



Operational Area	Employment
Responsible Executive	Vice President of Administration and Finance/CFO
Responsible Office	Human Resources Office
Effective	June 1, 2026

# Complaints by Administrators and Staff Policy

## Employment

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## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. **Authority:** C.R.S. § 23-54-102, et seq. (2026) authorizes the Trustees of Metropolitan State University of Denver (“MSU Denver” or “University”) to establish rules and regulations to govern and operate the University and its programs. The Board of Trustees (“Board” or “trustees”) retain authority to approve, interpret, and administer policies pertaining to University governance. The Trustees authorize the President of MSU Denver to approve, administer, and interpret policies pertaining to University operations.
- B. **Purpose:** This policy states the rights and responsibilities of MSU Denver administrators and staff to address complaints as defined in this policy.
- C. **Scope:** This policy applies to University administrators and staff exempted from the State of Colorado personnel system in accordance with [C.R.S. § 24-50-135](#). This policy does not apply to complaints involving allegations of discrimination or bullying. Complaints involving allegations of discrimination are subject to MSU Denver’s [Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, Title IX Violations, and Retaliation Policy](#) and complaints involving allegations of bullying are subject to [MSU Denver's Bullying in the Workplace Policy](#).



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### II. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. **Responsible Executive:** Vice President of Administration and Finance/CFO
- B. **Responsible Administrator:** Chief Human Resources Officer
- C. **Responsible Office:** Human Resources Office
- D. **Policy Contact:** Chief Human Resources Officer, 303-615-0999

### III. POLICY STATEMENT

- A. The most satisfactory procedure for resolving problems is a discussion between the persons involved in the matter at the lowest level possible before filing any formal complaint. Such persons, and other affected individuals, should reason together to identify problems, develop understanding, and reconcile differences before they develop into formal complaints.
- B. Complaint Records shall be held by the Senior Human Resource Partner and held as confidential to the fullest extent permitted by the [Colorado Open Records Act](#).
- C. Related Procedures:
  - 1. Allegations of discrimination (including all allegations of sexual misconduct which could be considered Title IX violations) must be addressed to the University's Office of Equal Opportunity and are subject to and governed by MSU Denver's Anti-Discrimination policy and procedures.
  - 2. Allegations of bullying are subject to and governed by MSU Denver's Bullying in the Workplace policy.
  - 3. Retaliation against an individual for filing or reporting a complaint is prohibited.
  - 4. This policy shall not be used to file or report frivolous or malicious complaints. Disciplinary actions may be taken against any person filing or making a complaint in bad faith.

### IV. DEFINITIONS

- A. "**Complaint**" means a claim by an affected professional employee of improper, unfair, or arbitrary treatment and is not a matter for which an alternative method



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of review is prescribed. This complaint procedure is intended to address complaints by professional personnel concerning treatment by supervisors or colleagues acting in an official capacity.

- B. **"Improper"** means inconsistent with an established fact, or with a rule that is not a University policy.
- C. **"Unfair"** means unjustifiably biased or prejudiced.
- D. **"Arbitrary"** means without any rational basis.
- E. **"Respondent"** means the party who is alleged to have treated the complaint in arbitrary, unfair or improper manner.
- F. **"Complainant"** means the party bringing the complaint forward.

## V. PROCEDURAL PROCESSES

- A. General Requirements
  - 1. Failure at any step to communicate the decision in writing within the specified time limit shall prohibit the employee from proceeding to the next step.
  - 2. Failure by an employee to give written notice of appeal to the next step within the specified time limits shall terminate the process and the case will be deemed closed.
  - 3. A complaint may be withdrawn at any time by the employee by filing a written withdrawal with the individual responsible for the step of the process that is active at the time.
- B. Examples of Possible Complaints (not an all-inclusive list)
  - 1. Toxic Work Environment, Insubordination, Microaggressions, Workplace Disputes.
  - 2. During any part of this complaint process, an employee may represent him/her/their self with or without an advisor or the employee may be represented by any other person.



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#### C. Filing a Complaint

1. It is recommended a complainant notify the respondent and initiate an informal discussion for the purpose of resolving the complaint within thirty (30) calendar days from the time the employee knew, or reasonably should have known, of the occurrence that gave rise to the complaint. Complaints can include related incidents from the past.
2. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the results of the informal discussion, the complainant must file a written Notice of Complaint. The complainant is required to file the Notice of Complaint with the respondent's supervisor (the Step 1 reviewer) and send a copy to their Senior Human Resource Partner. Such Notice shall be filed no later than sixty (60) calendar days from the date of the occurrence that gave rise to the complaint. The Step 1 Reviewer shall investigate the complaint and respond in writing to the complainant and the respondent within thirty (30) calendar days after receipt of the Notice of Complaint. The intent is to move through the process as efficiently as possible.
3. In the Notice of Complaint, the Complainant shall include a comprehensive and detailed statement of the facts and circumstances that form the basis of the complaint and shall include a statement of the remedies requested.

#### D. Complaint Investigation Process

1. If an employee reports a concern to their Supervisor, the Supervisor should discuss the complaint with the employee and help them determine if a formal complaint should be filed or if it should be handled within the work unit. Supervisors are encouraged to offer support to their employees. Supervisors can consult with their manager and/or Human Resources if they need assistance in guiding the employee. If the employee determines that a formal complaint is warranted, the steps below outline the process.
2. Student Employee Complaints
  - a) Complaints involving student employees will follow the same process.
  - b) Human Resources will collaborate with the Dean of Students and other offices as needed.

#### E. Process Lifecycle:

1. If the Step 1 reviewer and the complainant are unable to resolve the complaint, the Step 1 reviewer should notify the MSU Denver Human



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Resources office (“MSU Denver HR Office”) of the complaint. The MSU Denver HR Office will assign a “Sr. HR Partner” to process and handle the complaint as set forth, below.

2. Human Resources receives a complaint
  - a) The Sr. HR Partner reviews the complaint and meets with the complainant to obtain general information.
  - b) Sr. HR Partner determines if the Complaint or others need immediate support (i.e. mental/physical health) and if appropriate will direct that forward.
  - c) During the initial conversation, the Sr. HR Partner does an initial intake to learn the details of the complaint, identify potential impacts, and who else may be involved. If the complaint is related to Title IX or any other form of discrimination, the Sr. HR partner directs the complainant to the OEO.
  - d) If there are possible safety issues, Sr. HR Partner will contact the appropriate offices for support (AHEC, Office of General Counsel, etc.).
3. Investigation
  - a) After the intake conversations, whether or not it is determined there is enough information to warrant an investigation, the Sr. HR Partner will manage the process and communicate with all parties.
  - b) For policy violations, Sr. HR Partner will prepare a Notice of Investigation and send it to the complainant and the respondent.
  - c) The Sr. HR Partner may collaborate with the Office of General Counsel and leadership (i.e. any leader who is connected to the complaint) throughout the process.
4. Conclusion
  - a) If upon completion of the investigation a policy violation is found, the Sr. HR Partner collaborates with leadership to determine what, if any, action to take, which may include disciplinary action up to and including termination. The Sr. HR Partner may collaborate with legal and leadership along the way.
  - b) If upon completion of the investigation, a policy violation was not found but inappropriate conduct was found, the Sr. HR Partner may work with leadership to determine the appropriate action to take.



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- c) If upon completion of the investigation, there is no finding of wrongdoing on the part of the respondent, the Sr. HR Partner communicates the decision to all parties. The Sr. HR Partner may collaborate with the Office of General Counsel and leadership throughout the process.
  - d) The Sr. HR Partner works with leadership to implement any disciplinary action and to carry out the final decision.
  - e) The Sr. HR Partner will communicate the rationale for their final decision to the complainant and respondent.
5. Related Information
- a) Throughout the Investigation, if parties need additional support they may be referred to various services, such as CSEAP, the CARE team, the Dean of Students office, etc.
  - b) The Sr. HR Partner managing the complaint creates and maintains all documentation. There may be collaboration across the Sr. HR Partner team to identify trends and patterns within offices, departments and/or across the university and may make their findings available to leadership.

## VI. RELATED INFORMATION

- A. [Colorado State Employee Assistance Program \(CSEAP\)](#)
- B. [C.R.S. § 24-50-135](#)
- C. [MSU Denver Ombuds](#)
- D. [AHEC Policy Department](#)
- E. [MSU Denver Office of Human Resources](#)
- F. [MSU Denver Office of Equal Opportunity](#)
- G. [MSU Denver Office of General Counsel](#)
- H. [MSU Denver Dean of Students Office](#)
- I. [MSU Denver Faculty Employment Handbook](#)
- J. [Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, Title IX Violations, and Retaliation Policy](#)
- K. [MSU Denver Bullying in the Workplace Policy](#)



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- L. [MSU Denver University Library](#)
- M. [Colorado Open Records Act \(CORA\)](#)

### VII. POLICY HISTORY

- A. **Effective:** June 1, 2026
- B. **Revised:** 2025 revision removed Title IX and Bullying complaints as a part of this policy; revised August 1, 2024; July 1, 2017 revision supersedes Chapter X of MSU Denver's Handbook for Professionals; revised July 1, 2010.
- C. **Original Enactment Date:** February 2, 2005
- D. **Review:** This policy will be reviewed every three years or as deemed necessary by University leadership.

### VIII. POLICY APPROVAL

\_\_\_\_\_  
Janine Davidson, Ph.D.  
President, Metropolitan State University of Denver

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N/A  
Chair, Board of Trustees, Metropolitan State University of Denver



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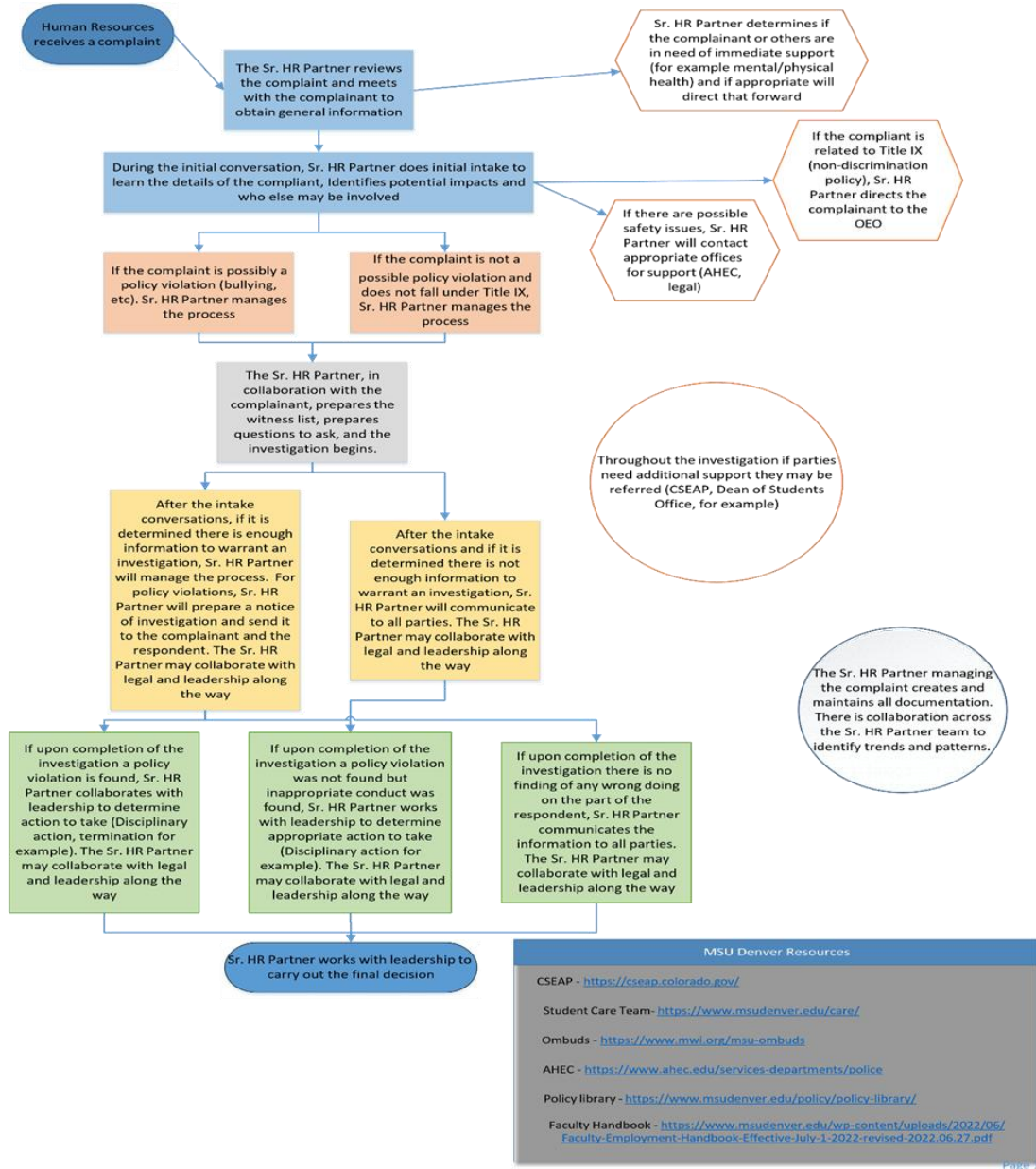


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### IX. COMPLAINTS FLOWCHART



A. [Complaint Process Flowchart 5-24.pdf](#)