



## NDU INSTRUCTION 1025.06

### STUDENT COMPLAINT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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**Originating Component:** Office of Academic Affairs

**Effective:** August 25, 2017

**Releasability:** Cleared for public release. Available on the Internet from the NDU Intranet Website at <https://portal.ndu.edu/Pages/Home.aspx>.

**Incorporates and Cancels:** N/A

**Approved by:** John W. Yaeger, Ed.D, Vice President for Academic Affairs (VP-AA) / Provost

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John W. Yaeger", written over a horizontal line.

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**Purpose:** In accordance with 34 CFR 602.16(a)(1)(ix) , 34 CFR 668.43(b), and Middle States Commission on Higher Education accrediting policy this instruction establishes NDU policies, requirements, and procedures to ensure that NDU has effective policies and procedures for receiving, tracking, and resolving student complaints within a reasonable time frame and a process for making modifications and improvements to the institution as a result of information obtained in handling student complaints.

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## SECTION 1: GENERAL ISSUANCE INFORMATION

**1.1. APPLICABILITY.** This instruction sets forth policies and procedures for student complaints and establishes an institutional record of complaints made by NDU students against NDU, its subordinate colleges, faculty, staff, or other students. Disciplinary issues and student professional conduct issues must be adjudicated through the appropriate disciplinary or legal processes as determined by the Office of the General Counsel.

**1.2. BACKGROUND.** Students may seek redress through their chain of command or other established mechanisms in accordance with applicable Department of Defense, Office of Personnel Management, and Agency processes and procedures. This instruction is not intended to interfere with such processes and procedures. Rather, it is designed to ensure that NDU and its subordinate colleges have effective means for receiving, tracking, and resolving student complaints within a reasonable time frame and that NDU processes make modifications and improvements to the institution as a result of information obtained in handling student complaints.

### 1.3. POLICY.

a. NDU is dedicated to a policy which provides that all student complaints at the university will be handled fairly and equally without regard to race, color, sex, age, religion, disability, national origin, marital status, veteran status, political affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity or other non-merit factors. It is the policy of NDU to provide fair and orderly procedures for students to submit complaints. Nothing in this policy prevents a student from discussing a complaint informally with any appropriate NDU faculty, staff, personnel, or other student. A complaint is defined as a formal written submission by a student related to a grievance against NDU, its subordinate colleges, faculty, staff, or other students.

b. An institutional record of student complaints shall track receipt and resolution of student complaints. The institutional record of student complaints shall also facilitate making modifications and improvements to the institution as a result of information obtained in handling student complaints. NDU colleges shall establish and maintain student complaint logs. NDU colleges shall submit an annual report to the NDU Office of Institutional Research Planning and Assessment (IR). More frequent reports may be generated if required.

Student complaint logs shall record any known student complaints, including the:

1. Date the complaint was made;
2. Nature of the complaint;
3. Date that the college or cognizant authority initiated review of the complaint;
4. Date that the college determined the complaint to have been resolved;

5. Nature of the resolution
6. If applicable, explanations or extenuating circumstances worthy of consideration if certain reviews or resolutions might unfairly be viewed as untimely

## **SECTION 2: RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **2.1. VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS (VP-AA)/PROVOST.**

a. The Provost shall publish and disseminate policy related to student formal complaints, and review any matters forwarded by the Deans Council for his or her attention, including recommendations for modifications or improvements to the policy for handling student complaints. The Provost may direct corrective action, defer to the Deans Council or other competent authority to implement corrective action, or otherwise exercise discretion as to how NDU makes modifications and improvements to the institution. Through these decisions, the Provost will ensure that student complaints are handled fairly and orderly to provide the optimal educational and working environment for NDU faculty, staff, and students.

b. NDU- Academic Affairs shall coordinate with NDU General Counsel to help resolve any formal complaints related to academic programs filed through the complaint process.

c. NDU- Academic Affairs (IR) shall maintain a log of formal student complaints in accordance with federal accreditation requirements.

### **2.2. DEAN'S COUNCIL.**

a. Deans Council shall discuss student formal complaints as an agenda item no less than annually, preferably coinciding with the completion of the spring semester to specifically assess the institutional record of student complaints, review the IR annual report as required, ensure that student complaints are addressed and resolved within a reasonable time frame, and make recommendations for modifications and improvements to the institution as a result of information obtained in handling student complaints.

b. The Deans Council shall require and/or receive additional reports as necessary. In the event that the Deans Council notes deficiencies in the handling of NDU student complaints, identifies modifications or improvements that should be made to the manner that NDU or particular colleges address student complaints, or otherwise believes that a matter brought before the Council is worthy of further action, the council will make recommendations to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and propose corrective action for those items that may appear to be systemic in nature.

### **2.3. GENERAL COUNSEL (OGC).**

a. The Office of the General Counsel (OGC) shall receive and review all student complaint forms regardless of resolution for any matters that may require legal advice, and provide to IR for record keeping, trend analysis, and generation of annual reports.

b. The OGC shall be available to advise and provide recommendations on handling student complaints.

#### **2.4. OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH, PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT (IR).**

a. IR shall receive complaints from the OGC for record keeping, trend analysis, and generation of annual reports.

b. IR shall analyze the college/program complaint logs and reports received and provide an annual report of student complaints to the NDU Deans Council. At a minimum that report shall detail:

- (1) The nature and frequency of student complaints;
- (2) The timeliness of initiating review of complaints;
- (3) The timeliness of resolving complaints;
- (4) The nature of resolutions;
- (5) Any noteworthy details about differing approaches amongst NDU colleges;
- (6) Any noteworthy details about patterns pertaining to student complaints;
- (7) If applicable, explanations or extenuating circumstances worthy of the Council's consideration if certain reviews or resolutions might unfairly be viewed as untimely.

#### **2.5. NDU COLLEGES.**

- a. Chancellors and Commandants shall publish guidance for students regarding submitting complaints that is clear, consistent with this instruction, published, and readily available in documents such as student handbooks, course syllabi, and other published instructions.
- b. Chancellors and Commandants shall identify an administrator and alternate who shall receive student complaints, maintain a student complaint log, and forward all complaint forms to the OGC regardless of resolution.
- c. When presented with a formal written complaint, faculty and staff should attempt to resolve the complaint in a timely manner at the lowest level of organizational authority.
- d. Chancellors and Commandants are responsible for addressing all complaints originating within their program(s). Students seeking further redress may do so through the OGC.
- e. Colleges shall retain documentation of formal complaints and their resolution for five years.

## 2.6. NDU STUDENTS.

- a. All students enrolled in NDU programs and courses have a responsibility to:
  - (1) Abide by appropriate military/department/agency rules, regulations and standards of conduct.
  - (2) Abide by NDU academic policies and procedures, and those of the college/program/course in which they are enrolled.
  - (3) Respect the opinions and rights of other students.
  - (4) Adequately prepare for each class.
  - (5) Comply with NDU academic integrity and standard of conduct policies.
- b. Students enrolled in NDU programs and courses are afforded certain rights that enhance the educational environment and support learning effectiveness including, but not limited to:

(1) Freedom from discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, age, religion, disability, national origin, marital status, veteran status, political affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity or other non-merit factors.

(2) Freedom from sexual harassment.

(3) Freedom to engage in intellectual discourse and scholarship.

(4) Freedom to submit formal complaints on NDU, its subordinate colleges, faculty, staff, or other students.

c. To pursue a formal complaint, students should submit an NDU Student Formal Complaint Form (See Section 4) to the designated administrator of their respective college or program.

d. Formal written complaints must be submitted within one month of the occurrence of the action or matter in question or in accordance with policies established by School or Center Commandants/Chancellors/Directors.



## APPENDIX A: NDU STUDENT FORMAL COMPLAINT FORM

### Student Complaint/Grievance Application

Authority: National Defense University Programs Instruction

Principal Purpose: Formal submission of complaint/grievance for students

Routine Uses: To provide a record to facilitate personnel management actions and decisions; to serve as a data source for complaint/problem information and resolution efforts.

Disclosure: Disclosure is voluntary. Failure to complete the requested items could result in delayed action and/or an inaccurate/incomplete analysis of the complaint/problem

#### Student Complaint Procedures

Specific references, guidance and procedures for filling a student complaint are described in detail in NDU Instruction 1300.01. All students wishing to file a complaint should review its provisions. Additionally, all students may raise complaints under NDU policy utilizing this form which outlines a three step process for registering a formal complaint. These steps ensure that the appropriate personnel will address the student complaint in a timely manner at the lowest possible level. Nothing in this policy precludes the right to request a meeting with the College or component leadership.

Name

Grade/Rank/Title

School/Component

Academic Year

Seminar

I certify that I met with \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ to attempt to informally resolve my issue.

Faculty Advisor's Signature/Date

Student Signature/Date

Step 1: If the issue cannot be resolved informally, the student has the option to submit a formal written complaint to the appropriate Dean (Faculty/Administration). This form shall be used for the submission of a formal complaint. The appropriate Dean will meet with the student within three working days of receipt of the written complaint. At this point the applicable commandant/chancellor/director will notify the Senior Vice President for Academic affairs (for academic related grievance) or the NDU Chief Operating Officer (for all other categories) that a formal complaint has been registered.

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Nature of Complaint or problem: Please describe what happened. Be as detailed as possible. Describe the incident(s)/behavior(s) and dates of the occurrence(s); the names of individuals involved, witnesses to whom it may have been previously reported. Include any other information relevant to your complaint/problem. Attach additional sheets and or supporting documents as needed.

Requested Remedy/Outcome: What assistance or complaint resolution are you seeking?

Affidavit

I, \_\_\_\_\_, fully understand the statement made by me and certify that the statement is true. I make this formal complaint without threat of punishment and without coercion, unlawful influence, or unlawful inducement.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature/Date