Resources

The confidential offices can provide assistance to offices interacting with respondents. They include:

UI Employee Assistance Program (UI EAP)  
http://hr.uiowa.edu/uieap  
(counseling for faculty and staff)  
319-335-2085

Office of the Ombudsperson  
http://www.uiowa.edu/ombuds/  
319-335-3608  
ombudsperson@uiowa.edu

University Counseling Service  
http://counseling.studentlife.uiowa.edu/  
(counseling for students)  
319-335-7294  
uccs@uiowa.edu

Women’s Resource and Action Center (WRAC)  
http://wrac.uiowa.edu/  
319-335-1486  
wrac@uiowa.edu

Other offices that may be helpful include:

Dean of Students  
http://dos.uiowa.edu/  
319-335-1162  
dos@uiowa.edu

Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity  
http://diversity.uiowa.edu/office/equal-opportunity-and-diversity  
(for issues related to discrimination,  
disabilities, harassment, sexual harassment,  
consensual relationships, retaliation, or violent behavior)  
319-335-0705  
diversity@uiowa.edu

Office of the General Counsel  
http://gencounsel.uiowa.edu/  
319-335-3696  
general-counsel@uiowa.edu

Office of the Sexual Misconduct Response Coordinator  
http://osmrc.uiowa.edu/  
(for sexual harassment/misconduct, dating/domestic  
violence, or stalking)  
319-335-6200  
omsrcc@uiowa.edu

Department of Public Safety  
http://police.uiowa.edu/  
319-335-5022 (non-emergency)  
police@uiowa.edu

Threat Assessment Team  
http://hr.uiowa.edu/tat  
319-384-2955  
uitat@uiowa.edu

Best Practices  
For Interacting with People  
Accused of Violating a University Policy  
(Respondents)

The University of Iowa prohibits discrimination in employment, educational programs, and activities on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, pregnancy, disability, genetic information, status as a U.S. veteran, service in the U.S. military, sexual orientation, gender identity, associational preferences, or any other classification that deprives the person of consideration as an individual. The university also affirms its commitment to providing equal opportunities and equal access to university facilities. For additional information on nondiscrimination policies, contact the Director, Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity, the University of Iowa, 202 Jessup Hall, Iowa City, IA, 52242-1316,  
319-335-0705 (voice), 319-335-0697 (TDD),  
diversity@uiowa.edu.

Prepared by:  
Faculty & Staff Services/EAP  
Office of the Ombudsperson  
Office of the Sexual Misconduct Response Coordinator  
University Counseling Service

For further information:  
The Office of the Ombudsperson  
319-335-3608  
ombudsperson@uiowa.edu

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Here are some suggestions to help UI staff and faculty provide information and resources to respondents. We use the term “respondent” to refer to a member of the UI community who has been accused of violating a University policy. Respondents often are under a great deal of stress and can be challenging for UI departments and programs with which these individuals interact.

Find out from your supervisor, Human Resources, Equal Opportunity and Diversity, and/or the Sexual Misconduct Response Coordinator what information you can share with the respondent.

1. Explain your role in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of everyone involved.
2. Explain the level of confidentiality you can provide in this situation (for example, if the respondent tells you new information).
3. Take any steps necessary to ensure everyone’s safety; this may include consulting with Public Safety, the Threat Assessment Team, University Counseling Service, Faculty and Staff Services, Office of the Dean of Students, and others.
4. Set boundaries for the person, including clarifying what you will and will not do in your role at the University. Keep in mind that you do not have all the information about the situation. You may find it helpful to use one or more of the following statements:
   a. “I will not make judgments regarding the situation.”
   b. “I will not determine whether a policy has been violated. There is a fair and equitable process in place to make this determination.”
   c. “I will not communicate with the complainant on your behalf.”
   d. “I will not represent or advocate for you.”
   e. “I will not vouch for your character.”
5. Help the person understand the policies and procedures involved in his/her situation.
6. Provide emotional support:
   a. Ask how the person is managing the situation.
   b. Normalize his/her response to the stress of the situation.
7. Talk about what the respondent should do in the situation. This may include the following suggested actions:
   a. Plan: think through how to handle the situation, think about options for the future.
   b. Know his/her resources: legal, psychological, other support.
   c. Abide by all interim sanctions such as no contact orders.
   d. Follow the confidentiality guidelines of the policy invoked.
8. Talk about what the person should refrain from doing in the situation, such as:
   a. Not doing anything that will make the situation worse.
   b. Not taking any action that can be perceived as retaliation, which could be a violation of the UI Anti-Retaliation Policy.
9. Refer the person to resources in order to:
   b. Get assistance in changing behaviors that may have contributed to the accusation of a policy violation.
10. Refer questions about the status of an investigation to the investigative office, e.g., Equal Opportunity and Diversity.
11. Follow up with the person to check on how he/she is doing.
12. If you believe the person is experiencing emotional distress or may be contemplating suicide, contact Faculty and Staff Services/Employee Assistance Program (EAP 319-335-2085) for a “just-in-time” consultation and to make a referral for a faculty and staff member; and University Counseling Service (USC 319-335-7294) for students. If there is a safety concern, contact the Threat Assessment Team at 319-384-2955. For a community resource, contact The Crisis Center for Johnson County at 319-351-0140.

It may not be clear that the person is responsible for an actual policy violation, and you may not know if the person is a repeat offender such as a sexual predator. Research indicates that repeat offenders and predators are extremely difficult to identify.

Although intended to help with respondents, these suggestions may be useful in other situations in which faculty, staff or students face adverse actions, such as employees who have been terminated from University positions or students who have been removed from academic programs.