

## Things to know about your Formal Hearing

Residents who request, or are assigned to, a formal hearing often have questions about the process. Here are a few things to know before the hearing begins.

- There are **two types of formal hearings**: an Administrative Hearing (with a full-time, professional staff member) and a Peer Review Board (PRB) Hearing (with a group of residential students). Assignment is based on availability of staff and PRB members.
- The hearings begin with **opening statements** by the staff member who investigated your case ("Housing"), and then by you ("Accused Student"). The administrator or board will ask **questions** of both you and Housing. Both parties will have a chance to **bring witnesses** to add any additional information about the incident. The hearing will end with an opportunity for both parties to give brief, three minute **closing statements, summarizing their cases**.
- Students presenting their case should **come prepared with any information** they believe will demonstrate that they are not responsible for their alleged violations. This may include witnesses, witness statements, pictures, or any other documents they may want to present.
- **Witnesses must have firsthand accounts of the incident**, and character references will not be permitted. All parties may ask witnesses questions related to the incident through the administrator or board chair. Witnesses are expected to be present at the start of the hearing, and will be asked to leave the room until it is time for them to share their perspectives.
- All students involved in the process may have an **advisor of their choice**. The advisor may be anyone the student chooses (friend, family member, a fellow student, etc.). The role of the advisor is limited and meant to provide support to the student. The advisor is not allowed to directly communicate with anyone else in the hearing, and as such advisors may not also serve as a witness.
- Formal Hearings **determine responsibility for violations** of the Housing Agreement. Sanctions are not discussed at the hearing.
- This **process is educational in nature** and is not a part of the legal system. Sanctions are educational and have specific learning outcomes for each exercise.

## Common Terms heard during the Conduct Process

- **Administrator:** The staff member who is hearing the case presented by Housing and the accused student and who will make the determination if a violation of the housing agreement has occurred, and if so, what sanctions are appropriate.
- **Peer Review Board:** A panel of at least 5 residential students who have been trained by Residential Life to hear cases, determine responsibility and assign sanctions in line with standard sanction guidelines.
- **“Accused Student”:** The student who has been charged with a violation of the housing agreement.
- **Community Standards:** Expectations for acceptable and unacceptable behavior in residential facilities; also called “policies” or “rules”, found in Appendix A of the Housing Agreement all residents sign.
- **“Complainant”:** A person who, directly or indirectly, submits a report to Residential Life alleging that he or she has been a victim of another resident’s misconduct that specifically includes violence, sexual harassment or other sexual offense.
- **“Housing”:** The staff member (most often a Resident Director) who originally investigated an incident and presents the case on behalf of Housing & Food Services.
- **Incident:** The event, behavior, or interaction that was documented by a staff member
- **Incident Report:** A document, submitted most often by a staff member, that summarizes the interaction between that staff member and a student involved in an incident
- **“Preponderance of evidence”:** The standard which the administrator or Peer Review Board are expected to use to decide if a violation occurred. The administrator/PRB must believe that it is “more likely than not” a violation happened.
- **Sanction:** Any number of outcomes that may be offered if a student is in violation of the housing agreement. Examples include but are not limited to: probation, reflection papers, educational workshops, and/or restitution. A violation may result in more than one sanction.

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### Questions or concerns about the formal hearing process?

While your conduct officer should be able to answer any questions you have about the formal hearing process you may also contact the Residential Life Administration Office (206-543-7725) or [judicial@uw.edu](mailto:judicial@uw.edu) with any other questions, or to set up an appointment to meet with the Administrator for Conduct, Compliance & Assessment to discuss the formal hearing process.