

Regulation for handling students' complaints

According to the Decision of the Senate of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki No. 78656/23.06.2023 "Approval of the Regulation of Postgraduate Studies Programs of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (A.P.Th.)" (Government Gazette 4084/B-23.06.2023) the following:

Article 22 – Graduate Student Complaint Management Mechanism

Postgraduate students can express any complaint or objection related to their studies and for this the complaints management mechanism is applied to each Postgraduate Study Program (P.G.P) separately. The aim is to upgrade the quality of the operation of the P.G.P. with full respect for all those involved in the educational and research process, but more for its recipients to whom it must be accountable. This specific procedure concerns all complaints/objections related to the quality of the educational, research and administrative services provided by the School.

A Complaint is defined as the display of dissatisfaction (oral or written) on behalf of the student of the School, regarding his/her expectations regarding the quality level of the services provided.

An Objection is defined as any written and official expression of doubt or objection on behalf of a student to the decision body of the School, regarding his/her submitted request.

The complaints handling policy is aimed at active graduate students and aims to resolve a dispute or problem, such as:

- i. Disagreement regarding his/her studies
- ii. Misconduct by a member of academic or administrative staff
- iii. Insufficient information to students by a member of the academic or administrative staff.

Postgraduate students during their studies have both rights and obligations, as described in the Operating Regulations of the P.G.P.. They should turn to their Academic Advisor for guidance and support in matters that are related to their studies. Students may submit a verbal or written complaint when an action or decision by a member of the School or other decision body is inconsistent with:

- his/her study and attendance regulations,
- the Code of Ethics and/or the agreed procedures, concerning academic teaching and research,

- the rational use of facilities and infrastructure,
- the protection of intellectual property and copyright,
- appropriate work behavior,
- equal treatment and equality,
- the fight against harassment and sexual harassment.

Postgraduate students can express any request or objection related to their studies, as follows:

- For matters of academic content related to studies, postgraduate students can contact the Program's Academic Advisor.

- For issues that require mediation between graduate students and professors or administrative services of the Institution, the compliance to legality in the context of academic freedom, the treatment of maladministration phenomena and the safeguarding of the proper operation of the Institution, students can turn to the Student Advocate of the Institution. The Student Advocate ensures the fulfillment of legality and academic ethics and order in the context of academic freedom and deals with phenomena of mismanagement in order to preserve the proper operation of the Institution. The Advocate does not intervene in issues related to teaching or grading in exams, but only examines phenomena of arbitrariness or violation of ethical rules during the conduct of exams (written or oral).

- For violations of the rules of ethics and quality of studies, students can refer to the Institution's Ethics Committee.

- For issues related to gender discrimination, students can contact the Gender Equality Committee.

- For issues related to the protection of personal data, students can contact the Data Protection Officer (DPO).

The complaints/objections management mechanism may include the following stages:

Stage 1: Direct Resolution

HEARING: examination of the graduate student's complaint by a member of the academic staff of P.G.P. The postgraduate student reports the complaint to a member of the academic staff (to the responsible professor or the course instructor or the academic advisor) or to a member of the administrative staff (to the head of the secretariat), depending on the nature

of the complaint. The member of the School examines the complaint in collaboration with the student and proposes a solution. In cases where, after the completion of the direct resolution process, the student insists on the resolution proposal or the situation is still problematic, then he/she can submit his/her complaint in writing to his Academic Advisor within 30 days from the day the problem appeared.

Stage 2: Formal Resolution

MEDIATION: Examination of the graduate student's complaint by his Academic Advisor. The Academic Advisor examines the complaint in collaboration with the graduate student and proposes a solution. In this direction, the Academic Advisor, at his/her discretion, also communicates with other members of the School in order to request their assistance, as it is their duty to solve the problem.

ADMINISTRATIVE INVESTIGATION: Examination of the student's complaint by the School Chair. In cases where, after the completion of the mediation process of the Academic Advisor, the student insists on the solution or the situation is still problematic, then he can submit his complaint in writing to the Secretariat, addressed to the Head of the School, using the specific Submission Form of Complaints & Objections which mentions, among other things, the hearing and mediation process that was followed. The Head of the School takes the necessary actions to examine/investigate the problem. It is possible, depending on the nature of the problem, to call the student to a hearing and request the assistance of any member or body of the School or the Institution or refer the complaint to the School Assembly. In cases where the Head refers the complaint to the School Assembly, the decision is final and the student cannot submit an objection and make use of the third stage of this process. Within a reasonable period of time and depending on the nature of the problem and the urgency of the matter, the student is duly informed of the outcome of the actions taken and the decisions taken regarding the complaint.

Stage 3: Appeal and Final Review of the Problem/Complaint

OBJECTION: Assessment of an objection by the School Assembly. In cases where, after the completion of the administrative review process of the complaint, the graduate student insists on the solution or the situation is still problematic, then he can resubmit his/her complaint in writing to the School Assembly or the Study Program Committee, through a protocol, using

the specific Complaints & Objections Form which mentions, among other things, the hearing, mediation, and administrative review process followed.

In cases where the Head of the School has already requested the assistance of the School Assembly at the Administrative Investigation stage, the student may not submit an objection and make use of this step of the procedure. The decision to be taken by the School Assembly is final.

"Privacy

The P.G.P. files and manages the information concerning the personal data of the students in accordance with the current legislation. It is pointed out that all the above procedures must follow the Personal Data Protection Regulation of AUTH and operate in accordance with it in order to fully ensure the protection of graduate students."

The above Student Complaints and Objections Management Regulation is complementary to the P.G.P. Student Complaints and Objections Management Regulation of the "Communications Networks and Systems Security" Programme (School Assembly no. 443/20-12-2023) which is listed and posted on the website of the P.G.P. GREEK and ENGLISH (<https://cnss.csd.auth.gr/studies/κανονισμοί/διαχείριση-παραπόνων-ενστάσεων/>)

Regulation for handling students' complaints

Contents

1. Introduction	5
2. Resolution Procedures	5
2.1 Informal Resolution	5
2.2 Formal Resolution	6

1. Introduction

This regulation refers to the procedure of handling complaints or arising issues that may be submitted by the postgraduate program students regarding the educational, administrative and/or other services provided to them.

A complaint or arising issue is defined as a concern or an issue that causes dissatisfaction regarding the quality of services provided by the program and whose resolution procedure is not covered by other regulations and processes.

It is recognized that such complaints or issues may arise occasionally, and they should be addressed appropriately. The postgraduate program aims to create an environment in which: (i) making complaints is completely acceptable, (ii) the person making the complaint knows that there will be no negative consequence for making it, (iii) complaints or arising issues will receive the necessary consideration, (iv) if any personnel of the program is involved, he/she will have an opportunity to respond, and (v) all parties involved will be informed in a timely manner regarding the handling of the complaint or arising issue after the process is completed.

The target of the regulation is to provide a systematic and consistent framework that promotes a fair and timely resolution of any issues raised by the students. This systematic approach promotes accountability and at the same time helps to restore problematic services, if required, to avoid the recurrence of identified problems, and to continuously improve the quality of studies and the learning experience.

2. Resolution Procedures

Two main categories of procedures could be followed to resolve a complaint or arising issue : (i) informal resolution and (ii) formal complaint filing.

2.1 Informal Resolution

The program encourages students to resolve any complaints or issues directly through the informal channel and directly with the faculty or staff member(s) involved in the matter which caused the dissatisfaction. In this way, it is possible to resolve any error, misunderstanding or omission in the shortest possible time.

If the student is not satisfied with the informal resolution process or does not know who to contact or has reservations about directly contacting the person involved, he/she may contact either the Director of the program or his/her academic advisor, to receive support and guidance, with the aim of informally resolving the issue.

2.2 Formal Resolution

If the student is not satisfied with the informal resolution outcome or considers that the nature of the complaint requires the initiation of a formal process, he/she may submit his/her complaint by filing in the [form](#).

Case 1. The complaint will be evaluated by the Director of the program, who will decide whether: (1) the issue can be resolved through the informal resolution process, if this has not already been attempted, (2) the issue should be examined by the Postgraduate Studies Coordination Committee (CC) of the program, (3) the issue should be referred to the University Student Advocate, (4) the complaint is trivial, abusive or malicious, (5) the same or similar issue has already been considered and no further action is needed.

Case 1. The complaint will be evaluated by the Director of the program, who will decide whether: (1) the issue can be resolved through the informal resolution process, if this has not already been attempted, (2) the issue should be examined by the Postgraduate Studies Coordination Committee (SC) of the program, (3) the issue should be referred to the University Student Advocate, (4) the complaint is trivial, abusive, or malicious, (5) the same or similar issue has already been considered and no further action is needed.

Case 2. The program director immediately sets up a three-member committee for the examination of the complaint, in which both faculty and staff members may participate, depending on the nature of the complaint. The committee, after investigating the issue, submits a relevant report to the CC of the program. The committee may seek more information regarding the issue under consideration from the student as well as from the member(s) to whom the submitted complaint concerns, as well as from other members of the program, to draw up the relevant report. The CC of the program will examine the recommendation of the committee and decide on the issue, which may also be the referral of the complaint to the Student's Advocate. The decision is final. The student who has submitted the complaint and any involved members of the program will be informed of the decision and the process is considered complete.

Case 3. The student is referred to the University Student Advocate (<https://www.auth.gr/synigoros-tou-foititi/>) and the process is considered complete. The program, through the CC, must consider any comments and recommendations of the Student's Advocate and act accordingly.

Case 4. A complaint/objection is considered trivial, abusive, or malicious when (a) it has elements of persistence and/or harassment, (b) it is repeated, (c) it makes unrealistic demands, (d) it is made with the intent to harass or annoy, (e) it is made in bad faith, (f) it is based in untrue facts, (g) requires compensation lacking serious drive or value. In this case, the Director of the program rejects the complaint by informing the student. The decision is final, and the process is considered completed.

In any case, the process of handling in the student's complaint must be completed within 15 working days from the date of submission of the form.

The form for submitting complaints and objections:

Φόρμα Παραπόνων & Ενστάσεων

Όνομα^{*}:

Επώνυμο^{*}:

ΑΕΜ^{*}:

Διεύθυνση Επικοινωνίας:

Διεύθυνση ηλεκτρονικού ταχυδρομείου (email)^{*}:

Τηλ. επικοινωνίας^{*} : |

Περιγραφή θέματος^{*}:

Ημερομηνία:

Υπογραφή

(Όνοματεπώνυμο Ολογράφως)

^{*} Όλα τα πεδία με αστερίσκο (*) είναι υποχρεωτικά για συμπλήρωση