

FAQs - Students

Dealing with Difficult Behavior

What do I do if a faculty member is repeatedly making negative or hostile comments about me in front of others?

You have to decide what course of action is best for you, whether you want to respond directly or get help from another resource.

- If you are able to address the faculty member directly, tell them that their comments are making you feel uncomfortable and to please stop.
- If there is a faculty or staff member in your department whom you trust, ask that person for advice on how to handle the situation.
- Or you can make an appointment to speak with staff at the Student Conflict Resolution Center (SCRC) or a counselor at the Student Counseling Services (SCS) for confidential advice and consultation. Talking with SCRC or SCS staff DOES NOT mean you are filing a grievance or making your complaint public.



What can I do if my adviser is not responding to repeated requests for assistance?

This is certainly a frustrating situation, and the “right” course of action may depend on a number of factors. Start by taking some time to reflect. Are you communicating your needs clearly and directly? Is this related to something that you might be able to do on your own?

If you cannot get a response from your adviser, consider the following options:

- Make appointments to serve as reminders to your adviser.
- When meetings do occur, have everything prepared. Be sure to rehearse your questions. If you only get five minutes in the hallway, you can get some information without scheduling a meeting.
- Document via email your requests for meetings.
- Ask departmental administrators to help determine when your adviser is typically in the office and ask them to help you.
- Talk with your Department Chair, Director of Graduate Studies, a trusted colleague, or whomever you feel comfortable with for ideas on how to get what you need in regard to advising.
- Consult with staff at the Student Conflict Resolution Center.

If I seek assistance at SCRC, SCS, ISSS, or Aurora Center, does that mean I am automatically filing a grievance? Am I required to take some action?

Unless you report sexual harassment or an intention to harm yourself or another person, your discussion will remain between you and the counselor/adviser. You will have the opportunity to talk about your situation, explore options, and hear about resources.

- If you have questions or concerns about confidentiality, reporting requirements, or policies, you can consult with the staff or faculty of the office you are contacting.

My adviser makes me work more hours than other graduate assistants. What can I do?

- Discuss the difference in hours with your adviser. If there is not a logical reason, ask that your hours be the same as others.
- If this issue is not resolved with your adviser, ask to have a confidential conversation with the graduate studies coordinator or program director.
- Speak to the faculty member who is the director of the academic program and/or the department head.
- Speak to the staff at SCRC for guidance as to how to proceed if you feel that you can not resolve it with help in your department. If you are an international student, you can also consult with advisers at International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS).

Resources

Student Conflict Resolution Center

www.sos.umn.edu
612.626.0689, 254 Appleby Hall
Contact: Jan Morse

Student Counseling Services

www.counseling.umn.edu
612.626.0150, 340 Appleby Hall
Contact: Matt Hanson

Graduate School

www.grad.umn.edu
612.625.2815, 321 Johnston Hall
Contact: Karen Starry



What do I do if a faculty member is making unwanted advances, e.g., inviting me on dates?

You have to decide what course of action is best for you, whether you want to respond directly, indirectly, or get help.

- If you are able to address the faculty member directly, tell them that their comments are making you feel uncomfortable and to please stop.
- If the advances persist, seek outside help. If this faculty member is your adviser, a teacher, or in any way connected with your academic work, you need to seek outside help. This behavior is not appropriate.
- Visit the [University Policy Library](#) for information on sexual harassment.



- You may also wish to consult with staff at the following resources:
 - Aurora Center www.aurora.umn.edu
 - Student Conflict Resolution Center (SCRC) www.sos.umn.edu
 - Student Counseling Services (SCS) www.counseling.umn.edu
 - Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action (EOAA) www.diversity.umn.edu
 - International students can also contact International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) www.isss.umn.edu

Someone is taking credit for my work, what should I do?

If you believe this has already occurred:

- Make an appointment to communicate your concerns to your adviser/supervisor “I would like an appointment to discuss authorship on projects.” See [Preparing for Difficult Conversations](#).
 - State the issues dispassionately, use “I” statements and avoid accusations. Write down your issues ahead of time if this helps you.
 - Listen to the responses; clarify your understanding of what the adviser says.
 - Offer your adviser time to consider the issue if they seem unprepared to address it.
 - Keep your long-term objectives in mind: is this an important issue? If the answer is “no,” consider how to avoid it in the future.
 - If you believe something unethical has occurred, take the necessary steps to address this issue. Do not ignore it:
 - If you feel comfortable, discuss this with your adviser, DGS, department head or other trusted faculty or staff.
 - Consult a staff member at the Student Conflict Resolution Center.
 - Consider reporting anonymously on the U’s whistleblower web site: [Ethicspoint](#) or by calling 1.866.294.8680
- If you have communicated with your adviser/supervisor and are not satisfied with the outcome:
- You can make an appointment to speak with the graduate studies coordinator in your department or the faculty member in charge of your program.

- You can make an appointment to speak with staff at the Student Conflict Resolution Center or Student Counseling Services. The staff provides confidential advice and consultation. Talking with the SCRC staff DOES NOT mean you are filing a grievance or making your complaint public.
- Review the policy on [Research Misconduct](#).
Step back and consider how this might be avoided.
- Before you join a research group, ask your faculty adviser/supervisor if there are written guidelines for student participation and projects.
- If there are no written guidelines, request a briefing about how collaborations proceed in this department, group or lab. Keep notes and ask your adviser to confirm your understanding.

Is your or someone else’s personal safety at risk?

- Call 911 if there is an immediate threat. For non-emergencies consider calling the [University of Minnesota Police Department](#). 612.624.2677
- Talk to your department or center safety office immediately. To find out who that is, contact the [Department of Environmental Health and Safety](#). 612.626.6002
- Call the [Security Monitor Program](#) to be accompanied to a destination on or near campus. 612.624.9255
- Call or email [Ethicspoint](#) to anonymously report violations of policies, regulations, or laws. 1.866.294.8680