BACHELOR of SOCIAL WORK
ACADEMIC MANUAL

BSW ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE
June 2017
Preface

This manual represents a compilation of the policies and procedures related to the BSW Program. We encourage you to read through it, use it often, and depend on it for a thorough understanding of the program’s rules. When you have questions, let us know. We wish you great success as you pursue the BSW program. We welcome you and look forward to greeting you as a BSW colleague at the end of your educational journey.

The Bachelor of Social Work program within the School of Social Work was fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education in 2010 and will be accredited until 2018. It is a program with a history of concern for social justice and a strong generalist perspective. Accreditation means that our program is fully recognized by its peer schools and the Council. The program’s history means that you are entering a program that believes people can learn, grow, and change. It recognizes that people bring strengths and assets to their lives and they bring challenges as well. Some of those challenges may come from their environment and the efforts of social work must be directed both at assisting individuals with their personal challenges and removing the barriers in their environment that keep them from realizing their potential.
Introduction

Mission Statement

The School of Social Work at Rhode Island College prepares students for social work practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities in diverse communities throughout Rhode Island and southern New England. We work to eliminate social injustice and economic inequality in an effort to realize a just and equitable society. We seek to create, analyze and evaluate knowledge and to instill in students a deep understanding of the people and communities they work with and the structural influences affecting their daily lives.

Vision Statement

The School of Social Work at Rhode Island College is widely recognized for:

- Student-centered learning environments
- Diverse and inclusive pedagogy
- Excellence in social work education
- Advocacy with and for oppressed and vulnerable populations
- Critical thinking and purposeful action to address social problems
- Quality training for social work practitioners
- Contributions to knowledge and skill development

Goals of the BSW program

Program graduates will:

- Engage in social work practice that is informed by best practices and empathetic engagement
- Apply knowledge of human rights, and social, economic, and environmental justice
- Use policy practice skills to achieve human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice
- Apply social work values and ethics in accordance with the NASW Code of Ethics to guide professional practice
- Understand the impact of oppression and human diversity in an unjust pluralistic society
Generalist Foundation Curriculum

The bachelor’s program at the School of Social Work at Rhode Island College prepares students for generalist social work practice. The generalist perspective stresses that the social worker focuses on social problems and human needs. The generalist approach recognizes the connection between private troubles and public issues, between the individual's well being and the environmental conditions of their lives, between personal and social change. The social worker should recognize that an individual client does not need to change simply because he or she has identified a problem and that the responsibility for social change is not relieved just by the development of legitimate personal change objectives with a client. The generalist approach stresses that intervention should occur at the level of the system or systems that have caused or contributed to the problems. Social workers must be prepared to intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. The social worker must be prepared to use a variety of theories, skills and methods for client engagement, assessment, and intervention. The curriculum of the BSW program introduces students to an understanding of basic knowledge, such as systems theory and skills in problem solving common to both macro (societal, community, organizational) and micro (individual, family, small group) levels of practice.

Thus, the mission of the School of Social Work and the perspective of generalist practice intersect as reflected in the following definition of social work practice: that process of responding to social need to promote the achievement of the fullest human potential and to prevent or alleviate problems and disadvantage. Social work practice identifies the source(s) of the difficulty or potential for enhancement, develops professional helping relationships directed towards change, and builds upon the strengths and resources of those in need to intervene in ways that are consistent with social work values and ethics. The goals of helping are to more equitably distribute resources, empower those who are oppressed, and increase individual and societal well being. Generalist foundation content includes social work values and ethics, diversity and oppression, advancement of social and economic justice, theories of human behavior, social work practice, research, social policy, and field education.

Curriculum Structure of the BSW Program

The social work major contains required courses that build on the liberal arts base of understanding people and society. To meet the objectives of the program, the curriculum includes sequences in social policy and social services, human behavior and oppression, social research, and social work practice methodology.

- The social services and social policy courses familiarize students with the history of social welfare and social work, creation, meaning and impacts of social policy, major social issues confronting society, and the role of the social worker in creating social policy that benefit clients.
- The human behavior and oppression sequence provides students with an understanding of human development and growth in relation to structural and environmental factors that may enhance or impede functioning.
The research course introduces students to the role and value of research in social work, the development and building of evidence to inform social work practice, the ability to evaluate practice, and the initial skills to do research in social work arenas.

The social work practice sequence establishes competencies in the problem-solving approach of generalist practice. It stimulates awareness of self as a professional social worker and teaches skills, theories and models for working with individuals, groups, organizations, and communities.

Field education offers an intensive social work practice experience in which students have the opportunity for supervised direct service to client systems.

The program prepares students for entry level social work practice. It also provides students with the foundation for graduate education. The social work curriculum consists of the following academic requirements:

**Foundation Courses**
Students are required to take the following courses offered by other departments as foundation for the professional context areas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course #</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Econ 200</td>
<td>Introduction to Economics</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS 202</td>
<td>American Government</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psych 215</td>
<td>Social Psychology</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psych 230</td>
<td>Developmental Psychology</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Any 200-level Sociology course</td>
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<td>4</td>
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**Courses for the Social Work Major**
Students are required to take the following courses within social policy and social services, human behavior and oppression, social work research, and social work practice sequences.

**Social Welfare Policy and Services**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course #</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SW 240</td>
<td>Introduction to Social Work and Social Welfare</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW 320</td>
<td>Social Policy Analysis</td>
<td>3</td>
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**Human Behavior and Oppression**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course #</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SW 306</td>
<td>Biological Perspectives for Social Workers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW 324</td>
<td>Diversity and Oppression I</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW 325</td>
<td>Diversity and Oppression II</td>
<td>3</td>
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Social Work Research

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course #</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SW 302</td>
<td>Evaluation and Research</td>
<td>4</td>
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Social Work Practice

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course #</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SW 326</td>
<td>Generalist Practice</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW 327</td>
<td>The Helping Process</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW 426</td>
<td>Creating Change</td>
<td>3</td>
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</table>

Integrated Field and Seminar

**Option 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course #</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SW 338</td>
<td>Introduction to Field</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW 436</td>
<td>Field Work I</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW 437</td>
<td>Field Work II</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW 463</td>
<td>Field Seminar</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW 464</td>
<td>Senior Seminar</td>
<td>3</td>
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**Option 2**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course #</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SW 338</td>
<td>Introduction to Field</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW 445</td>
<td>Summer Field</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW 446</td>
<td>Field Work I</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW 447</td>
<td>Field Work II</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW 463</td>
<td>Field Seminar</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW 464</td>
<td>Senior Seminar</td>
<td>3</td>
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Obtaining a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree at Rhode Island College requires successful completion of 120 credit hours of academic study. Social work students must complete approximately 63 hours of study including general education courses and courses required for the social work major.

Social Work Practice

The practice courses (SW 326, 327, and 426) are based on the generalist perspective and are intended to facilitate a student's progression from basic knowledge, values and skills to the ability to apply a sophisticated understanding to actual field work. In the junior year, students complete generalist social work practice (SW 326), which introduces them to strengths-based, ethical social work engagement, interviewing and assessment skills in a variety of fields of
practice. While in this course, students also submit an application to the major. Their application includes a current résumé, a letter of reference discussing their readiness to move into practice settings, and an interpretive personal statement (addressing their interest in social work, their experiences relevant to becoming a social worker, and their experiences with diversity and oppression).

Prior to or concurrently with enrollment in the generalist course, students take the Human Behavior and Oppression courses (SW 324 and SW 325) that help them develop knowledge for assessment and intervention planning. These courses stress understanding individuals, families, small groups, organizations and communities, with a special emphasis on those who have been oppressed historically, i.e., women, minorities of color and culture, gay men and lesbians, the elderly, and those who are poor. In the second semester of the junior year, students complete The Helping Process (SW 327), which introduces them to group and community practice and apply principles of research to the monitoring and evaluation of change.

By the end of the junior year, students will also have completed courses in social policy (SW 320) and social research methods (SW 302). These courses provide additional socialization to social work practice. The policy course assists students to understand, analyze, and affect social policies that may impact their clients’ lives. The research course introduces the importance of research and establishing evidence in social work. Students complete an advanced social work practice course in the first semester of the senior year, which focuses on varying models and methods of social work practice (SW 426). Additionally, they also engaged in their field experience and field seminar in both semesters of senior year (SW 436/463 and SW437/464).

**The BSW Field Experience**

The required field work experience (Option 1: Social Work 338, 436 and 437 OR Option II: Social Work 338, 445, 446, and 447) consists of a placement of 8-hour per week for 10 weeks in the spring semester of the junior year and a 16-hour per week placement for 14 weeks in the fall and spring semesters of the senior year with Option 1 or 8-hour per week placement in the spring semester of the junior year and a 12 hour per week placement in the summer between the junior and senior years, followed by 12-hour per week placement in both the fall and spring of the senior year. Students choosing Option II elect summer field so they can stretch their required 480 hours over a longer period than Option 1 provides. Students need to obtain consent from their field placement site/field instructor to be present in the placement for 12 hours per week, receive the required one-hour of MSW supervision during the summer, and enroll in summer field after successfully completing their junior year. Students continue with 12-hour per week field in the fall and spring of the senior year. Note: Option 2 requires students to earn one (1) extra credit of field/seminar work since they must earn one credit per four-hours in filed placement and take a concurrent field seminar.

Students earn one credit for every four hours of placement for a total of two credits in the spring of the junior year and four credits each semester in the senior year (option 1), or two credits in the junior year, three credits in the summer field, and three credits in both the fall and spring of the seniors year (option 2). Students can earn additional credit for each four-hour-per-week increment of placement time (i.e., a placement of 20 hours per week work = five credits).
Students interested in adding additional time and credit to their field placement experience must consult with and gain approval from their field instructor/agency and their faculty liaison/advisor. As a minimum requirement, students are expected to spend 480 clock-hours in their placement agencies during three semesters or three semesters and a summer. The field work experience is sequenced so that all other required courses in social work, including two introductory social work practice courses (SW 326 and SW 327) are taken as prerequisites. Thus, students have a strong base of knowledge that they can test in practice during the field placement.

**Field Work Seminar: SW 463/446**

The weekly seminar accompanies the field experience in the senior year. It is a problem-solving forum in which students share experiences encountered in the field, discuss issues related to practice and service-delivery, and obtain assistance with the process of integrating field and classroom learning. The integration process involves re-conceptualizing and reinforcing generalist social work practice as part of students’ actual experience in settings that provide specific services.

Faculty who are responsible for administering and supervising the field experience are also responsible for teaching the seminar. A faculty member who works with a student in class is responsible for liaison/advisory work with the student's field instructor. This course is offered only in the fall semester and must be taken concurrently with the first semester of senior year placement.

**Senior Seminar in Social Work: SW 464/447**

This seminar encourages students to engage in an in-depth exploration of policy and practice issues related to social welfare and social work to complement their academic experience. In this course, students are expected to integrate their field and academic learning into a logical and comprehensive approach to professional practice. This course is offered only in the spring semester and must be taken concurrently with the second semester of placement. Students usually remain with the faculty liaison/advisor/instructor who facilitated their fall semester seminar; this assures continuity and integration.
Academic Policies and Procedures

BSW Program Policies

Introduction

The BSW major is available to all degree candidates enrolled at Rhode Island College. All students wishing to pursue the social work major must indicate their interest to the BSW department by completing a departmental registration form. Students who express an interest in social work and/or register with the department as social work students must meet with a faculty academic advisor each semester. Failure to do so will prevent the student from registering for courses for the following semester.

Students must receive passing grades in cognate courses (Econ. 200, Pol. Sci. 202, Psych. 215 & 230, and Soc. 200-level) and C or better in the social work courses they take to satisfy pre-requisite requirements for the next course in each sequence.

Acceptance into the Major

After at least one full semester in courses at the college, students can apply for admission to the major. Admission is determined on the basis of a GPA of at least 2.0 from courses in the college and 2.67 in social work courses. In addition to GPA, the department requires submission of a personal statement and a letter of reference. In addition, as indicated in the College Catalog, applicants are expected to show “evidence of personal qualities considered essential to professional social work practice, such as responsiveness and sensitivity in relationships, values compatible with those of the social work profession, the ability to carry out the ethical obligations of a social worker, commitment to improving social conditions, and the ability to function collectively with others” (p. 153).

Admission to the major is a pre-requisite for enrollment in Social Work 327, 338 and subsequent field placement and senior year courses.

Credit for Academic or Life Experience

The BSW program does not permit academic credit for life experience or previous work experience in lieu of field practicum and/or social work courses.

Denial of Admission to the Major

Students who are denied admission to the BSW program major and wish to appeal this decision must submit support materials with a letter of intent to appeal to the dean of the School of Social Work within five working days of their denial.
Retention in the Major

After students have been admitted, they are subject to the following criteria in order to remain in the major:

- A student must maintain a grade point average (GPA) of at least 2.0 at the College and 2.67 in social work courses.
- A student must demonstrate professional behavior in classroom and field as defined below.

Repeating a Course

- Students who earn a grade of C- or below in a social work course, but who do not fail, are required to repeat that course.
- The course(s) to be repeated must be successfully completed by the end of the next semester in which the course is offered (except for summer school). The student will be allowed to take additional course work in the BSW major during that semester if he or she has the required prerequisites.

Dismissal from the Major

- A student who receives a grade of F in a required social work course or C- or below in any two required social work courses, will be dismissed from the major.
- A student who receives a grade of U in SW 338, Introduction to Field Work, SW 436 or SW 437, Field Work I or II, will be dismissed from the major.
- The faculty of the BSW program reserves the right to dismiss from the program students who give evidence (as defined by the College Handbook, The BSW Field Manual, learning contracts, field evaluation, and/or the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics) of violations of professional behavior, an inability to secure and/or maintain a field placement and carry out field responsibilities at the baccalaureate level.
- Students who are required to retake a course in the major and do not receive a grade of C or better on the second try will be dismissed from the BSW major.
- No BSW major will be allowed to register for a field placement without the GPA identified above.

Re-Admission of Students Dismissed From the Major

Dismissal from the major, while in the practice or field work sequence, represents a serious level of concern on the part of the BSW faculty about the student’s suitability for the social work profession. Once the dismissal is final, any student seeking re-admission must re-apply to the major, demonstrating remediation of the specific issues that led to their dismissal, in addition to the other admission requirements. Re-applications will be evaluated in the same manner as other applications, with a final decision by the faculty of the BSW program.

A student will demonstrate remediation by re-applying to the major in the semester before a field placement would be made (the application deadline is November). In the re-application, the
student’s essay must directly address the specific issue(s) that led to her or his dismissal. Additional ways to demonstrate remediation would be one or more of the following:

- Work experience with a letter of reference that speaks directly to the issue(s) in question;
- Other letters of reference that do the same;
- Repeating any course in which the student’s performance was an issue in the dismissal;

There will be an evaluation of remediation steps in determining eligibility for re-admission. Students re-applying to the major may request a meeting with the chair of the BSW program to clarify the issue(s) that led to their dismissal and must be remedied.

**Report of Incomplete**

For undergraduate students, a report of Incomplete shall be given in place of a grade when the work for the semester has been passing but has not been completed because of illness or some other reason that, in the opinion of the instructor, justifies such a report.

- The student must initiate the request prior to the last day of exam week, unless the instructor has specified an earlier deadline in the course syllabus, in which case, the instructor’s earlier deadline date supersedes the last day of exam week.
- Normally the student must initiate a request for an I grade; however, in extreme circumstances, faculty members may assign this grade at their discretion, i.e., without discussing it with the student.
- Incompletes are appropriate only if some or most of the work has already been completed and the student is able to complete the remaining requirements with a minimum of faculty supervision by the end of the succeeding semester (excluding summer sessions).
- The student and faculty member will reach an agreement regarding the work that the student should complete to obtain a final grade, including the following:
  - What work needs to be completed;
  - When the work will be completed: (College policy requires that all Incompletes be completed by the end of the next semester).
  - This policy applies to the BSW program except where successful completion of one course is a prerequisite to enrollment in the next semester, e.g., enrolling in SW 426 requires successful completion of SW 327.
  - What grade will be assigned if the work is not completed. If the instructor has not assigned a grade for the course or has not notified the Records Office in writing of an extension of the deadline for completion, the I grade will change automatically to an F.
- Contracts for approved Incompletes must be completed and signed by the student, the instructor and the department chair, and placed in the student's folder prior to assigning a grade of I.

**Grade Grievances**

Students who believe they have received a grade that does not represent their efforts or results and wish to obtain a change of grade must contact the faculty member first within 14 days of receiving notice of the grade to discuss their rationale for requesting a change of grade. The student and faculty member should meet in person for this discussion.
If, after such a meeting, the matter of the grade is unresolved, the student should write a letter to the BSW program chair requesting re-consideration of the grade. The letter should contain relevant information about the student’s rationale, understanding of the faculty member’s response, and an indication of the change the student is requesting. The chair will schedule a meeting with the student within 14 days to provide an opportunity for discussion. At the chair’s discretion, the faculty member may be invited to the meeting. Following the meeting, the chair will respond to the student in writing within seven days. The letter will state the chair’s decision. Students who are not satisfied with the decision of the chair may contact the dean of the School of Social Work to appeal the decision of the chair within seven days of receiving the chair’s decision.

Academic Standing Committee Description and Procedures

Composition of the Committee

The School of Social Work maintains an ongoing Academic Standing Committee. The Committee shall consist of up to eight (8) members:
- Two (2) BSW Faculty
- Up to Two (2) BSW Students
- Two (2) MSW Faculty
- Up to Two (2) MSW Students

The faculty members are elected by the School of Social Work faculty and serve two (2) year terms. The chair of the committee is elected from amongst the faculty representatives who are in their second year on the committee. The chairs of the BSW and MSW departments cannot serve on the Academic Standing Committee. The student representatives will be selected by the respective student organization.

Committee Responsibility

The Academic Standing Committee is charged with:
- hearing all appeals/grievances;
- hearing cases of alleged unethical behavior, which occurs outside of field placement and the classroom
- recommending resolution of appeals/grievances to the appropriate program chair

The Academic Standing Committee reserves the right to review any student’s performance in relation to the application of the above policies. Dismissals from the major and other consequences of the policies stated in this manual may be appealed to the School of Social Work Academic Standing Committee.

Procedures of the Committee

- Students have the right to freedom from disciplinary action without due process. Students have a right to appeal any adverse action.
- An appeal of the recommendation of the committee will be made to the appropriate chair in the School of Social Work.
- An appeal of the decision of the chair is made to the Dean.
REFERRAL APPEAL TO THE COMMITTEE

- Referral appeal to the Committee must be submitted in writing to the chair of the Committee and all materials must be fully documented.
- The appeals/grievance statement must include a summary of not more than one written page stating the specific policy or policies violated or the exact nature of the grievance, the specific actions upon which it is based, and the remedy being sought. Supplementary materials may be presented to support the grievance.
- Types of Student Grievances:
  - Violation of established academic policies and regulations (e.g., examination policies, advisement policies, and registration policies).
  - Violation of student's academic freedom.
  - Grievance related to violations of the NASW Code of Ethics, the school’s professional code of conduct
  - Appeal of dismissal from the program.

The student shall discuss the grievance with the faculty or staff member involved who shall attempt to resolve the grievance and shall render a written decision to the student within five (5) working days of the faculty member's receipt of the grievance. Copies shall also be forwarded to the chair of the appropriate department in the School of Social Work and the Academic Standing Committee of the School of Social Work.

The grievance should be presented in person to the faculty member involved as soon as possible after the grievant feels that an abridgement of the grievant's rights has occurred, but in no case shall it be later than (10) working days following the grievant's knowledge of the act, event, or commencement of the conditions which is the basis for the grievance, except in the case of final grades and then no later than the tenth (10th) working day of the next semester.

If the grievance is not resolved, the student may submit the grievance in writing, within five (5) working days of the grievant's receipt of the decision of the faculty member involved, to the Academic Standing Committee. Within five (5) working days of receipt of the appeal, the Academic Standing Committee will notify the student and the faculty member(s) that the grievance has been received, that a time and place for the hearing will be set, and the student, faculty member and any other witnesses will receive notification. (see Hearing Procedure).

In the case of a dismissal from either the BSW program or the MSW program, the student must submit a written appeal outlining the reasons for the appeal to the Chair of the Academic Standing Committee within five (5) working days of receipt of notification of dismissal. Within five (5) working days of receipt of the appeal, the Academic Standing Committee will notify the student and the faculty member(s) that the grievance has been received, that a time and place for the hearing will be set, and the student, faculty member and any other witnesses will receive notification (see Hearing Procedure). Reasonable efforts, including traditional mail, e-mail, and attempted phone contact will be made to notify the student.

Hearing Procedure
- Prior to the hearing, the chair of the Committee shall notify the affected parties in writing by email, outlining the concerns before the committee. All written materials must be available to
the committee members and affected parties forty-eight (48) hours before the hearing. The student shall notify the chairperson forty-eight (48) hours before the hearing who his/her advocate(s) will be. (See the Advocate bullet below)

- Prior to the hearing, the student and involved parties have the right of access to information, which will be used by the committee in the hearing.
- All material(s) distributed at the hearing shall be returned to the chair of the committee at the conclusion of the hearing. This material will be stamped confidential and is not for distribution. The material will be placed in a file in the BSW program office which houses records of the Academic Standing Committee.
- The Chair of the Academic Standing Committee will ensure that all packets of information will contain all necessary copies of pertinent information.
- Hearings will be conducted in an informal manner, with both the student and members of the committee having the right to question all participants on pertinent matters.
- The student has the right to be present throughout the entire hearing, except during the deliberation and final voting of the committee. S/he has the right not to testify or appear, though the committee shall proceed with its deliberations and recommendations. However, at any time, any committee member may request an executive session in which case all non-committee members will be asked to leave.
- Students may select an advocate to appear with the student at the hearing. The advocate may be a School of Social Work faculty member, staff member, or student and must be affiliated with the College. The advocate does not have voting privileges. Under no circumstances will legal counsel be permitted.
- Witnesses may elect not to make verbal presentations, but should present a written statement, which must be submitted to the chair forty-eight (48) hours prior to the hearing.
- Once people are finished presenting collateral information, they will leave the hearing room.
- Recommendations of the committee will be by majority vote of the faculty representatives, though consensus will be sought.
- The chair of the Academic Standing Committee will send the student written notification of the Committee’s recommendation by mail and email within five (5) working days. A copy of the Committee recommendation will be forwarded to the BSW department chair and the faculty advisor.
- Appeals of the recommendation(s) made by the Academic Standing Committee must be instituted in writing within five (5) working days of the date of receipt of the recommendation(s) to the chair of the BSW department of the School of Social Work. All appeals must be based upon existing documentation and no new materials may be presented.
The Chair of the BSW department of the School of Social will notify the student in writing of her/his decision regarding the Committee’s recommendation within five (5) working days of the receipt of the recommendation from the Committee.

Appeal of the chair's decision may be made to the dean of the School of Social Work. Appeals must be instituted within five (5) working days of the receipt of the chair's decision. The appeal must be in writing and must explicitly identify the basis for appeal. All appeals must be based upon existing documentation and no new materials may be presented.

Appeal of the Dean's decision will be made to the college Provost [See College Student Handbook, Chapter 3 for procedure.

If a student is dismissed from the program he/she cannot enroll in or attend classes pending appeal.

**Policy on Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is using the words of another as your own without quotation marks and/or use of another person’s ideas without citation. Use of material from the web or online sources without citation is strictly forbidden. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and is grounds for dismissal from the BSW program. The sections below describe the college’s definition of Academic Integrity, show violations of Academic Integrity, indicate the mechanisms for resolving such violations, and specify the appeals procedures to be used.

**Academic Integrity**

*(As amended by the Council of Rhode Island College – 11/07/08 and 4/13/12)*

*(Further changes approved by Council on 12/13/13 and by the President on 12/18/13)*

**A. Introduction**

Academic integrity is the foundation of the academic community. Students who violate College rules on academic integrity are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure or removal from a course, disciplinary probation, and/or dismissal from the College. Individual schools may have additional standards and policies related to academic honesty.

**B. Applicability**

The rules for academic integrity, and the penalties for violations, apply to all undergraduate and graduate, full-time and part-time students at Rhode Island College. Persons who withdraw from the College after allegedly violating these standards, who are not officially enrolled for a particular term but who have a continuing relationship with the College or who have been notified of their acceptance for admission are considered “students.” In such cases a student may be prevented from re-enrolling or may be readmitted with certain restrictions until the case is resolved.
C. Prohibited Behavior

Academic integrity is the foundation of the academic community. Students who violate College rules on academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure or removal from a course, disciplinary probation, and/or dismissal from the College. Individual schools may have additional standards and policies related to academic honesty.

(a) Examples of violations of academic integrity include (but are not limited to):

- Cheating: intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information or study aids in any academic exercise.
- Fabrication: intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.
- Plagiarism: intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one’s own in any academic exercise. The following are examples of plagiarism:
  - Word-for-word plagiarism: This includes (a) the submission of another student's work as one's own; (b) the submission of work from any source whatever (print or electronic) without proper acknowledgement by footnote or reference within the text of the paper; (c) the submission of any part of another's work without proper use of quotation marks.
  - Patchwork plagiarism: This consists of a piecing together of unacknowledged phrases and sentences quoted verbatim (or nearly verbatim) from a variety of sources. The mere reshuffling of other people's words does not constitute original work.
  - Unacknowledged paraphrase: It is perfectly legitimate to set forth another author's facts or ideas in one's own words, but if one is genuinely indebted to the other author for these facts or ideas, the debt must be acknowledged by footnote or reference within the text of the paper (e.g., the above paragraphs are based largely on Sears, Harbrace Guide to the Library and Research Paper, p. 39).

- Collusion: facilitating academic dishonesty intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic dishonesty.
- Deception: Providing false information to an instructor concerning a formal academic exercise, e.g. giving a false excuse for missing a deadline or falsely claiming to have submitted work.
- Sabotage: Acting to prevent others from completing their work. This includes cutting pages out of library books or willfully disrupting the experiments of others.
- Multiple Submissions: Submitting for credit, when a student has not been given permission to do so, any work that is the same or substantially the same as work that has been submitted for credit in another course. Many professors allow re-working or building on prior work; however, multiple submissions are permitted only with the prior permission of the instructor(s), and only when the student acknowledges the multiple submission in the work itself.

Many facts, ideas, and expressions are considered to be in the public domain or general knowledge and need not be acknowledged (e.g., the fact that the Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776; the idea that universal public education is essential to the survival of democratic institutions; such proverbial expressions as "A rolling stone gathers no moss," or "New York is a great place to visit, but I wouldn't want to live there," but as a general rule, when one is in doubt, it is best to acknowledge the source.

- Collusion: facilitating academic dishonesty intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic dishonesty.
- Deception: Providing false information to an instructor concerning a formal academic exercise, e.g. giving a false excuse for missing a deadline or falsely claiming to have submitted work.
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D. Adjudicating Alleged Violations of Academic Integrity

Formal adjudication of alleged violations of academic integrity is conducted by the Academic Integrity Board.

(a) Initiation of Complaint
Cases of violations of academic integrity should be identified by individual faculty members, and reported to the V.P.A.A. A student may also report a case to a faculty member or the V.P.A.A.

(b) Faculty Role
The faculty member has two clearly defined roles: first, to establish preventive measures; and, second, to ensure that detected violations of academic integrity are dealt with appropriately and reported.

Preventive measures should include a statement to each class by the faculty member outlining expected standards of academic integrity and the necessity for such standards. The faculty member should also maintain reasonable security of all examination materials and procedures. Generally, the faculty member should employ any reasonable methods to discourage violations of academic integrity.

A faculty member may take action up to and including failing a student accused of a violation of academic integrity. Some often-used penalties include:
- A low or failing grade on the assignment in which the offense occurred.
- An additional assignment.
- Reduction of the final grade up to and including failure.
- Any combination of the above.

In all cases, a report describing the nature of the violation and the subsequent action taken by the faculty member shall be filed with the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Additionally, the faculty member may recommend that the Academic Integrity Board recommend further action.

In the case of graduate students, the faculty member will also inform the director of the graduate program of the nature of the violation and the subsequent action taken by the faculty member, and may recommend that the director of the graduate program take further action.

(c) Graduate Programs Role
In the case of graduate students, the director of the graduate program may convey the recommendation of a penalty of probation or dismissal from the program to the academic dean of the school in which the student is enrolled. (Revised by vote of the Council (May 3, 2013, and approval of the President (May 24, 2013)

(d) Vice President for Academic Affairs Role
The Vice President for Academic Affairs shall maintain a file of any and all reports of violations of academic integrity. At the discretion of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and depending upon the severity of the infraction, the student may be informed in writing about possible consequences of further infractions. In the case of multiple infractions, the Vice
President for Academic Affairs will refer the student’s name to the Academic Integrity Board for review and possible action.

(e) Academic Integrity Board Role
The Council of Rhode Island College created the Academic Integrity Board (AIB), composed of students, faculty and administration. The AIB has authority to establish, publish and implement procedures for adjudicating alleged violations of academic integrity by students. It is authorized to hear and adjudicate charges against individual students in cases of violations of academic integrity. The Academic Integrity Board shall consider cases referred to it by a faculty member or the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and has the option to recommend any penalties ranging from those available to the faculty member to placing the student on academic probation or expelling the student from the College.

1. Appeal
Any student accused of a violation of academic integrity may appeal action taken by the instructor in a case to the Academic Integrity Board.

2. Appeals Procedure
• Appeals or referrals to the Board will follow the standard procedure of the Board.
• The Board shall inform the student, the faculty member, and Vice President for Academic Affairs of its decision.
• A record of the cases concerning violations of academic integrity will be kept in the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs.
• A student may appeal the decision of the Academic Integrity Board to the Vice President of Academic Affairs. Appeals may be considered on the basis of new information or procedural errors.

(f) Hearing Procedures
Absent extraordinary circumstances, the Academic Integrity Board (AIB) shall operate in accordance with the following:

1. The student accused will be given written notice of an academic integrity violation.
2. The Chair of the Board shall schedule the time, date and place of the hearing(s), to be held normally at least five days following the student's notification but normally within thirty days. The Chair shall rule on any other procedural matters raised by either party.
3. Any documentary evidence that any witness or party wishes to present at the hearing shall normally be submitted to the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) as far in advance of the hearing as possible. The VPAA shall forward all evidence to the AIB Chair. The Chair will share all evidence with the Board prior to the hearing. The accused may view the evidence prior to the hearing by contacting the Chair and arranging to have the materials viewed. Any documentary evidence not submitted in advance of the hearing shall be permitted at the discretion of the Chair.
4. An accused student or a complaining witness may request that one or more members of the Board be recused for good cause such as a conflict of interest or bias. The fact that one of more members of the Board may have previously adjudicated a matter involving the student or witness(s) shall not, in and of itself constitute good cause. The Chair shall
rule on the request for recusal except when the Chair is the subject of the recusal request in which case the remaining members shall make the ruling.

5. Board Hearings shall be conducted in private.

6. The accused student, the party bringing the charges forward, and a person of support for the accused student and the party bringing the charges forward may attend the hearing. A person of support for the accused student and a person of support for the party bringing the charges forward may attend. However, the support person must be a member of the RIC community and may not be a member of the accused family. The support person may only speak to the Board with the Chair’s approval. Attendance of any other witnesses shall be at the discretion of the Chair.

7. The Board's deliberations concerning the determination of guilt and the imposition of sanctions shall be conducted in executive session.

8. Where more than one student is accused of misconduct arising out of the same incident the accusations against all of the students shall be considered separately. The Chair shall rule on any exceptions.

9. All members of the College community are expected to cooperate with the Academic Integrity Board and those who are prospective witnesses shall make themselves available at the hearing as necessary. The parties seeking to call witnesses from the College community shall contact the witnesses as far in advance of the hearing as possible.

10. Hearsay evidence may be admitted at the discretion of the Chair.

11. The hearings shall be conducted without the formal procedures that are followed in a court of law.

12. A recording shall be made of the hearing and a copy shall be provided to the accused student upon request.

13. Following the presentation of the case by the party bringing the charges forward and/or the Board, the accused student shall have the opportunity to respond.

14. Questions directed at the accused and the Complainant (if present) will be asked by the Board.

15. Normally, the party bringing the charges forward and accused student may not directly question each other.

16. Either side may make a closing argument with the accused student going last.

17. The Board's determination shall be made on the basis of whether it is more likely than not that the accused student violated the Academic Integrity Code except where the likely sanction is either suspension for at least a semester or expulsion in which case the standard of proof shall be by clear and convincing evidence.

18. The Board shall make its decision(s) on the evidence presented and arguments made at the hearing, in addition to evidence and findings related to previous hearings of the accused and college documents. If the accused student fails to appear, the Board shall proceed with the hearing and consider whatever evidence is presented.

19. Corrective actions may include but are not limited to: expulsion, suspension, academic probation, failure of a course, failure of assignment(s), and/or a prescription of work by an assigned Academic Integrity Advisor. The Board may also prevent a student from graduating or being readmitted.

20. Notice of the Board's decision, including information regarding any relevant right of appeal, shall be sent to the student, the faculty member, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs as soon as practicable.
Freedom of Expression

The BSW department faculty of the School of Social Work recognizes the right of all members of the academic community – including students, faculty, and staff – to express their opinions. The BSW Department faculty has a commitment to engage students in critical examination of diverse ideological views, particularly with respect to their relationship to social work values. Discussion and debate about diverse ideological views should be conducted in a manner that respects the rights of others, consistent with the values, ethical principles, and ethical standards contained in the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics.

Criteria for Evaluating Academic Work

A. Written Work: Writing is an essential skill for social work practice. Students must carefully proofread their papers for typographical, grammatical, sentence structure, and spelling errors. The paper must begin with an introductory statement of purpose and an overview of the ideas to be presented. The ideas must be discussed in a coherent, logical, well-organized manner and must be supported by one's own arguments, by research findings, and theoretical discussions from relevant literature, when appropriate. Each aspect of the assignment must be thoroughly addressed. Citations and a reference list in proper form must be included. These aspects of the paper are stressed in addition to the substantive content because it is important that social workers know how to communicate with clients and other professionals in writing that is concise, clear, organized and properly documented.

B. Class Presentations: Students are expected to prepare for presentation so that the criteria described below are met. The purposes of the presentation are made clear at the beginning. The presentation is well organized and articulately delivered. The presenter's manner is engaging. The presentation shows self-awareness, practice insights and skills, ample integration of theoretical material from the readings and class discussions. The presenter skillfully manages group discussion, by effectively eliciting it, focusing it, summarizing it, and explicitly connecting it to the presentation's stated purposes. Slides and handouts are written clearly, articulately, concisely, and are germane to the topic.

C. Attendance and Class Participation: The student is expected to behave in a way that demonstrates that she or he has integrated the core values and skills of the profession. This means that the student attends each class session, arriving on time. Students who must be late or absent (because of illness, for example), are expected to contact their instructor to inform her/him of the absence and plan to complete work they have missed.

The student's oral participation should show an ability to make conscious, purposeful use of self in interactions within the classroom. The student should demonstrate awareness of her or his own feelings, behaviors, and motivations; she should be comfortable with feedback and show an ability to integrate feedback into behavioral change; he is able to make appropriate use of “air time” in class, i.e., willingness both to use it and to limit one's use of it. They show a respect for difference and for others' feelings, including a nonjudgmental attitude, sensitivity to ethnic diversity and oppressed groups, respect for confidentiality and client self-determination. Students contribute comments that are clearly stated and immediately germane to the focal issues under discussion; they can use the group to meet their own needs, while respecting the needs of others. The student's comments should show that assigned readings were completed on time and were
understood, that opinions are supported with data and/or logical argument and that class content is integrated with field experiences.

For additional criteria for evaluating student performance, see the School of Social Work policies below regarding (1) confidentiality in the classroom and (2) professional behavior.

D. Special Learning Needs: Students with special learning needs should inform their instructors, advisor, and field supervisor early in the semester so that needed accommodations can be made to facilitate learning. Students who require accommodation because of a disability are encouraged to contact the Disability Services Center (DSC) in Fogarty Life Science 137 or call the office at (401) 456-8061.

Disability
The School of Social Work is committed to removing learning barriers and facilitating inclusion throughout its curricula, specifically in the classroom learning environment and in field education. We wish to offer an integrative, accepting, and facilitating environment that is conducive to learning and professional growth for all students including those with disabilities. Students who have disabling conditions are entitled to reasonable accommodation. Faculty and staff are available to meet individually with students who require accommodation and maintain confidentiality. We ask students to self-identify and contact the DSC at Fogarty Life Science 137 (401-456-8061). The Center is the central resource for students with disabilities on campus. DSC Staff makes every effort to verify and coordinate learning needs with faculty and to advocate for changes in policies and procedures. By contacting this office and registering, students will learn about the special services and equipment available to them. Moreover, registration assures student compliance with guidelines requiring reasonable accommodation.

Confidentiality
The faculty of the School of Social Work recognizes the value and importance of each student's right to confidentiality. Students may request that specific information shared with individual members of the faculty, field instructors, and/or academic administrators is kept confidential.

The School of Social Work regards faculty, faculty advisors, field instructors, and school administrators as members of each student's educational team who may be consulted periodically to discuss student progress. There are routine reviews of student progress at monthly BSW faculty meetings. Information shared confidentially by a student will be shared with other team members only when a team member deems it necessary to address a student's educational needs. The procedure for sharing such information is to first inform the student of the issue to be discussed; only after that will the issues/concerns be discussed. Discussions will include those individuals directly concerned with the issue, such as the dean of the School of Social Work, the chair of the department, the faculty concerned, the student’s advisor, and/or the director of Field Education.

If a faculty member is unable to notify a student ahead of time, in person, the faculty member will attempt to reach the student by e-mail or phone. If contact is still not made, the
faculty member will send a written notice, return receipt requested, to the student’s address on file with the BSW program. A follow-up meeting will be scheduled with the student.

The faculty of the School of Social Work recognizes the value and importance of free and open classroom discussion. Students are encouraged to express opinions and offer observations relevant to course content. In sharing information about others (e.g., clients in their practice), students are expected to protect the confidentiality of those individuals. Other students in the classroom are expected to treat classmates’ comments with respect and courtesy, and to protect the confidentiality of comments and observations offered in the classroom, to the extent possible under law and college/school policy. Students are expected to refrain from divulging content of classroom discussion to others outside of the classroom. The confidentiality of classroom discussion cannot be guaranteed because of “duty to protect” and “mandatory reporting” laws and/or other policies that may require disclosure.

In writing papers and in class discussions it is important for students to disguise any potentially identifying information about clients.

Professional Behavior

Students matriculating at the School of Social Work are preparing for entry into the profession of social work. The behavior of professional social workers is guided by the NASW Code of Ethics and students are expected to act in accord with that professional code throughout their period of matriculation, including but not limited to both field and classroom related learning. Failure to behave in accord with the Code of Ethics or the Professional Code of Conduct described below may result in review and action by the School of Social Work Academic Standing Committee.

The following framework guides the policy on professional conduct. Failure to meet generally accepted standards of professional conduct, personal integrity or emotional stability requisite for professional practice, inappropriate or disruptive behavior toward colleagues, faculty, or staff (at school or field placement) will be the basis for nonacademic termination policies.

Ethical Obligations

Students are ethically and professionally bound to:

- adhere to the NASW (National Association of Social Workers) Code of Ethics
- appreciate the value of diversity by demonstrating effective and nonjudgmental relationships and working with others who are different from oneself; and
- adhere to issues of confidentiality as they relate to human services, classroom activities, and field placement.

Students are required to meet all of the following requirements to maintain good standing:

Professional Commitment

- A strong commitment to the goals of social work and to the ethical standards of the profession, as specified in the NASW Code of Ethics. Behavior judged to be in violation of
the current NASW Code of Ethics may result in a consultative review and/or administrative action by the Academic Standing Committee.

- A demonstrated commitment to the essential values of social work, which include respect for the dignity and worth of every individual and his/her right to a just share of society’s resources (social justice).

**Professional Behavior**

- Behaviors that are in compliance with program policies, institutional policies, professional ethics standards, and societal laws in classroom, field, and community.
- Appearance and personal demeanor that reflect a professional manner.
- Sound judgment in decision making.
- Potential for responsible and accountable behavior by knowing and practicing within the scope of social work, respecting others, being punctual and dependable, prioritizing responsibilities, attending class regularly, observing deadlines, completing assignments on time, keeping appointments or making appropriate arrangements, and accepting supervision and critique in a positive manner.
- Work and communication with others that is intended to resolve issues in a manner that is direct, professional, and geared toward problem resolution while avoiding triangulation.
- Advocacy for him/herself undertaken in an appropriate and responsible manner using proper channels for conflict resolution.
- Willingness to receive and accept classroom feedback and field supervision in a positive manner to enhance professional development.
- Professional and respectful interpersonal behavior with colleagues, faculty, and staff in class and field.

**Personal Behavior**

**Stress Management**

- Ability to deal with current life stress, through the use of appropriate coping mechanisms when stress interferes with scholastic and professional performance.
- Use of appropriate self-care and supportive relationships with colleagues, peers, and others when stress affects scholastic and professional performance.

**Emotional Problems**

- Use of help for problems that interfere with scholastic and professional performance.
- Recognition of need to engage in counseling or seek support and help if personal problems, psychosocial distress, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties result in any of the following:
  - compromising scholastic and other performance;
  - interfering with professional judgment and behavior;
  - jeopardizing the best interests of those to whom the social work student has a professional responsibility (as outlined in the *NASW Code of Ethics*).

**Harassment**

There will be zero tolerance for any form of harassment, which includes the following:

- Conduct that intimidates, threatens, or endangers the health or safety of any person.
- Behavior that intentionally or negligently causes physical, financial, or emotional harm to any person.
- Behavior that is construed as a nuisance, including prank phone calls or abusing or harassing another user through electronic means.

**Oppression**
In accordance with the *NASW Code of Ethics*, the faculty of the school of social work condemns any and all oppression of individuals or groups on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age or handicapping condition. In addition, we reaffirm the Code's precepts that social workers have a duty to fight discrimination and other forms of injustice.

**Illegal Harassment**
The School of Social Work believes that its students, faculty and staff should have the right to study and work in a college community free from any types of harassment. We show the college’s harassment policy and the Complaint Resolution Policy below so that students understand their remedies, should they encounter any type of harassment.

**The Rhode Island College Illegal Harassment Policy**

In accordance with its policy of Nondiscrimination, Rhode Island College prohibits sexual harassment and harassment on the basis of race, color, creed, national or ethnic origin, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or citizenship status.

Sexual harassment is a form of gender discrimination and is a violation of State and Federal law.

Sexual harassment is defined to include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Such conduct is prohibited when the behavior is directed to an individual because of his or her gender and (1) when submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of instruction, employment or otherwise full participation in College life; (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct is considered in evaluating a person's academic work or job performance; or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with a person's academic or job performance or creating a sexually intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or educational environment.

Complaints about illegal harassment will be responded to promptly. Retaliation against an individual bringing a complaint of illegal harassment constitutes a violation of College policy as well as state and federal law. An individual found guilty of illegal harassment or retaliation, or any individual who initiates a fraudulent claim of harassment, shall be subject to disciplinary action. All persons who believe that they are or may have been victims of illegal harassment are encouraged to seek resolution promptly through the established informal and formal procedures of the College as set forth in the Complaint Resolution Policy.

Individuals seeking information regarding illegal harassment may consult with any of the following offices or individuals for advice and assistance. ([A list can be obtained by clicking here.](#)) Those who have been witness to illegal harassment should report their observations as well.
All employees of Rhode Island College are expected to make every effort to ensure that students and fellow employees are not subjected to any form of sexual or other illegal harassment. This effort may be formal or informal, depending on the circumstances. Students who engage in illegal harassment off College premises at College related activities will be subject to discipline in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct (see Student Handbook).

Confidentiality will be respected during all complaint procedures to the degree the procedure will allow. However, if an employee or student wishes to bring a complaint and remain anonymous, the ability of the College to respond may be limited. The Affirmative Action Office has institutional responsibility for monitoring the College's compliance with applicable state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination in the form of illegal harassment.

College officials receiving complaints of illegal harassment should report the same to the Affirmative Action Office so that effective monitoring of illegal harassment incidents can take place.

Students and employees shall retain their right to seek resolution for alleged illegal harassment by filing a complaint with responsible state and federal civil rights agencies:

R.I. Commission for Human Rights  
180 Westminster Street, 3rd Floor  
Providence, RI 02903  
Tel: 401-222-2661  
[http://www.richr.ri.gov/frames.html](http://www.richr.ri.gov/frames.html)

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)  
John F. Kennedy Federal Building  
475 Government Center  
Boston, MA 02203  
(617)565-3200  
[http://www.eeoc.gov/boston/charge.html](http://www.eeoc.gov/boston/charge.html)

**Complaint Resolution Policy**

Rhode Island College affirms its commitment to ensuring an environment for all students and employees that is fair, humane, and respectful; an environment that supports and rewards students and employees on the basis of relevant considerations, and which is free from discriminatory, inappropriate, and disrespectful conduct or communication. As an institution of higher education dedicated to fostering and upholding higher order values of human dignity and respect for the individual, Rhode Island College expects standards of professional behavior that exceed those minimally prescribed by law.

In an instance of perceived violation of the College policies, a member of the College community may file a complaint. In pursuing a complaint, the individual may be accompanied
and otherwise assisted by an advisor/advocate from within the College community. The advisor shall not act as an attorney. Should any of the parties retain legal counsel, counsel may not be present at any level of the complaint called for by these procedures. College employees governed by collective bargaining agreements may pursue perceived violations of those agreements according to the grievance procedures set forth in them.

Confidentiality and privacy of those involved will be respected during all complaint procedures to the degree the procedure will allow. If an individual wishes to bring a complaint of discrimination, including a complaint alleging sexual harassment, and remain anonymous, the College's ability to respond will be limited. Nevertheless, any individual who believes he or she has been the victim of discrimination is encouraged to discuss the matter with the College's Director of Affirmative Action or any other administrator with whom he/she feels comfortable. Consultations will be confidential to the full extent permitted by law.

This policy provides two avenues for pursuing a complaint: an Informal Resolution Procedure and a Formal Resolution Procedure. An individual may utilize either or both of these avenues of resolution. The College will maintain records and monitor all complaints at all levels. In the case of Affirmative Action complaints, all records are required to be retained for monitoring purposes.

Policy Advising
Individuals seeking information regarding the process of complaint resolution may consult with any of the following offices or individuals for advice and assistance. (A list can be obtained by clicking here.)

Informal Resolution Procedure
Members of the College Community are encouraged normally to seek an informal resolution of their complaints. This informal procedure is intended to encourage communication between the parties involved, either directly or through an intermediary, in order to facilitate a mutual understanding of what may be different perspectives regarding the complained of action or behavior, and to find a solution.

If the complainant is a student, the complaint shall be handled by the Dean of Students. Purely academic complaints shall be handled in accordance with the College's academic grievance policies that are outlined in the College Handbook – Chapter 3 – Academic Policies and Procedures.

If the complainant is an employee, the complaint normally shall be handled by the employee's immediate supervisor. If the immediate supervisor is the subject of the complaint, the complainant may file the informal complaint with another person in the administrative chain of command.

Absent extraordinary circumstances, a record of a complaint alleging discrimination shall be reported to the Director of Affirmative Action so that the College may maintain a record of all complaints filed.
If the informal process does not result in the resolution of the complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant, the complainant may utilize the formal complaint procedure.

**Formal Resolution Procedure**
Any member of the College community may submit a formal complaint alleging a violation of College policy to the appropriate administrator at any time. However, time limits contained in law or contracts may limit the College's ability to respond fully. Purely academic complaints shall be handled in accordance with the College's academic grievance policies and are not covered by this policy. Those policies and procedures may be found in the [College Handbook – Chapter 3 – Academic Policies and Procedures](#).

**Filing a Formal Complaint**
A formal complaint shall be in writing and shall set forth a statement of the facts, the College policy/policies or practice/practices violated, and the specific remedy sought. The complaint normally shall be filed as follows:
- If the complaint alleges discrimination, including illegal harassment, the complaint shall be filed with the Director, Institutional Equity/Affirmative Action, Margaret Lynch-Gadaleta, Roberts Hall 111, telephone # 456-8218, email: mlynchgadaleta@ric.edu.
- If the complaint is a non-academic student issue, the complaint shall be filed with the Dean of Students, Scott Kane, Craig-Lee 119, telephone # 456-8061, email: skane@ric.edu.
- All other complaints shall be filed with the Director, Human Resources, Maggie Sullivan, Building 6 East Campus, telephone # 456-8216, email: msullivan@ric.edu.

These College offices shall forward the complaint to the appropriate Dean or Director for Step 1 resolution. They shall also continue to monitor and coordinate its resolution.

If the complaint is against a Dean or Director, Step 1 of the complaint procedure shall be by-passed and the grievance shall be filed with the appropriate Vice President.

If the complaint is against a Vice President, Step 1 and Step 2 of the complaint procedure shall be by-passed and the complaint shall be filed directly with the President.

If the complaint is against the President, Step 1, Step 2, and Step 3 of the complaint procedure shall be by-passed and the complaint shall be filed with the Post-Secondary Council of the Board of Education, which shall deal with the complaint through an *ad hoc* procedure.

If the College determines that a complaint is well-founded and that the respondent has engaged in inappropriate conduct, disciplinary action may be imposed (and formally effectuated, as required, by an appointing authority) ranging from an oral reprimand to termination of employment or expulsion from the College.

**Hearings**

**Step 1**
Absent extraordinary circumstances, the Dean or Director to whom the complaint has been forwarded shall, within seven (7) calendar days of receiving the complaint, conduct a formal conference with the complainant, permitting her or him to provide any necessary relevant
information. The Dean or Director shall also meet with the respondent and conduct such additional investigation as he or she deems necessary. Absent extraordinary circumstances, a written recommendation shall be rendered within seven (7) calendar days of the first formal conference. The recommendation shall be sent to the complainant and respondent. The written recommendation shall state the background information, the rationale for the recommendation, and the recommended remedy (if any). No transcript or recording of the conference shall be made by either party. For monitoring purposes, a copy of the recommendation shall be sent to the College officer who received the initial complaint.

**Step 2**
If the complaint is not resolved at Step 1, the complainant or respondent may, within fourteen (14) calendar days of receipt of the Step 1 recommendation, appeal to the Vice President administratively responsible for the unit of the College in which the alleged policy violation/s occurred.

Absent extraordinary circumstances, the Vice President shall hold a hearing within fourteen (14) calendar days of receipt of the appeal or complaint. Absent extraordinary circumstances, a written recommendation shall be rendered within fourteen (14) calendar days of such hearing. The complainant and the respondent shall be afforded the opportunity to testify, to call witnesses and to introduce documentary evidence. The Vice-President may review any evidence gathered at the Step 1 level, (including the Step 1 recommendation), and shall, if that evidence is deemed relevant and probative, make it available to the parties. Hearsay evidence, including out-of-hearing statements, if deemed reliable by the Vice President, may be introduced but will normally be accorded less weight than the testimony of live witnesses. No formal cross examination by the parties shall be permitted. No transcript or recording shall be made of the hearing. For monitoring purposes a copy of the recommendation shall be sent to the College officer who received the initial complaint.

**Step 3**
In the event that the complaint is not resolved at Step 2, the complainant or respondent may file an appeal with the President within fourteen days of the receipt of the Step 2 recommendation.

Absent extraordinary circumstances, the President shall, within seven (7) calendar days, refer the case to the Complaint Hearing Panel. The Complaint Hearing Panel shall consist of three (3) persons, one of whom shall be designated chair, chosen from a standing panel appointed annually by the President. The standing panel shall consist of twelve (12) College employees representing administrators, faculty, and staff. The Complaint Hearing Panel shall be formed as follows: one person shall be appointed by the President and designated chair, one person shall be appointed by the complainant, and one person shall be appointed by the respondent. Any member of the panel whose term of appointment expires during the course of the hearing shall continue to serve until completion of the hearing and rendering of a recommendation. The Step 3 hearing shall be held as soon as practicable and normally within twenty-one days of referral by the President. The complainant and the respondent shall have the right to call witnesses, to testify and to present relevant documentary evidence. The complainant and the respondent shall have the right to cross-examine all witnesses, subject to the supervision of the Panel. The Panel may review any evidence gathered at the Step 1 or Step 2 level, (including the Step 1 and 2
recommendation), and may, in its discretion, make that available to the parties. Hearsay evidence, including out-of-hearing statements, if deemed reliable by the Panel, may be introduced but will normally be accorded less weight than the testimony of live witnesses. A tape recording of the proceeding shall be made and a copy shall be provided, at cost, to the complainant and to the respondent. Following the hearing, the Panel shall render a report and recommendation to the President, absent extraordinary circumstances, within twenty-one (21) calendar days following the hearing. The report shall contain specific findings of fact and recommendations. Upon consideration of the report and recommendation, the President shall render a decision in writing and communicate the same to the complainant, the respondent, and to the College monitoring officer. The President's decision shall be final.

While this procedure is generic and therefore available to address any concerns of members of the College Community, it is intended to be of particular use to those persons seeking to vindicate rights accorded them pursuant to the College's Nondiscrimination and Affirmative Action Policy. More specifically, this policy constitutes the grievance mechanism called for by the regulations implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Title IX (barring sex discrimination), Title VI (barring discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin); and Title VII (barring discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, or national origin).

**Liability Insurance**
Rhode Island College carries insurance that covers all students during their tenure in the program, including work in the field. However, we recommend, but do not require, that you consider obtaining your own individual liability insurance if you are concerned about specific protection. The National Association for Social Workers (NASW) offers insurance for social workers. You can check out requirements and costs at [http://www.naswassurance.org/](http://www.naswassurance.org/).

**Student Records**
Student academic and health records are maintained by Rhode Island College at the following locations and with the following custodians:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Custodian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Student Records    | Records Office   | Director of Records
|                    |                  | Building 4
|                    |                  | 600 Mt. Pleasant Ave.
|                    |                  | Providence, RI 02908                                                     |
| Health Records     | Health Services  | Director of Health Services
|                    |                  | Browne Residence Hall
|                    |                  | 600 Mt. Pleasant Ave.
|                    |                  | Providence, RI 02908                                                     |

If you have questions regarding your records, you should refer to one of the offices shown above.