

## **Grievance Procedure for Cases of Alleged Disability Discrimination and Appeal Procedure for Denials of Accommodation Requests**

Rhode Island School of Design prohibits discrimination against any individual on the basis of disability in any of its programs and activities, including without limitation admissions, financial aid, housing, educational programs, and employment. RISD also provides reasonable accommodations to persons with disabilities unless such accommodations would impose an undue burden or fundamentally alter the relevant program or activity. The purpose of these procedures is to ensure that complaints of discrimination in violation of these policies and denials of requested accommodations are thoroughly and fairly investigated and promptly and equitably resolved. Retaliation against anyone who has filed a complaint of discrimination or an appeal of the denial of a requested accommodation, or who has participated in the investigation and resolution of such a complaint or appeal, is also prohibited.

Anyone who believes that he or she has been discriminated against in violation of these policies (other than by the denial of a requested accommodation, for which the appeal process is set forth below) may file a written complaint with the Coordinator of Disability Support Services, who is RISD's designated ADA/504 compliance officer.<sup>1</sup> The statement should be as specific as possible regarding the nature of and basis for the complaint, including the relevant actions or inactions on which the complaint is based, dates, places, persons involved, and any proposed witnesses, as well as any efforts made to resolve the matter informally and the remedy sought. Copies of relevant letters, e-mail messages, and other documents should also be included.

The Coordinator will investigate any such complaint promptly. In conducting the investigation, the Coordinator may interview the complainant and other involved persons or witnesses, request a response from the person or persons whose actions or inactions are the subject of the complaint, request documents or other materials, and make other appropriate inquiries.

Upon completing the investigation, the Coordinator will forward a report and recommendation to the Dean or Vice President overseeing the relevant academic or administrative unit, or to another appropriate official if the complaint involves the relevant Dean or Vice President.<sup>2</sup> Within 60 days of the filing of the complaint, the

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<sup>1</sup> In certain circumstances, such as employment matters, disability-related grievances may also or instead be filed with other offices at the option of the complainant. In such cases, the Coordinator will work together with the other offices to investigate and resolve the complaint. Complaints about the Coordinator should be filed with the Dean of Students, who will then fulfill the role of the Coordinator outlined in this procedure.

<sup>2</sup> To the extent that the complaint implicates another RISD proceeding, such as a disciplinary hearing under the Code of Student Conduct, a grade grievance, or an employment-related grievance, the Coordinator will also forward a copy of the report or recommendation to the official responsible for conducting that proceeding, who shall take the information into account in conducting that proceeding.

Dean, Vice President, or other official should if reasonably possible render a written decision on the merits of the complaint and advise the complainant and the Coordinator, or if not reasonably possible advise the complainant and the Coordinator of the reasons why. Copies may also be provided as appropriate to the person or persons who are the subject of the complaint.

A complainant who is not satisfied with the resolution of a grievance or who has been denied a requested accommodation may appeal the matter in writing to the Senior Vice President for Student Affairs (or his or her designee).<sup>3</sup> The statement should be as specific as possible about the nature of and basis for the appeal. In reviewing the appeal, the Senior Vice President for Student Affairs (or designee) may interview the complainant and other appropriate persons, request documents and other materials, and conduct other appropriate reviews. Within 30 days of the filing of the appeal, the Senior Vice President for Student Affairs (or designee) should if reasonably possible render a written decision on the appeal and advise the complainant and the Coordinator, or if not reasonably possible advise the complainant and the Coordinator of the reasons why. Copies may also be provided as appropriate to the person or persons who are the subject of the appealed complaint or denial.

Questions about these procedures should be directed to the Coordinator of Disability Support Services at:

Brittany Boyne  
Coordinator of Disability Support Services  
Rhode Island School of Design  
Two College Street  
Providence, RI 02903  
bboyne@risd.edu  
(401) 709-8460

In addition, the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) enforces Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974, which generally prohibits disability discrimination at academic institutions. Inquiries may be addressed to OCR's New England regional office at:

U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights  
5 Post Office Square, 8th Floor  
Boston, MA 02109-3921  
(617) 289-0111 direct  
(617) 289-0150 fax

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<sup>3</sup> Appeals that involve or were decided at the first level by the Senior Vice President for Student Affairs should instead be filed with the Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration, who will then fulfill the role of the Senior Vice President for Student Affairs outlined in this procedure.