

THE OFFICE OF EQUITY COMPLIANCE ADVISOR GUIDE



Advisors play a vital role in understanding and supporting Complainants and Respondents throughout the College's Sexual Misconduct: Harassment and Discrimination Policy and the Anti-Harassment and Discrimination Policy and Grievance Procedures. Their involvement helps promote equity, clarity, and confidence for all parties involved.

The Office of Equity Compliance (OEC) Advisor Guide serves as a resource for individuals who may wish to serve as advisors for Providence College community members and to help individuals understand the role of advisors in OEC processes.

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When May A Party Need An Advisor?

A Party, **Complainant** (the person bringing forth the report or formal complaint) and/or **Respondent** (the person against whom the report or formal complaint is filed), may need an advisor once a report and/or Formal Complaint has been filed with The Office of Equity Compliance (OEC). A Party may use an advisor throughout any meeting with the Office of Equity Compliance (OEC) or related OEC resolution process (informal or formal).

If a Respondent is a member of a collective bargaining unit, their union representative may act as their advisor, in accordance with the terms of their contractual agreement.

Who Are Advisors?

Advisors are individuals chosen to provide guidance and support to a Complainant or Respondent throughout the OEC resolution process.

Who May Serve As An Advisor?

An advisor may be any individual chosen by a Complainant or Respondent.

Advisors are not required to be affiliated with Providence College but should be able to serve in their advising role without a conflict of interest. Additionally, advisors should also not be serving in any other role associated with the same matter (e.g. serving as a witness).

Examples of individuals who may serve as advisors include, but are not limited to:

- A friend or roommate
- A faculty member
- A parent or relative
- A union representative (For employees covered by a Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA))
- An attorney
- A Confidential Advocate (More information on Confidential Advocates, [here](#)).

What Is The Role Of An Advisor?

Advisors can provide procedural and emotional support to their advisee throughout the OEC process by assisting them in understanding policies and procedures and remaining on informed on resources and support options available. Advisors are not permitted to speak on behalf of their advisee.

Advisors may:

- Provide their advisee with a supportive presence throughout any OEC resolution process or related meeting. Although advisors are not permitted to speak on behalf of their advisee or make requests on their behalf, they may request breaks on behalf of their advisee, if they believe their advisee would benefit from one.
- Ask the Coordinator, OEC investigator, or designee procedural questions, such as those related to resources, meeting/interview logistics, or hearing-related matters.
- Review the Formal Complaint and other related documents, as provided by their advisee and in compliance with the terms of their Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA).
- Offer feedback to their advisee on their written statements, responses, and/or investigative reports.
- Connect their advisee with resources and support offered through OEC, the Coordinator, or other on-campus and community support offices.

What Is The Typical Time Commitment For An Advisor?

The typical time commitment for an advisor varies on the type of policy at issue, the type of grievance procedure being navigated (informal or formal), and the number of times a party/witness may be interviewed in a particular case. Additional factors may include the type and complexity of the case, the number of allegations raised in the Formal Complaint, the nature and timing of the documentation submitted as evidence, and the number of witnesses interviewed.

It is up to the advisee whether they would like their advisor to:

- Attend any/all of their meetings and/or interviews.
- Review documentation shared during the process.
- Provide support throughout the different stages of the OEC resolution process.



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Must Advisors Participate In OEC Interviews In-Person?	No. Advisors can provide support to their advisees in person but may also participate in OEC meetings and/or interviews by phone or video conference (e.g. Zoom, Teams etc.). The Office of Equity Compliance recognizes that some advisors may not be local and will make reasonable efforts to accommodate scheduling accordingly.
May An Advisor Communicate With The Coordinator, OEC Investigator, Or Designee Directly Outside The Presence Of Their Advisee?	No. Once an advisor has been chosen by the advisee, the only communication between the advisor and Coordinator, OEC Investigator and/or Designee will be limited to procedural questions or general information. The advisee will be copied on communications sent to the advisor. Additionally, an advisor will only be copied on correspondences sent by OEC to their advisee at the written request of their advisee.
May A Witness Bring An Advisor To An OEC Interview?	In general, witnesses are not entitled to an advisor. However, if a witness is an employee belonging to a collective bargaining unit, that witness may request a union representative in accordance with their Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA).
How Does Confidentiality Apply To The Advisor-Advisee Relationship?	A Providence College employee who serves as an advisor in an OEC resolution process is not considered a mandatory reporter for purposes of their advising duty, meaning, employees acting as advisors are not required to share any information they learn as part of the advising relationship. All advisors are required to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) once they have been designated by the advisee and before any meeting or communication related to the OEC process can occur. Advisors must also complete the appropriate OEC Advisor Designation and FERPA Release form before participating in meetings or accessing case information.
Can A Confidential Resource Serve As An Advisor?	At their discretion, an individual who is a Providence College confidential resource may also serve as an advisor. These individuals maintain confidentiality in accordance with their professional or legal obligations. Individuals in these categories should consult their applicable professional rules regarding the confidentiality and privilege of their communications for more information.
Where Do I Go For More Information About Advisors?	Simone Tubman Assistant Vice President for Institutional Diversity and Equity Compliance Title VI and IX Coordinator stubman@providence.edu 401.865.2878 More information can also be found on our website at: equity-compliance.providence.edu.

