



Department of Nursing

Policy #041

Informal and Formal Complaints

Status:	Originated 2017-11-07 Revised 2024-04-22
Effective:	2024-04-22
Initiated by:	Bylaws, Policies, & Handbooks Committee
WAC / CCNE:	CCNE Standard I-G

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide direction to situations in which students, faculty, and staff in the Heritage University Nursing Department (HUND) wish to resolve an issue unrelated to academics or a more serious claim of wrongdoing.

AUDIENCE

This policy applies to all Heritage University Nursing Department (HUND) students, faculty, and staff.

PLAN

The Department of Nursing strives to provide an environment of mutual respect, cooperation, fair treatment, stewardship of resources, integrity, and quality education and services. Even with this commitment, problems and concerns may arise. At the university level, procedures are available to students and other parties for appealing decisions or policies, addressing concerns, resolving grievances, and dealing with retaliation.

This policy differentiates a complaint from a grievance as follows:

- A complaint is a general expression of dissatisfaction with a situation or the behaviors of another person(s) within the department of nursing – generally a complaint will be able to be managed within the Department of Nursing. Complaints are handled as described below.
- A grievance is a more specific issue related to academics, or a serious claim of wrongdoing that relates to harassment, discrimination, or vilification by a person(s) either within or external to the Department of Nursing, which could also arise from the outcome of complaint proceedings. Grievances are handled:
 - Academic grievances and grade appeals are handled by Nursing Policy #006 Grade Appeal and Academic Grievance, and/or by the Heritage University Academic Grievance Process (see catalog)
 - Non-academic grievances are handled by the Heritage University Code of Conduct and Student Rights and Responsibilities (see catalog)

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

INFORMAL COMPLAINTS

Informal concerns or complaints within the Department of Nursing are addressed in the following general process:

- a) The individual student, faculty, or staff addresses the concern or complaint with the individual student, faculty, or staff related to the concern.
- b) If not resolved, the individual will make an appointment to speak with the Chair of the Department of Nursing. If the Chair determines that the individual did not already do so, the Chair will recommend that the person bringing up the concern or complaint discuss the matter directly with the person(s) involved and seek resolution to the problem.
- c) If the matter remains unresolved for the person bringing up the concern, or complaint, the Chair will work with the individual experiencing the concern or complaint such to continue the process for seeking a resolution to the problem. If the complaint is against the Chair, the Heritage University Provost or designee will serve in this role.
- d) If the matter remains unresolved, the person with the concern or complaint will be referred to the applicable Heritage University policies and procedures.

FORMAL COMPLAINTS

Formal complaints within the Department of Nursing are defined as complaints provided in writing to the Chair of the Department of Nursing after the established informal processes are exhausted and the person believes they have been unfairly treated by or has concerns about Department of Nursing students, faculty, staff, administration, or the department as a whole. Formal complaints must identify the person filing the complaint and their role or relationship with the Department of Nursing and include the complainant's contact information, signature, the date of submission, and as much detail as possible about the concern.

Documentation

Students, faculty, staff, or other constituents can file a formal complaint. The document must state that the individual is filing a formal complaint. A copy of the formal complaint will be provided to named individuals if not provided by the complainant.

Documentation of action/resolution in response to the formal complaint will be according to FERPA Student Data Privacy procedures.

A request to withdraw a formal complaint must be submitted in writing and filed with the original complaint if a print or electronic copy is being retained.

Reporting

The Chair of the Department of Nursing will maintain a summary of the number and type of formal complaints and share relevant information with the Department of Nursing faculty and staff who are charged with review of the issue(s) and with identifying quality improvement activities as appropriate.

Complaints to Accrediting Bodies

Should a consideration be made to file a formal complaint about the program to an accrediting or approving body, the student or other party must follow the criteria established by the agency.

PROFESSIONALISM AND CODES OF CONDUCT

In consideration of concerns or formal complaints, Nursing Policy #009 Professionalism and the following professional codes of ethics and conduct (ANA for faculty, ANA and NSNA for students) will apply as a guide for determination of appropriate conduct of faculty, administration, and nursing students:

- American Nurses Association's *Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements (2015)*
- National Student Nurses' Association *Code of Ethics: Section 3 Code of Academic and Clinical Conduct and Interpretive Statements (2022)*

CITED AND RELATED POLICIES

Cited

- Nursing Policy #006 Grade Appeal and Academic Grievance
- Nursing Policy #009 Professionalism
- Heritage University Academic Grievance Process
- Heritage University Code of Conduct
- Heritage University Student Rights and Responsibilities

Related

- Nursing Policy #033 Student Rights and Responsibilities

POLICY REVIEWERS

Proposed revisions of this policy should be reviewed by:

- 1) Bylaws, Policies, & Handbooks Committee [initiating committee]
- 2) Nursing Faculty Assembly

FORMS

- Heritage University Department of Nursing Formal Complaint Form (attached)

WAC

Washington State Legislature. (2016). WAC 246-840-519. Student requirements in all approved nursing education programs. <https://app.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=246-840-519>

REFERENCES

American Nurses Association. (2015). *Code of ethics for nurses with interpretive statements*. American Nurses Association. Retrieved from <http://www.nursingworld.org/Code-of-Ethics>

National Student Nurses Association. (2022). *Code of Ethics*. Retrieved from <https://www.dropbox.com/s/a229ong58d5jx4p/Code%20of%20Ethics.pdf?dl=0>

Nursing Director Signature:



**Heritage University Department of Nursing
Formal Complaint Form**

Name: _____

Date: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Phone (day) : _____

Relationship to HU Department of Nursing:

- Student Faculty
 Non-student Staff

Type of complaint:

- Academic
 Non-academic

Describe the nature of your complaint. Be factual. Include names, dates, and other specific information. Use reverse side if necessary.

Describe actions you have taken to resolve the issue, e.g., discussed concern with instructor. Use reverse side if necessary.

The information given in this formal complaint is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. Signing this form confirms that a formal complaint has been filed with the Heritage University Department of Nursing.

Student signature: _____ Date: _____

Received by the Chair of the Department of Nursing by: _____ (Print Name)

Signed: _____ Date Received: _____