

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” or “the Board”) adjudicates behavioral (non-academic) infractions by undergraduates where the maximum possible penalty is disciplinary probation. Examples of behavioral violations heard by RCDB include alcohol or drug violations, disorderly conduct, health and safety violations, theft, assault, and violations of our policy on honesty and cooperation.

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 behavioral (non-academic) violations where an undergraduate could, if found responsible, be separated from the University (i.e., where a suspension, suspension with conditions, suspension (not served), 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.
- The Judicial Committee of the Council of the Princeton University Community hears and decides, either in the first instance or on referral from one of the other judicial bodies, cases that involve alleged violations of those established rules and regulations whose violation constitutes a serious infringement of the recognized rights of members of the University community, a serious offense against the University's mission, a threat to the ability of the University to carry on its essential operations, or a substantial impairment of the common and legitimate interests of the University.

2. Who is on the Residential College Disciplinary Board?

RCDB comprises the seven Assistant Deans for Student Life from the residential colleges and the deputy, senior associate, and associate dean of undergraduate students.

Assistant Deans for Student Life (ADSLs):

Butler	Joseph Rolón, jrolon@princeton.edu
Forbes	Michelle Smith, ms5465@princeton.edu
Mathey	Melissa Chesanko, mc7350@princeton.edu
New College West	Garrett Meggs, gmeggs@princeton.edu
Rocky	Monica Fung-Janardhan, monica.fj@princeton.edu
Whitman	Momo Wolapaye, momo@princeton.edu
Yeh	Claire Pinciario, pinciario@princeton.edu

Other members of RCDB:

Joyce Chen (Deputy Dean of Undergraduate Students)
Amy Ham Johnson (Associate Dean of Undergraduate Students)
Mellisa Thompson (Senior Associate Dean of Undergraduate Students)

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*.

3. How are alleged infractions reported?

A majority of alleged infractions come to the attention of the deans and ADSLs 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?

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 Assistant Dean for Student Life (ADSL) 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 ADSL 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 the information you provide is information that any number of students could have provided, then it is likely that you will remain anonymous. If a student is notified of a disciplinary violation, that student will have the right to review all information that will be considered by RCDB when adjudicating the policy violation, 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 ADSL or a member of the Student Support and Accountability team 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 notified that there will be a review of a

potential policy violation. Your ADSL will explain the procedures and standards followed by RCDB.

Your ADSL (or, at times, a member of the Student Support and Accountability team), 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 all the interview summaries. If you prefer that certain information you have shared be redacted or omitted, you may contact the person who interviewed you, Amy Ham Johnson (amyham@princeton.edu), or Joyce Chen (jgchen@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 ADSL about any witnesses who should be interviewed and any other relevant information, and your ADSL 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 ADSL with any questions.

8. Who decides whether a student will be notified that RCDB will review a potential disciplinary violation?

At the conclusion of the information-gathering process, your ADSL, in consultation with the co-chairs of RCDB as necessary, will determine whether RCDB will review a potential violation of University policy. If so, the student will be notified. Remember that receiving a notice of potential violation is not the same thing as being found responsible.

9. I have received notification that RCDB will review a potential violation of University policy. How will I know what policies I may have violated? When can I see the documents?

At the end of the information-gathering process:

- (1) You will be notified in writing of the specific policy violations that RCDB will consider

and the date on which the matter will be decided;

- (2) You will be provided with copies of all documents (i.e., Public Safety reports, witness statements, interview summaries, etc.) that RCDB will review 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 ADSL.

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 ADSL, 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 ADSL, although you may request a meeting if you prefer. A first violation involving illegal filesharing is typically met with a Dean's Warning.

Occasionally, in cases involving a large number of students, RCDB may streamline the resolution of cases with less severe sanctions by sending a notification that the Board has determined that a student violated a particular University policy based on the information collected (which is attached) and has been issued an outcome. In that case, the student may accept the outcome or choose to go through the full process, where the student will be issued a notification that the Board will review the potential violation, have an opportunity to submit a statement and then have their case adjudicated by the Board.

10. I have been notified that RCDB will review a potential violation of University policy. What do I do next?

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

- (a) **Meet with your ADSL.** Your assistant dean for student life can help you with many things, including:
 - Questions about the policy violation(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 the notification of potential violation of University policy,** which will outline the reported or suspected conduct that may have been a violation.
- (c) **Review *Rights, Rules, Responsibilities*,** especially the passages that describe the conduct that violates University policy. Look at section 2.5.3 for a description of the

RCDB process.

- (d) You are encouraged to **write a statement that addresses the policy violation(s)**. Your statement will be provided to the members of RCDB.
- (e) **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 and issued a term of disciplinary probation, the Associate Director of Athletics and Associate Dean of the College will be informed of your penalty. Your coach may be updated, but coaches prefer to hear from you first.
- (f) **Consider making an appointment at Counseling and Psychological Services** or with another confidential counselor (e.g., the chaplains, SHARE, the University Ombuds officer) for support and guidance. CPS can be reached at 609-258-3141 (press 2).
- (g) **Consider talking to your family**. Sometimes, it is easier for families to hear about a disciplinary matter before it is resolved, rather than after the fact. You are in the best position to judge whether notifying your family makes sense in your situation.

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

No, students do not attend RCDB meetings. Instead, your ADSL 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. Your ADSL will be available to answer any questions you may have about RCDB's determination.

12. How does RCDB make decisions?

After your ADSL 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 that you have been notified will be reviewed by the Board. 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 (suspended, expelled or issued a withheld degree) 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 informal 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). If you authorize the University to release your disciplinary record to a third party (such as a graduate or professional school to which you are applying for admission), the University will not disclose infractions resulting in disciplinary probation unless a student commits another infraction for which they are separated. For more information about disciplinary probation, please see the [FAQs](#) on the ODUS website.

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 ADSL 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 RCDB outcome?

Disciplinary records are highly confidential. Only Princeton University officials with a Residential College Disciplinary Board FAQ

professional need to know, such as your deans or Athletics (if you are an athlete and receive disciplinary probation), will be informed about the outcome. With very few exceptions (e.g., in cases of physical assault), disciplinary records are not disclosed to other students. Disciplinary records are not disclosed to third parties without the student's authorization.

Your parent/legal guardian 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 Regan Crotty. 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 return a case 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 ADSL 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 ADSL about the possibility of housing and/or academic accommodations.
- In limited situations, a No Contact or No Communication order may be issued: 1) in an emergent situation such as where there has been a significant interpersonal conflict or altercation, a dean may issue a temporary No Communication Order for a short period of time (typically until the next business day) until the matter can be reviewed; 2) where a disciplinary infraction is being investigated and there is a concern for the

safety of an individual, until an adjudication of the case can take place; or 3) if an individual has been found responsible for a disciplinary infraction, the Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Students or the Graduate School may issue a No Communication Order or No Contact Order as part of the penalty. For more information about NCOs, see the NCO FAQs on the ODUS website (<https://odus.princeton.edu/standards/resolution>).

- Students with a disability may obtain information regarding resources that may be available by contacting Asha Nambiar, Director for Disability Services ((609) 258-8840 or anambiar@princeton.edu) or the Office of Disability Services (609-258-8840 or ods@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 Cheri Burgess, Director, Institutional Equity and EEO in the Office of the Provost (clawson@princeton.edu).