

## *University of Washington - Department of Physics*

### **Policy and Procedure for Reporting and Handling Graduate Student Complaints**

*(Revised June, 2017)*

The Department of Physics is committed to ensuring that students have a positive graduate school experience. To this end, the Department will make every effort to prevent and respond to problems. The department also pledges to respond quickly and affirmatively to alleviate any problems or miscommunications that may arise

Students may report grievances to the Department Chair or the Graduate Program Coordinator; however, the Department recognizes that students also need a less formal environment where they may speak openly and easily about their concerns. This policy and procedure is intended to encourage students to report complaints to the Graduate Advisor who will provide sympathetic counsel in a supportive environment. Students should still speak with the Department Chair or the Graduate Program Coordinator about serious complaints, which warrant immediate action.

In cases of sexual harassment, or when the student does not feel comfortable talking to members of the Department, the student should contact the University Office of the Ombud and Title IX Coordinator Harassment at 206-543-6028 or 206-543-6452. The UW Office of Health & Wellness offers additional information and resources at: <http://depts.washington.edu/livewell/advocate/>. The University's Student Conduct Code is [Washington Administrative Code 478-120](#) and is published on the University of Washington Policy Directory

#### **ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Graduate Advisor helps protect the rights and interests of graduate students. In this role the Graduate Advisor will:

- Act as a source of information and assistance to graduate students.
- Receive complaints from graduate students.
- Discuss options and offer advice for resolving complaints.
- Make recommendations to the Department Chair and Graduate Program Coordinator about desired or necessary changes in Department policies and procedures.

#### **POLICY**

The Graduate Advisor will respect confidences. While the Graduate Advisor will occasionally report to the Chair on graduate student concerns, these reports will not contain any details making it possible to identify individual students unless the students give their consent.

Although the Graduate Advisor will not normally take action without the graduate student's explicit consent Allegations of serious misconduct (such as theft or discrimination, including sexual harassment) must be reported to the appropriate authority. Graduate students are expected to be actively involved in discussing a plan for resolving the complaint and deciding how to proceed.

#### **PROCEDURE**

If you have a complaint, you should stop by the Graduate Program Advising Office or make an appointment to meet with the Graduate Advisor.

Catherine Provost, Graduate Advisor  
C139B Physics/Astronomy Building  
[grad@phys.washington.edu](mailto:grad@phys.washington.edu)  
206-543-2488

The Graduate Advisor will listen; discuss your options and offer advice; and ask you how you would like to proceed. You may ask the Graduate Advisor to proceed in one of the following ways:

1. Take no action. (You simply need a sympathetic ear.)
2. Report the complaint to the Department Chair or Graduate Program Coordinator if a pattern of similar complaints is heard which, in the judgment of the Graduate Advisor, merits action. (You feel the complaint requires action if the Graduate Advisor hears similar complaints from other graduate students.)
3. Report the complaint to the Department Chair or Graduate Program Coordinator. (You feel the complaint requires action.)

No matter how you decide to proceed, the Graduate Advisor will support you in your decision and follow-up with you to find out if the complaint was resolved and your situation improved.

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

You may also report complaints to the following persons or offices.

Blayne Heckel, Chair  
C121F Physics/Astronomy Building  
chair@phys.washington.edu  
206-543-2771

Marcel den Nijs, Faculty Graduate Program Coordinator  
B408 Physics/Astronomy Building  
dennijs@phys.washington.edu  
206-682-2395

Chuck Sloane, University Ombudsman and Ombudsman for Sexual Harassment  
301 Husky Student Union Building (HUB)  
ombuds@u.washington.edu  
206-543-0283  
206-543-6028

University Complaint Investigation and Resolution Office (UCIRO)  
1415 NE 45<sup>th</sup>, Room 405  
uciro@u.washington.edu  
206-616-2028

Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs  
476 Schmitz Hall  
ovpsa@u.washington.edu  
206-543-4972