

Conduct Process Advisors

Anyone can be an advisor. Students have had friends, family members, professors, mentors, and attorneys serve as advisors. Advisors assist and support students accused of violating the Code of Student Conduct. The Code calls accused students respondents. In some cases there are also complainants (the person who experienced the alleged misconduct). Complainants can also be accompanied by an advisor to meetings.

An advisor helps you prepare for meetings with the university about the alleged violation as well as assist with any issues that may arise for the Respondent during the process (counseling, advocating to professors, etc). This includes meetings with the Dean of Students Representative investigating the allegation and with the Committee on Student Conduct if you have a review before the committee. An advisor does not represent you in meetings. This means an advisor cannot speak on your behalf, question witnesses, or otherwise actively participate in the process. During meetings the advisor's role is limited to quiet consultation, exchanging notes with you, and conferring with you during breaks.

Preparation before a meeting can help you make the best use of an advisor. Conduct meetings can feel stressful. You may get nervous and forget important points or questions. If you and your advisor have talked about what you want to say or questions you have, the advisor can provide reminders so nothing important is forgotten. An advisor could also help you think through questions, offer feedback on a statement, or help you practice answers to potential questions to help you feel prepared.

The Dean of Students Office works with staff who volunteer to serve as advisors. These staff members receive ongoing training on the conduct process. The Dean of Students Office wants all

students to actively and fully participate in the conduct process, and providing access to trained advisors is one way we accomplish this goal. There is no requirement to use a trained advisor, or any advisor at all.

University staff serving as advisors have important limitations. They are not lawyers and cannot offer legal advice. They have an obligation to report if you tell them you intend to harm yourself, harm someone else, lie in the conduct process, or harass or retaliate against someone. They are not able to keep information you share with them confidential like an attorney- they could be subpoenaed by a court to testify. If you have pending criminal charges that relate to the alleged misconduct the university is investigating, you may want to consult with an attorney. Sometimes a university staff member may not be able to serve as an advisor due to a conflict of interest. The staff member will tell you up front if they cannot serve due to a conflict or for other reasons.

You can have an attorney as an advisor. This is at your own expense. An attorney's role in the conduct process is the same as an advisor. If you want to have an attorney attend meetings with you the university needs to know in advance and one of the university's attorneys will attend. The only time a university attorney attends a conduct-related meeting is if the respondent or complainant brings an attorney.

If you have questions about the conduct process or need assistance please call the Dean of Students Office at 940.565.2648 or visit us in suite 409 of the University Union.