

# Complaints and Grievances

It is the intention of Johnson & Wales University to resolve complaints and grievances quickly, informally and as close as possible to the point of origin. The complaint and grievance process set forth below is not intended to be a forum to challenge university policy, but rather a means by which individuals can seek a timely and fair review of their concerns.

Exempt from Johnson & Wales' complaint and grievance process are those areas for which there presently exists a separate complaint or grievance process or built-in review or appeal. Those exempt areas include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Actions by the dean of students, including matters that have been referred to Community Standards and Conduct
2. Actions by Residential Life concerning contract release or room relocations
3. Actions by the Academic & Financial Appeals Committee
4. Actions by a faculty member, staff member or third party which may constitute harassment or discrimination (which should be referred to the nondiscrimination and Title IX coordinator, a nondiscrimination campus liaison, or Human Resources & Payroll, as set forth in the Prohibited Discrimination and Harassment Policy)
5. Actions relating to voluntary medical withdrawals
6. Actions relating to involuntary medical withdrawals
7. Actions relating to the ADA/Rehabilitation Act Grievance Policy And Procedure
8. Actions relating to the review of accommodation decisions
9. Actions relating to academic integrity

## Complaint and Grievance Process

For the resolution of academic and administrative issues outside of the exempt areas, please follow the process outlined below. At its sole discretion, the university (including deans and departmental chairs and Human Resources) may consider complaints made outside of channels or time frames indicated below, but it may choose not to do so and asks all students to adhere to the process set forth below.

### Step 1

If a student has a complaint about a matter related to the student's grade, class assignment, or issue of a similar nature, the student should first address the complaint or grievance with the faculty or staff member involved within five days of the incident. If a student has a different type of complaint, the student may also follow this process. The faculty or staff member will consider the complaint or grievance and notify the student of the faculty or staff member's decision within a reasonable time, usually five days. If a student (a) does not have a complaint about a matter related to the student's grade, class assignment, or issue of a similar nature and (b) does not wish to address the complaint or grievance with the faculty or staff member involved, the student should follow the applicable process indicated in Step 2 below.

### Step 2

If the student (a) does not have a complaint about a matter related to the student's grade, class assignment, or issue of a similar nature and (b) does not wish to address the complaint or grievance with the faculty or staff member involved OR the complaint or grievance cannot be resolved at the previous level, the student should present the complaint or grievance, in writing, to the appropriate department chair or department director within five days of the incident (if raised in the first instance) or within five days of receipt of the faculty or staff member's decision (if raised previously with the faculty or staff member). The department chair or department director will document their decision and provide a copy to the student, faculty or staff member, and dean of the appropriate school or college (in the case of an academic complaint or grievance) or the dean of students (in the case of an administrative complaint or grievance) within a reasonable time, usually five days.

### Step 3

If the complaint or grievance is still unresolved, the student may request a final review at the dean's level by submitting a written request for review to the dean of the appropriate college or school (in case of an academic complaint or grievance) or the dean of students (in case of an administrative complaint or grievance) or their designees. The written request should set forth the reasons that the student is seeking a review of the earlier

decision and, in particular, should specify if the student feels that relevant, new information has come to light since the decision was made or that the decision was unjust or inconsistent with the circumstances of the incident. The request will be considered by the appropriate dean or designee. The decision of the reviewing dean will be final and a written copy of the decision will be given to the student.

## Expedited Review

If there is a legitimate need for an immediate or expedited review of an academic or administrative decision, then written complaints and grievances or requests for review and decisions may not be required. The determination of whether an expedited review is appropriate is determined in the sole discretion of the dean of the appropriate college or school (in case of an academic complaint or grievance), the dean of students (in case of an administrative complaint or grievance) or their designees.

Note: Retaliation against any individual who has made a good faith complaint or grievance or cooperated in the investigation of such a complaint or grievance is a violation of university policy. Anyone found to have engaged in retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination or dismissal.

## Student Complaint Process for Online Students

### Current SARA Member Jurisdictions

Current authorized jurisdictions subject to the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) and the National Council for SARA (NC-SARA) standards include all states and the District of Columbia, with the exception of California. California has its own process for the filing of complaints by online students living in that state that is discussed under **Student Complaint Process for Online Students in Non-SARA Jurisdictions** below.

### Online Student Complaint Process

If you are enrolled as an online student and you have a complaint that cannot be resolved through Johnson & Wales University's complaint and grievance process as set forth above, you may file a complaint with the Rhode Island Council on Postsecondary Education (RI-CPE), as described below in **Student Complaint Process for Online Students in SARA Jurisdictions**, or, if living in California, with the California Department of Consumer Affairs (CADCA), as described below in **Student Complaint Process for Online Students in Non-SARA Jurisdictions**.

You may also see additional consumer information related to all other aspects of Johnson & Wales University.

### Initial Complaints To Be Filed with JWU

Before filing a complaint with RI-OPC or CADCA, online students are expected to first file an internal complaint with JWU, by following this process (p. 1).

The complaint will be reviewed, evaluated, and, whenever possible, resolved by the relevant JWU personnel. If the student bringing the complaint is not satisfied with the outcome of JWU's internal complaint process, the complainant may file his/her complaint, within two years of the incident about which the complaint is made, with RI-OPC or CADCA, depending on where the online student resides. The resolution of the complaint by RI-OPC or CADCA will be final.

### Student Complaint Process for Online Students in SARA Jurisdictions (All But California)

RI-CPE has promulgated a Student Complaint Procedure. As specified in that procedure, JWU online students may file the following types of complaints with RI-CPE:

- Allegations of Consumer Protection Violations, including Fraud and False Advertising
- Allegations of Violations of State Laws, Rules or Licensing Requirements
- Allegations of Violations of Accreditation Standards
- Allegations of Violations of Standards Established by NC-SARA
- Complaints About Education Program Quality
- Other Complaints as specific in the RI-CPE Student Complaint Procedure

As specified in the RI-CPE Student Complaint Procedure, such student complaints shall be delivered or mailed to the Rhode Island Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner (RI-OPC) at the following address:

Rhode Island Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner  
560 Jefferson Blvd  
Warwick, RI 02886-1304

The phone number for RI-OPC is (401) 736-1100.

**Student Complaint Process for Online Students in Non-SARA Jurisdictions (California)**

If you are enrolled as an online student living in a state that is not a member SARA (currently only California) and you have a complaint that cannot be resolved through Johnson & Wales University's internal complaint process, you may file a complaint with the California Department of Consumer Affairs (CADCA). On behalf of California student residents, CADCA will evaluate complaints, identify the appropriate accrediting agency or governmental entity to handle the complaint, and request a response from the entity regarding the final disposition of the complaint. The address and contact information for CADCA are below:

**California Department of Consumer Affairs  
Consumer Information Center**

1625 North Market Blvd, Suite N-112  
Sacramento, CA 95834  
(833) 942-1120

[dca@dca.ca.gov](mailto:dca@dca.ca.gov)

For a complete list of relevant state agencies within the U.S., please refer to the following list of State Agencies.