The Opportunity Development/Diversity Education Planning Internal Complaint Process: Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is a complaint?

A: The Opportunity Development and Diversity Education Planning Office (ODDEP) considers a Complaint to be an allegation (charge of wrong doing) involving discrimination, hostile work environment (discriminative), sexual harassment, or protected activity retaliation that is filed by an employee, student, applicant, vendor, contractor, and/or a group thereof relative to employment or admission involving race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, sexual orientation, veteran status or disability. The complaint may arise from a specific personnel action, such as employment, promotion, work assignment, selection for training, disciplinary action, or separation, or it may relate to existing conditions in an organization.

Q. Where do I go if I have a complaint?

- STAFF, FACULTY, VENDORS, CONTRACTORS, & APPLICANTS

  A: All staff, faculty, applicants and vendors should file their complaints with the ODDEP Office.

- STUDENTS

  A: Students who have a complaint against Georgia State University staff, faculty, vendors, visitors or contractors should file their complaint with the ODDEP Office.

  A: Students who have a complaint against another student should file their complaint with the Georgia State University Dean of Students Office.

The ***ODDEP Office*** is located on on-campus in the 10 Park Place Building on the 4th Floor in Suite 460. Complainants can call the ODDEP Office at (404) 413-2567 for immediate consultation and assistance. Information about the Georgia State University Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Policy can also be found on the internet at: http://www.gsu.edu/oddep/30760.html. To access to ODDEP's Complaint Form, go to: http://www.gsu.edu/images/ODDEP/employeeorstudentcomplaintquestionnaire.pdf

The ***Dean of Students Office*** (DSO) is located in the Georgia State University Student Center on the 3rd floor in Suite 300. For more information about the Dean of Students Office, please call their main office number at (404) 413-2561.

The Opportunity Development/Diversity Education Planning Internal Complaint Process: Frequently Asked Questions

Q. How long will I have to complete and turn in my complaint form?

A: Complainants have 15 calendar days to complete and turn in their complaint form.

Q. What happens during the complaint process?

A: As every complaint is unique, the following is a typical example of the steps of a complaint in progress:

STEP 1). ODDEP receives notification of the complaint(s) via walk-in, email, referral, or telephone call.

STEP 2). ODDEP completes an intake form with the Complainant(s). During the intake interview, ODDEP determines the most appropriate office (i.e. Employee Relations, Ombudsperson, Dean of Students, GSU Police, Faculty and Staff Assistance, etc.) to address the allegations. In some cases, more than one office will need to address the Complainant's allegations simultaneously.

STEP 3). If appropriate, ODDEP will start a formal review or investigation by requesting the Respondent(s) answer the allegation(s) made by the Complainant(s). ODDEP will also start measures to gather additional documentation from other relevant sources as deemed appropriate.

STEP 4). ODDEP will determine if further information is needed from either party or if there is a need to interview witnesses.

STEP 5). ODDEP will analyze the facts gathered and issue a determination.

NOTE: In the above example, the complaint process is described in a generic and simplistic manner. Additional steps often occur due to the complexities associated with any investigation.

Q. How long does the complaint process take?

A: In general, ODDEP's goal is to process a complaint from the intake phase to the end of the investigation within 60 days. As suggested above, the thorough investigation of a complaint can take many twist and turns. As such, the processing of any complaint is completed in a time frame that is responsible and appropriate to the complexities of that specific investigation.

The Opportunity Development/Diversity Education Planning Internal Complaint Process: Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Can I be retaliated against for filing a complaint?

A: Retaliation against the Complainant(s) is prohibited by University policy and federal/state laws. However, retaliation may still occur. If the Complainant(s) believe they are being or have been retaliated against for filing a complaint, they have every right to file new a separate complaint alleging retaliation based on the participation in the original complaint or protected activity. Examples of protected activity include filing a claim of discrimination and participating as a witness in a discrimination investigation.

Q. How will I know when the complaint process is over?

A: The complaint process ends when ODDEP distributes a determination of findings which consists of a Final Investigative Summary and Determination Letters. The Complainant(s) and the Respondent(s) will receive Determination Letters indicating whether or not the facts were with or without merit and whether or not the facts warranted a cause, no-cause, or inconclusive finding. A cause finding translates into a finding with merit and in favor of the Complainant's allegations. A no-cause finding translates into a finding without merit and not in favor of the Complainant(s) allegations. An inconclusive finding translates into a finding where the facts that were gathered during the investigation failed to prove or disprove the Complainant(s) allegations.

Q. When the complaint is over, what documents can I have a copy of?

A: Once the complaint process is over, documents associated with the complaint are accessible via the State of Georgia's Open Records Act. For more information on how to obtain copies of these documents, contact the Georgia State University Legal Affairs Office located on-campus at 10 Park Place, 5th floor, Suite 510. The contact number for Legal Affairs is (404) 413-0500.