

Role of Advisors

The purpose of this guide is to help another person help a student by taking on the role of advisor as contemplated in the Algonquin College Policies & Directives. Directive A21 entitled Rights, Freedoms, Responsibilities and Code of Conduct for the Algonquin College Community provides that all persons should expect to have the laws of natural justice prevail in official procedures including the right to an advisor.

Who is an advisor?

A student who must meet with a decision maker at the College need not go to such a meeting alone if they prefer to be accompanied. For example, a student involved as either the complainant or an accused student under the Student Misconduct Directive may be accompanied by an advisor of his or her choosing at hearings as provided for in Directive E27. The same applies for Academic Appeals. A student may invite a single person to accompany them for support at any appeal where the student is required to make a personal representation. This may be another student, a professor, a parent, a friend, or the Ombudsman. Even in situations where it is not specifically provided for in a Directive, if a student is involved in an official procedure that may result in an outcome affecting the student, the student may be accompanied by one other person in the role of advisor. It is proper procedure for the student to first notify the other party or parties to the meeting that an advisor will be in attendance. The other party sometimes decides to invite an advisor also.

Example: Student John Doe receives an email from his professor, indicating that his assignment appears too similar to that of another student. John arranges to meet with the professor to discuss the matter. He takes his friend Tony with him. Before the meeting begins, he introduces Tony to his professor, and asks if Tony may be present during their meeting.

Role of an advisor.

Typically, an advisor is present as an observer of the meeting and for moral support.

- An advisor may not speak during the meeting unless invited to do so by the person in authority (chairing the meeting). Despite the seemingly passive role advisors play, their presence can be very important to the parties. The student may see the advisor as a supportive presence, and feel less vulnerable.

- Both student and decision maker can have a witness at the meeting. The presence of an advisor may help raise the tone of the meeting, making the participants more reasonable and respectful than they might be otherwise.
- The advisor may take notes at the meeting, to help the student recall all the points that were made.
- The student can discuss the meeting afterwards with someone (advisor) who was there.

Note: *The information contained herein is based on best practices and has been adapted from a guide produced by the Ombuds Office of the University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario. It is not an official Algonquin College document nor is it meant to replace any Algonquin College document.*