

Grievance Policy

Notre Dame Seminary commits itself to guaranteeing students the right to quality intellectual and spiritual formation and aims to be responsive to student concerns. In order to best serve the students and to protect personal dignity, Notre Dame Seminary follows procedures for resolving student complaints. If there is a grievance regarding grades, the procedures indicated under “Appealing Grades” are to be followed. For all other grievances, NDS recognizes the following procedures for resolving student complaints.

- ◇ Informally, students have three routes through which complaints may be articulated and reconciliation sought:
 - Students are first encouraged to address complaints with the person to whom they are directing the grievance, observing the Christian understanding of “subsidiarity.”
 - If the student does not find satisfaction with the response of the person against whom there is a grievance, the student can seek the counsel of the Rector-President who has ultimate responsibility over the formation of the students.
 - In addition, students may submit complaints by way of the Student or Seminarian Association, especially to its president representative and class committee representatives who serve on administrative committees including Academic Affairs, Social Life, Faith Life, Pastoral Education, and Library. These committees in turn discuss the concern(s) and, if it is within their capacity, resolve them. If it is beyond the capacity of the committee, it is forwarded to the Faculty Council, the Priestly Formation Board, or the Administrative Board, depending on the nature of the grievance which discusses the matter and either resolves it or forwards it to the Rector-President. After consultation, the Rector will make the final decision regarding the grievance.

If these methods do not seem appropriate due to the nature of the grievance, or if these methods should fail to provide adequate resolution, a student may have recourse to a more formal grievance procedure. Notre Dame Seminary strongly encourages reconciliation through the informal means, in the context of mutual respect; however, when necessary, the student may pursue the following procedure.

- ◇ A student wishing to make a formal complaint about any aspect of the institution should file a grievance petition with the Vice-Rector. (If the grievance concerns the Vice-Rector, a Grievance Officer shall be appointed by the Rector-President.) Such a statement should include a reference to some standard that Notre Dame Seminary is pledged to uphold and that has been allegedly violated, as well as details about the alleged violation.

- These standards can be found in the *Program for Priestly Formation* and the *Notre Dame Seminary Policies and Catalog*. A student needing assistance in locating references should contact the Vice-Rector. The Vice-Rector will assist the student in following a proper process of redress, as outlined in the institution's handbook and manuals.
- Excluded from the grievance process are all decisions concerning continuation of formation and/or promotion to ordination.
- The petition must be made within one year of the alleged grievance.
- If the Vice-Rector or Grievance Officer deems the allegations to have merit, a Grievance Board will be assembled to hear said grievance. This Board will be composed of the Grievance Officer and two members of the seminary community to be named by the Rector-President; one of these is appointed from a list of three drawn up by the complainant; the other is appointed from a list of three drawn up by the defendant.
- Within two weeks, this Board shall hold a hearing and deliver written recommendations to the Rector-President, who will render the final decision and disseminate copies of the Board's report to the parties involved.

The dignity and privacy of all parties shall be respected throughout this process. The Grievance Petition can be found online under the Registrar's page, click on NDS Policies. Students should submit this completed form to the Vice-Rector when placing a formal complaint. A log of all formal complaints will be kept in the office of the Vice-Rector.