



## NDU INSTRUCTION 1025.06B

### STUDENT COMPLAINT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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**Originating Component:** Office of Academic Affairs

**Effective:** March 29, 2023

**Releasability:** Cleared for public release. Available on the Student Intranet at [Student Complaint Policy and Form \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

**Incorporates and Cancels:** NDU Inst 1025.06 Student Complaint Policy and Procedures, Aug 25, 2017

**Approved by:** James L. Lepse, Ph.D., Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "James L. Lepse", 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 at the university level within a reasonable time frame as well as 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. A complaint is different from a suggestion to improve a process. 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. A complaint is not an appropriate method to appeal grades. The grade appeal process is covered by a separate NDU grade policy that contains procedures to appeal grades. Additionally, 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. GENERAL.** 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 (1-2 months) and that NDU makes appropriate 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 that ensures 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 without fear of retribution. Nothing in this policy prevents a student from discussing their concerns informally with any appropriate NDU faculty, staff, personnel, or other student. Students may appeal any resolution of their complaint through the chain of command or via the Provost, COO, or President's open door policy.

b. The NDU Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment (IR) shall maintain NDU's institutional record of student complaints, tracking their receipt and resolution. The institutional record of student complaints shall be used to facilitate making modifications and improvements to the institution as a result of information obtained in handling student complaints. The NDU IR office will generate reports for the Provost and other senior leaders as noted below.

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 Provost, COO, or component leadership/cognizant authority initially reviewed of the complaint;
4. Date that the Provost, COO, or component leadership determined the complaint to have been resolved and the nature of the resolution;
5. If applicable, explanations or extenuating circumstances worthy of consideration if certain reviews or resolutions might unfairly be viewed as untimely;
6. Any recommended changes to institutional policies or procedures;
7. Date the student was notified of final complaint resolution.

## **SECTION 2: RESPONSIBILITIES**

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

a. The Provost shall publish and disseminate a policy regarding student formal complaints (this document) and shall review all formal complaints. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the Provost may:

(1) analyze the complaint and direct corrective action,

(2) forward to the Deans Council for collective resolution of an institution-wide problem,

(3) forward the complaint to the Chief Operating Officer, college/component leadership, or other competent authority to analyze and implement corrective action, if appropriate.

(4) refer those matters for which the authority to investigate and resolve has been assigned by law or DOD policy to another organization or office (e.g., complaints related to alleged violations of criminal law will be referred the appropriate criminal investigative agency, complaints regarding allegations of reprisal or restriction will be referred to the appropriate Inspector General office, complaints related to Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) or Military Equal Opportunity (MEO) will be referred to the servicing EEO or MEO office, etc.). In addition, complaints involving non-criminal allegations of wrongdoing by general or flag officers, senior executive civilians, and the equivalent will be referred to the Joint Staff Inspector General.

b. While analysis and resolution of a complaint may occur within any of these organizations, the Provost will maintain a central log of student complaints submitted through the NDU Online Complaint Form Portal and shall document their resolution, to include notifying the student of the resolution. Through these actions, the Provost will ensure that student complaints are handled in a fair, orderly, and timely manner to provide the optimal educational and working environment for NDU faculty, academic support personnel, and students.

c. NDU-Academic Affairs shall coordinate with NDU Office of the General Counsel (OGC) on all complaints and help resolve any formal complaints related to academic programs filed through the complaint process. NDU-Academic Affairs should also seek advice from OGC in the event the situation appears to call for disciplinary or other legal processes.

d. NDU-Academic Affairs Office of Institutional Research Planning and Assessment (IR) will maintain a log of formal student complaints in accordance with federal accreditation requirements. The Provost will discuss the resolution of student complaints with the NDU-P and other senior leaders monthly and report formally to the President quarterly.

e. If a student's formal complaint is raised via the Provost's Open Door Policy, assume reporting responsibilities to IR.

### **2.2. VICE PRESIDENT FOR OPERATIONS (VP-COO)/CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER.**

a. When forwarded from the Provost, the Chief Operating Officer will investigate student complaints involving business/life support activities and notify the Provost of their resolution.

### **2.3. DEANS' COUNCIL.**

a. The Deans' Council shall discuss student formal complaints forwarded to them by the Provost as an agenda item no less than quarterly, to include at the completion of the fall and spring semesters to specifically assess the institutional record of student complaints, review the IR annual report as required, ensure that student complaints were 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.

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

a. The Office of the General Counsel (OGC) shall receive notification of all student complaints from IR regardless of avenue for potential resolution, review them for any matters that may require legal advice, and provide recommendations, as appropriate.

b. If a student's formal complaint is raised via the OGC's Open Door Policy, assume reporting responsibilities to IR.

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

a. IR shall retain complaints and resolution for record keeping, trend analysis, and generation of annual reports, while carefully ensuring the security of any personally identifiable information.

b. IR will distribute complaints upon receipt to the Provost to determine routing for action and to OGC for situational awareness.

c. IR shall analyze the complaint logs and reports received and provide an annual report of student complaints to the Provost and NDU Senior Leadership.

d. At a minimum, the 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 to resolution amongst NDU colleges, components, or organizations;
- (6) Any noteworthy details about patterns pertaining to student complaints;
- (7) If applicable, explanations or extenuating circumstances worthy of the leadership's consideration if certain reviews or resolutions might be viewed as untimely;
- (8) Any recommended changes to institutional policies or procedures.

### **2.6 NDU COLLEGES.**

e. Chancellors and Commandants shall inform students of the complaint policy and location of the online student complaint form in documents such as student handbooks, course syllabi, and other published instructions and during other informational events. Chancellors and

Commandants will appoint a member of their staff, normally the Dean of Students, to address informal complaints or students suggestions.

f. If a student's formal complaint is raised via the College's Open Door Policy, assume reporting responsibilities to IR.

g. If presented with an offline formal written complaint, Chancellors and Commandants should attempt to resolve the complaint in a timely manner at the lowest level of organizational authority. College representatives, normally the Dean of Students, will forward complaints to the Academic Affairs POC to log in.

## **2.7 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, or 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. Students should address complaints about a grade using the procedures in the NDU Grade Policy. [Policy on Grades and Grading](#)

d. To pursue a formal complaint, students should submit an NDU Student Formal Complaint Form online (See example in Appendix A).

e. Students should submit formal written complaints in a timely matter to ensure the best and most effective resolution.

f. Students may also seek redress via an office call with their Commandant or Chancellor, the Provost, General Counsel, or the University President via the Open Door Policy.

## APPENDIX A: NDU STUDENT FORMAL COMPLAINT FORM

Students shall submit their complaint online at <https://ndu1.sharepoint.com/sites/ndu-students-portal/SitePages/Home.aspx>. The complaint will be collected by Academic Affairs and routed to the appropriate authority for analysis and resolution. Once adjudicated, the complaint will be used to document the results of the complaint resolution process. Below is a print version of the online form.

# NDU Student Complaint Form

**Principal Purpose:** To provide a systematized process for submitting a complaint for students at NDU.

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

### Demographic Information

1. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Non-binary
- Prefer not to say

2. What is your race / ethnicity? (Select all that apply)

- African American
- Asian
- Caucasian
- Hispanic/Latino
- Native American
- Prefer not to say

Other

Next

\* Required

## Contact Information

3. Enter your name, or enter "Anonymous" if you do not wish to be identified. \*

4. To which organization/school/component/anonymous do you belong? \*

5. How may we contact you? Please enter your email address or "Anonymous" if you do not wish to be contacted. \*

Back

Next

\* Required

## Issue, Attempted Resolution, and Supporting Evidence

6. Description of complaint/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/suggestion. \*

7. Have you spoken to anyone in your organization about this complaint/problem/suggestion? \*

Yes

No

8. Please include to whom you spoke, the outcome of the discussion, and why the response wasn't satisfactory. \*

9. Do you have any documentation you'd like to submit with this complaint? \*

- Yes
- No

10. If you have a file to attach, please do so here. (Non-anonymous question ⓘ) 

 Upload file

File number limit: 1 Single file size limit: 10MB Allowed file types: Word, Excel, PPT, PDF, Image, Video, Audio

Back

Submit