

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) for the Respectful Learning Environment Policy and Procedure (RLE)

1. Does a student have to be engaged in an informal resolution process or can they go straight to a formal Complaint?

Following consultation with the Complaints Coordinator, every effort will be made to resolve the concern as defined in the RLE policy under the Informal Complaint process in the first instance, as defined in the Policy, section 2.2.1.

There may be circumstances where an informal resolution is not appropriate, and it would then proceed to the formal Complaint process as defined in Section 6.1 through 6.15.8 of the Respectful Learning Environment Procedure (RLE).

2. Are faculty and staff included in the Respectful Learning Environment policy?

Yes, further, employees of Memorial abide by their respective collective agreements and/or the Respectful Workplace Policy.

<https://www.mun.ca/hr/myhr/healthy-workplace/respectful-workplace/>

3. Why is there a Confidentiality and Privacy section in the Respectful Learning Environment (RLE) document?

This section applies to all individuals who are involved in the Complaint process, including students, staff or faculty, and the facilitators of the process. This section is meant to protect all individuals, including the Complainant(s), Respondent(s), and witnesses of any particular Complaint and to ensure the integrity of the process. All persons involved in any process are required to maintain confidentiality.

Confidential matters are handled in accordance with the [Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 2015, cA-1.2.](#), other privacy legislation to which the University is subject, and the [University Privacy Policy](#).

4. Why are all individuals required to maintain confidentiality?

This section does not restrict individuals involved in the RLE process to discuss any concern if they are seeking guidance or advice. This statement has been included to protect all parties. While it may be of interest for some individuals to publically share details of the interactions, not all parties engaged in the same process may want their information shared. This section does not prevent individuals engaged in the process to seek guidance and advice (including personal supports), nor is it to isolate individuals from being able to discuss these matters with their supports. It is solely for the purpose of protecting all parties to

ensure that information is not shared or publically distributed without the consent of all parties involved in a Concern or Complaint.

5. Will my information or matters pertaining to a Complaint be shared with a faculty's academic department?

No. Matters regarding a student(s) Complaint are not shared unless the person has a bona fide need to know the details of a situation. In such a case these individuals will have access to such information and will be limited to the scope of the individual's responsibilities. In some instances, a respondent may be a member of a students' academic department, and would also be required to maintain confidentiality with respect to the process.

6. Can a student be involved in an academic concern or appeal matter and still be involved in a process under the Respectful Learning Environment (RLE) process?

Yes. Students can still be engaged in an academic matter and also a matter under the Respectful Learning Environment process given this policy is not a mechanism to address academic concerns or appeals. These processes can occur simultaneously and are separate and independent of each other. i.e. Students involved in academic misconduct, appeal, or concern, would have to avail of the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies for Undergraduate Students and School of Graduate Studies for graduate students.

7. Does every campus have a Complaint Coordinator and who do I contact if I have a concern?

Every campus has a person who is appointed by the University to act in the roles outlined in the Respectful Learning Environment Policy. The University may decide to appoint a different Complaints Coordinator (s) for the St. John's Campus, Signal Hill Campus, Harlow Campus, Grenfell Campus, Labrador Campus and/or the Marine Institute.

Student who have a query, Complaint or Concern, can contact the following for your respective campus:

- St. John's Campus, Harlow Campus, Signal Hill Campus, and Labrador Institute – Dr. Jennifer Browne jbrowne@mun.ca
- Marine Institute – Ms. Juanita Hennessey, Manager, Student Support, Juanita.Hennessey@mi.mun.ca
- Grenfell Campus – Ms. Carolyn Parsons, The Registrar and Director of Student Services, csparsons@grenfell.mun.ca.
- Faculty-Associate Director of Faculty Relations
- Staff- Associate Director of Human Resources

8. Can a student(S) bring a support person and a legal representative to any meetings/interviews as outlined in the RLE policy?

Yes. Students can bring a support person and/or a legal representative. A support person is defined in the RLE Policy. Students are required to complete the Respectful Learning Environment (RLE) Consent Form, Appendix A as outlined in the Respectful Learning Environment (RLE) procedures, if they wish for another party to attend a consultation, interview, or meeting with them. This form must be submitted to the Complaints Coordinator at least two (2) days in advance of the consultation, interview or meeting at their respective campus.

9. Can a student lodge a Complaint or concern anonymously?

No. All Concerns or Complaints must be initiated by completing Appendix B, Respectful Learning Environment (RLE) Matter of Concern Request Form as defined in the Respectful Learning Environment Procedures. In a case where the concern is about an employee who is teaching or supervising the student, the name of the student will not be disclosed to the employee until after grades are submitted or supervision for that semester is complete.

10. Can a student lodge a Complaint or Concern regarding a disagreement with their professor regarding a grade or evaluation relating to a course?

No. Academic matters would have to be addressed through the appropriate Academic department or through the appropriate regulations as per the [University Calendar](#).

11. Can an individual auditing a class lodge a Complaint or Concern against an employee?

If an individual auditing a class was a registered student within the last thirty (30) days a Concern or Complaint can be filed.

12. How long does a student(s) have to lodge a Complaint against an employee?

In accordance with the Respectful Learning Environment Policy a Concern or a Complaint should be brought forward within twelve (12) months of the incident.

13. Does this policy distinguish between harassment versus criticism?

Yes. Harassment is defined in the policy and includes harassment based on all of the prohibited grounds of discrimination. Examples of harassment are not limited to the examples listed in the policy definition. The RLE definition of harassment does not include respectful interpersonal disagreements, respectful performance

feedback or discipline or remediation conducted in a respectful and appropriate manner.

14. Was consideration given to Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism (EDI-AR) and Indigenization in the development of this policy?

Yes. Meetings were held with the Vice-Provost, EDI-AR as well as the Vice-President (Indigenous) for their input. Consultation was extensive and beyond the requirements of the policy framework. Feedback from a diverse group of stakeholders and general university community was incorporated prior to circulating to the university community.

15. Does the process outlined in the RLE hinder academic freedom?

No. Academic freedom permits scholars to teach, learn, conduct research, publish, comment and criticise freely. Further, academic freedom allows individuals to speak on social, political, economic, and other interests to the larger community, to select course materials, make assignments, assess students' academic performance and the right to discuss and criticize policies and actions of the University.

Academic freedom, does not, for example, allow space for harassment, bullying or intimidation. The proposed respectful learning policy does not hinder the principles of academic freedom.

16. Why was this policy created?

Students' non-academic Concerns or Complaints have been excluded from the scope of the *Respectful Workplace* policy (2014); instead they have been addressed through a variety of protocols and practices. One of those is the non-academic appeals document:

http://www.mun.ca/main/non_academic_appeals.php . The RLE policy was created to replace the out-dated (created more than 40 years ago), and difficult to navigate, non-academic appeals procedure. The RLE is a comprehensive policy that articulates a learning environment that emphasizes fairness and respect and frames an updated process for addressing non-academic Concerns and Complaints.

The revised policy was developed to align with best practices includes those related to EDI-AR, privacy and information management. Further, it is orientated in the context of the University's *Transforming our Horizons Strategic Plan*, the Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities; Respectful Workplace Policy; the Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault Policy; along with relevant legislation and collective agreements.

17. Who was engaged in the consultation process for this policy?

The consultation process involved an intensive 11-week, open-consultation period. A Newsline message and social media campaign went out to the university community, as noted in the policy communications plan. Memos were sent to all student and employee union groups.

Prior to engaging the university committee in public consultations a series of targeted consultations were conducted inviting input from representatives of the following units:

- Office of the Vice-Provost, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism;
- Indigenous Affairs office;
- Office of Faculty Relations;
- Department of Human Resources;
- Office of the Chief Risk officer;
- Information Access and Privacy Office;
- General Counsel;
- Grenfell Campus;
- Harlow Campus;
- Labrador Campus; and
- Signal Hill Campus;

18. When can a representative of the University act as a Complainant?

If individual(s) involved have not lodged a Complaint under the RLE policy, and the behaviours identified pose a safety risk to any member of the university community a representative of the University can act as a Complainant.

19. Will information related to RLE be retained in an employee's personnel file?

Yes. Records related to the formal Complaints process will be retained in an employee's personnel file. These records are stored in line with the MUNCLASS retention and disposal schedule which include the legal destruction of University records.