommodations may be available to me before, during, or after the disciplinary process?

Your DSL will be happy to discuss resources and accommodations that may be available to you.

- You are strongly advised to seek confidential counseling by visiting Counseling and Psychological Services.
- Confidential counseling is also available at SHARE, University Health Services, or with the chaplains in the Office of Religious Life.
- You may also inquire with your DSL about the possibility of housing and/or academic accommodations.
- If you have experienced negative interactions with another student and a conflict persists after you have communicated in writing your wish to have no communication or contact with the other individual, ask your DSL about the possibility of a Dean's No Communication or No-Contact Order (DNCO), a non-disciplinary, administrative measure which may be relevant in non-academic cases.
- Students with a disability may obtain information regarding resources that may be available by contacting Elizabeth Erickson, Director for Disability Services ((609) 258-8840 or eerickso@princeton.edu).

19. If I feel that my Title IX rights have been violated in connection with the disciplinary process, what should I do?

You may file a Title IX grievance with the Vice Provost for Institutional Equity and Diversity, Michele Minter (mminter@princeton.edu). See also <https://sexualmisconduct.princeton.edu/>.

20. If I feel that my rights under the University's non-discrimination policy have been violated in connection with the disciplinary process, what should I do?

You may contact LaTanya Buck, Dean for Diversity and Inclusion in the Office of the Vice President for Campus Life (latanya.buck@princeton.edu), or Cheri Burgess, Director, Institutional Equity and EEO in the Office of the Provost (clawson@princeton.edu).