Tips for Those Accused of Violating a University of Iowa Policy

If you have been accused of violating a University of Iowa policy, here are some tips you might consider for self-care and stress management.

Understand the process. It is important to educate yourself about the process. Check to be sure that you understand the policies that might have been violated and prepare yourself by reviewing the process and organizing information that might be helpful to you. If you have received notification of a possible policy violation, this does not mean that you have been found to have violated a policy; a determination has not yet been made about a violation.

Develop a plan. Consider how to handle the allegation(s) and seek the support you will likely require as you participate in University procedures for addressing the allegation(s), including family, friends, a counselor, an attorney, etc. You may have options to bring someone with you to meetings scheduled to discuss the allegation(s).

Manage your stress. Distress and anxiety are typical responses when someone has been accused of a violation of University policies. Keep things in perspective, work to manage your stress, and seek professional help if appropriate.

Consider how you will get support. Talking to a counselor can make a difference at those times when you are anxious and can’t think clearly, you need a little help sorting things through, or you just need to vent. Many people who have faced investigations have found that talking with a professional counselor was a good source of support. Maybe you’ve never been to a counselor, but now may be good time to consider making an appointment.

Don’t make things worse. The University of Iowa has policies addressing retaliation against those who come forward with complaints or people who might be witnesses, so be careful about actions you take after any allegations have been made against you. Don’t do something on an impulse that could appear to be motivated by anger or a wish for revenge (e.g. sending an emotional email). Don’t misrepresent the truth in statements that you make. If you are concerned about how best to proceed, consider legal advice and/or visit one of the confidential offices on the University campus (see reverse).


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:
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For further information:
The Office of the Ombudsperson
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ombudsperson@uiowa.edu

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You have been informed that you have been accused of violating a University of Iowa policy. What does this mean? What do you do? To whom can you turn for help?

Being accused of a serious policy violation is extremely stressful for anyone. You may not know who to ask questions about the process or how to cope with the situation, and you may not know where to seek help. The University of Iowa offers a number of resources to answer your questions and help keep you and others safe during this difficult time.

Keeping yourself safe and healthy is critical, and there are resources available to help you. To talk to someone or make an appointment, please call any of the following confidential offices, all of which offer free services.

The Office of the Ombudsperson, which can assist you with understanding University policies and processes, help you identify your options, and refer you to other resources as needed.

www.uiowa.edu/ombuds/
319-335-3608
ombudsperson@uiowa.edu

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UI Employee Assistance Program (UI EAP), available to faculty and staff members. This office provides confidential consultation and counseling, can assist you in understanding the process and your options, and can refer you to other resources as needed.
http://hr.uiowa.edu/ueiap
319-335-2085

University Counseling Service, which serves students. This office can provide counseling to assist you in dealing with emotional responses such as depression and anxiety and can work with you to develop strategies to help you cope in healthy ways.
counseling.studentlife.uiowa.edu
319-335-7294
ucs@uiowa.edu

Women’s Resource and Action Center (WRAC), which serves students, staff and faculty. WRAC can provide confidential consultation to help you understand the process and your options, and individual counseling to provide emotional support and stability.
wrac.uiowa.edu
319-335-1486
wrac@uiowa.edu

What these resources can do for you is:

- Provide trained professionals for you to talk to in a confidential setting.
- Provide you with information about administrative processes.
- Discuss concerns you may have regarding the potential impact of being named in a complaint (such as concerns about your professional and personal reputation and your career).
- Discuss strategies for handling the emotions you may be experiencing.
- Meet with your family members, colleagues or friends to assist them with their feelings and help them be supportive of you.
- Make referrals for help in dealing with substance abuse or mental health issues.

What these programs CANNOT do is:

- Make judgments regarding your case, you or the complainant.
- Determine whether or not you violated the policy.
- Communicate with the complainant on your behalf.
- Represent you in any of the proceedings.
- Mediate on your behalf.
- Vouch for your character.

Other Resources:

Other resources may be covered by your health insurance or may require a fee, such as psychologists, psychiatrists and social workers at UIHC. The Johnson County Crises Center lists community resources that may be helpful, see: http://jccrisiscenter.org/pages/online-resources.php

Additional resources for undergraduate students and for graduate and professional students, which may or may not be confidential, are listed at:

http://www.uiowa.edu/ombuds/files/ombuds/files/wysiwyg_uploads/Problem-Solving%20Resources%20for%20Graduate%20Students.pdf