

WAC 495B-121-315 Student conduct committee—Prehearing. (1)

Proceedings of the student conduct committee shall be governed by the Administrative Procedure Act, chapter 34.05 RCW.

(2) The student conduct committee chair shall serve all parties with written notice of the hearing not less than seven business days in advance of the hearing date. The chair may shorten this notice period if both parties agree, and may also continue the hearing to a later time for good cause shown. The notice must include:

- (a) A copy of the student conduct code;
- (b) The basis for jurisdiction;
- (c) The alleged violation(s);
- (d) A summary of facts underlying the allegations;
- (e) The range of possible sanctions that may be imposed; and
- (f) A statement that retaliation is prohibited.

(3) The chair is authorized to conduct prehearing conferences and/or to make prehearing decisions concerning the extent and form of any discovery, issuance of protective decisions, and similar procedural matters.

(4) Upon request for a document exchange filed at least five business days before the hearing by any party or at the direction of the chair, the parties shall exchange, no later than the third business day prior to the hearing, lists of potential witnesses and copies of potential exhibits that they reasonably expect to present to the committee. Failure to participate in good faith in such a requested exchange may be cause for exclusion from the hearing of any witness or exhibit not disclosed, absent a showing of good cause for such failure.

(5) The committee chair may provide to the committee members in advance of the hearing copies of:

- (a) The conduct officer's notification of imposition of discipline (or referral to the committee); and
- (b) The notice of appeal (or any response to referral) by the respondent. If doing so, however, the chair should remind the members that these "pleadings" are not evidence of any facts they may allege.

(6) The parties may agree before the hearing to designate specific exhibits as admissible without objection and, if they do so, whether the committee chair may provide copies of these admissible exhibits to the committee members before the hearing.

(7) The student conduct officer or their designee, upon request, shall provide reasonable assistance to the respondent and complainant in procuring the presence of college students, employees, staff, and volunteers to appear at a hearing, provided the respondent and complainant provide a witness list to the student conduct officer or designee no less than three business days in advance of the hearing. The student conduct officer or their designee shall notify the respondent and complainant no later than 24 hours in advance of the hearing if they have been unable to contact any prospective witness to procure their appearance at the hearing. The committee chair will determine how to handle the absence of a witness and shall describe on the record their rationale for any decision.

(8) Communications between committee members and other hearing participants regarding any issue in the proceeding, other than procedural communications that are necessary to maintain an orderly process, are generally prohibited without notice and opportunity for all parties to participate, and any improper "ex parte" communication shall be placed on the record, as further provided in RCW 34.05.455.

(9) In cases heard by the committee, each party may be accompanied at the hearing by an advisor of their choice, which may be an attorney retained at the student's expense.

(10) For any matters involving a disciplinary sanction of suspension of more than one quarter, dismissal, or sex-based harassment, the college shall provide an advisor to the respondent and any complainant, if they have not otherwise identified an advisor to assist them during the hearing. The committee will ordinarily be advised by an assistant attorney general or their designee. If the respondent and/or complainant is represented by an attorney, the student conduct officer or their designee may also be represented by an assistant attorney general.

(11) Attorneys for students must file a notice of appearance with the committee chair at least four business days before the hearing. Failure to do so may, at the discretion of the committee chair, result in a waiver of the attorney's ability to represent the student at the hearing, although an attorney may still serve as an advisor to the student.

(12) In cases involving allegations of sex discrimination, the complainant has a right to participate equally in any part of the disciplinary process, including appeals.

(a) Notice. The college must provide a notice that includes all information required in subsection (2) of this section, and a statement that the parties are entitled to an equal opportunity to access relevant and permissible evidence, or a description of the evidence upon request.

(b) Advisors. The complainant and respondent are both entitled to have an advisor present, who may be an attorney retained at the party's expense.

(c) Extensions of time. The chair may, upon written request of any party and a showing of good cause, extend the time for disclosure of witness and exhibit lists, accessing and reviewing evidence, or the hearing date, in accordance with the procedures set forth in subsection (13)(b) of this section.

(d) Evidence. In advance of the hearing, the student conduct officer, or designee, shall provide reasonable assistance to the respondent and complainant in accessing and reviewing the investigative report and relevant and not otherwise impermissible evidence that is within the college's control.

(e) Confidentiality. The college shall take reasonable steps to prevent the unauthorized disclosure of information obtained by a party solely through the disciplinary process, which may include, but are not limited to, directives by the student conduct officer, their designee, or chair issuing directives pertaining to the dissemination, disclosure, or access to evidence outside the context of the disciplinary hearing.

(13) In cases involving allegations of sex-based harassment, the following additional procedures apply:

(a) Notice. In addition to all information required in subsection (2) of this section, the notice must also inform the parties that:

(i) The respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged sex-based harassment;

(ii) That the parties will have an opportunity to present relevant and not otherwise impermissible evidence to a trained, impartial student conduct committee;

(iii) That they may have an advisor of their choice, who may be an attorney, assist them during the hearing;

(iv) They are entitled to an equal opportunity to access relevant and not otherwise impermissible evidence in advance of the hearing; and

(v) The student conduct code prohibits knowingly making false statements or knowingly submitting false information during a student conduct proceeding.

(b) Extensions of time. The chair may, upon written request of any party and a showing of good cause, extend the time for disclosure of witness and exhibit lists, accessing and reviewing evidence, or the hearing date. The party requesting an extension must do so no later than 48 hours before any date specified in the notice of hearing or by the chair in any prehearing conference. The written request must be served simultaneously by email to all parties and the chair. Any party may respond and object to the request for an extension of time no later than 24 hours after service of the request for an extension. The chair will serve a written decision upon all parties, to include the reasons for granting or denying any request. The chair's decision shall be final. In exceptional circumstances, for good cause shown, the chair may, in their sole discretion, grant extensions of time that are made less than 48 hours before any deadline.

(c) Advisors. The college shall provide an advisor to the respondent and any complainant, if the respondent or complainant has not otherwise identified an advisor to assist during the hearing.

(d) Evidence. In advance of the hearing, the student conduct officer or their designee shall provide reasonable assistance to the respondent and complainant in accessing and reviewing the investigative report and relevant and not otherwise impermissible evidence that is within the college's control.

(e) Confidentiality. The college shall take reasonable steps to prevent the unauthorized disclosure of information obtained by a party solely through the disciplinary process, which may include, but are not limited to, directives by the student conduct officer, their designee, or chair issuing directives pertaining to the dissemination, disclosure, or access to evidence outside the context of the disciplinary hearing.

(f) Separate locations. The chair may, or upon the request of any party, must conduct the hearing with the parties physically present in separate locations, with technology enabling the committee and parties to simultaneously see and hear the party or the witness while that person is speaking.

(g) Withdrawal of complaint. If a complainant wants to voluntarily withdraw a complaint, they must provide notice to the college in writing before a case can be dismissed.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 28B.50.140(13). WSR 25-02-031, s 495B-121-315, filed 12/19/24, effective 1/19/25. Statutory Authority: Chapter 34.05 RCW; and RCW 28B.50.140(13); 20 U.S.C. § 1092(f); Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. § 1681 et seq.; RCW 28B.50.130. WSR 21-07-085, amended and recodified as § 495B-121-315, filed 3/18/21, effective 4/18/21. Statutory Authority: RCW 28B.50.130. WSR 16-08-029, § 495B-121-120, filed 3/30/16, effective 4/30/16.]