

UF Astronomy Departmental Policy for Resolving Concerns or Conflicts

As in any work environment, issues or conflicts may arise that warrant mediation or intervention. Areas in which concerns, or grievances may arise include sexual harassment, discrimination, scientific misconduct, employment-related concerns, and academic matters. Note that procedures for handling grievances vary depending on the type of problem and the procedures for reporting the different types of concerns are listed below.

In general, the procedure to report concerns in the Department of Astronomy is as follows:

Step 1- If possible, talk to the other person involved in the conflict to try to informally work out the issue.

Step 2 - If the matter/conflict is not resolved or you are not comfortable speaking with the person involved, then report your concern to your immediate supervisor/advisor or the undergraduate/graduate coordinator.

Step 3 - If the matter/conflict is not resolved or the department member is not comfortable speaking with any of the people listed in Step 2, then report your concern to the Department Chair either verbally and/or submit a written grievance with supporting documents.

Step 4 – If the Department member is not satisfied with the results of Steps 1, 2 and 3 , then they should discuss the matter with our Unit's Associate Dean in CLAS.

Step 5 - If Step 4 does not resolve the matter to your satisfaction then discuss your concern with the UF Ombuds or follow one of the procedures below.

Reporting Information for different areas of concern:

- a. Sexual harassment and related violations of Title IX are handled by the Title IX Coordinator. **For any Title IX violation, there is mandatory reporting.** For more information about Title IX resources, reporting and procedures, please see the website for the Office for Accessibility and Gender Equity at <https://titleix.ufl.edu>. Please refer to <https://titleix.ufl.edu/report/> to report any Title IX violations. **The department requires that any faculty member or supervisor who is informed of a Title IX violation to immediately report this to both the department chair and the Title IX coordinator.** The person filing the complaint about the violation can report directly to the chair, or to any other faculty member or supervisor with whom they feel comfortable.
- b. Information on discrimination or bias based reporting can be found at <https://respect.ufsa.ufl.edu>.
- c. Employment-related concerns are handled in compliance with the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the University of Florida Board of Trustees and Graduate Assistants United. In such cases, contact UF Human Resources at 352-392- for information and instructions. For a comprehensive guide to the options for reporting employment related concerns please go to <https://hr.ufl.edu/manager-resources/employee-relations/employee-inquiry-and-complaint-procedures/complaint-filing-options/>. This resource is applicable to all UF employees, including students.

- d. In cases of research misconduct consult with the Office UF Research Integrity, Security & Compliance before lodging a formal complaint, by clicking on this online link: <https://research.ufl.edu/compliance.html>. Any follow-up formal complaints would go to the administrator (department chair or dean, for example) to whom the accused party reports.
- e. Academic issues, those not involving sexual harassment or employment, should be handled first through department mechanisms, and if still unresolved, through the Deans Office for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The Department of Astronomy follows the grievance procedures as described by the University in the [Rules of the University Student Affairs](#) and by the Graduate School at the University of Florida in the [Graduate School Handbook](#).

For your Reference here are excerpts directly from the 2020-2021 Graduate Student Handbook:

1. **Conflict Resolution**

The University of Florida is committed to treating all members of the campus community fairly and considerately when it comes to conflict resolution.

UF has mechanisms in place to ensure that you are given adequate opportunity to raise concerns (aside from grades) before university administrators if you feel that you have experienced unfair treatment or undue hardship, such as academic issues, discrimination, employment problems, scholarly misconduct, or sexual harassment.

Your degree program, department, or college may have their own specific conflict resolution procedures as well, so be sure to check with those units.

If **academic conflicts** arise, here are the steps you can take to address and resolve them:

1. Communicating promptly and proactively is key. As soon as you become aware of activity or circumstances that cause you concern, speak to the individuals involved, your department's graduate coordinator, or your supervisory committee chair, to see if you can resolve the conflict informally. You may wish to present your concerns in writing to the individuals alleged to have caused a conflict. Those individuals must respond either orally or in writing.
2. If Step 1 does not resolve the conflict to your satisfaction, submit a written grievance and supporting documentation to your department chair or designated representative, who must respond to you in writing in a timely fashion.

3. If Step 2 does not resolve the conflict to your satisfaction, submit your written grievance and support documentation to your college's graduate associate dean, who will investigate the matter and respond to you in writing within a reasonable time frame.
4. If Step 3 does not resolve the conflict to your satisfaction, submit your written grievance and support documentation to the UF Office of the Ombuds. You can only take this step after you have gone through Steps 1 through 3. Appeals to and decisions of the Ombuds are final. For more information, click this online link to the Ombuds website: [UF Ombuds](#).

Most **employment-related grievances** are covered by Article 22 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Florida Board of Education of the State University System and Graduate Assistants United (GAU). In such cases, call the GAU office at 352-392-0274 or UF Human Resources at 352-392-2477 for information and instructions.

In cases of **research misconduct**, consult UF Research Integrity before lodging a formal complaint, by clicking on this online link: [UF Research Integrity](#). Any follow-up formal complaints would go to the administrator (department chair or dean, for example) to whom the accused party reports.

If you have questions, problems, or complaints with other aspects of student life, consult the UF Dean of Students Office: [UF Dean of Students Office](#).

For your Reference here is a link to The Orange Book – Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution:

<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2020/12/Orange-Book-Web-Version-2020.pdf>