



## SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION: Grievance Process

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A common topic within the broader conversation around unionization is grievance processing. A grievance generally is a complaint alleging that the university has violated what the parties agreed to in the collective bargaining agreement (CBA).

If the SEIU becomes the representative of Emory PhD students, the union would likely seek to negotiate a contractual grievance process. For reference, these contractual grievance procedures typically involve a formal multi-step process with time periods that both the union and the university must abide by in order to have the grievance resolved. If the grievance is not resolved via the multi-step grievance procedure, the grievance can typically proceed to an arbitration provided the union continues to pursue the grievance on behalf of the aggrieved student. An arbitration proceeding is similar to a trial. Each side may call witnesses to present evidence through sworn testimony, including cross-examination, and enter documentary evidence and other exhibits into the record. Based on the record produced at the hearing, a neutral third party, the arbitrator, will make the final determination about whether a violation of the CBA occurred.

However, there is no guarantee that a collectively bargained grievance procedure would be more beneficial to PhD students than Emory's existing procedures. Even without the presence of a union, Emory has endeavored to foster an environment where there is open dialogue and transparency, and where all students feel comfortable using available resources for addressing issues of concern.

While not an exhaustive list, some of the key resources available to Emory PhD students include:

- **[Office of Ethics and Compliance – Emory Trust Line](#)**: A hotline operated by an independent third-party for the confidential reporting of potential ethical, legal, and or business conduct violations at Emory.
- **[Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance – Department of Equity and Inclusion](#)**: A confidential reporting mechanism through which any student, faculty, or staff member who has experienced discrimination, discriminatory harassment, or retaliation by a faculty or staff member may file a complaint.
- **[Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance – Department of Title IX](#)**: A resource for students with concerns related to sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, intimate partner violence,

stalking, and gender-based harassment. The Department of Title IX has both informal and formal processes—including informational meetings, supportive measures, and formal complaint and grievance process, which includes an investigation and opportunity for an evidentiary hearing—with varying degrees of confidentiality designed to help students identify the right support to meet their needs.

- **Office of Respect:** A 24-hour support resource for Emory students impacted by sexual and/or relationship-based harm. The Office aims to provide confidential support by helping students learn about their options and rights; assisting with safety planning; providing legal and medical accompaniment; and offering academic assistance and individual and group counseling.
- **Emory Ombuds Office:** A confidential, safe space where students, faculty, and staff can discuss concerns about interpersonal conflicts, misunderstandings, incivility, or possible wrongdoing. The Office can assist students in (1) identifying, clarifying, and articulating their concerns; (2) understanding the landscape of Emory policies, procedures, and organizations touching upon their issue; (3) navigating a path forward to address their concerns with the appropriate parties; and (4) exploring options to engage the involved parties through informal means, including intermediated conversations, facilitated discussion, and mediation.

Additional resources available to all Emory students include [Bias Support Services](#), [Office of Spiritual and Religious Life](#), and [Counseling and Psychological Services](#).

As part of the ongoing dialogue around unionization and contractual grievance procedures, it is important to keep in mind that it is not only having a grievance process that matters – it is creating and sustaining a culture where grievances can be openly aired and resolved in a manner that is consistent with our academic values and principles. The University has actively worked to create a culture of honesty, equality, fairness, and comprehensive support through the resources named above as well as the other mechanisms in place to assist students experiencing a conflict or other academic or personal issue. Students interested in learning more about these support resources should contact the [Student Affairs Team](#) at the Laney Graduate School.