

Management of Complaints and Objections from Students at the University of Crete

A. Introduction

In the context of the student-centred approach that characterizes the University of Crete, every effort is made to continuously improve its services and maintain excellent relations between its members. Considering that during the course of study it is possible that objections and complaints may arise from students, the University of Crete encourages them to address directly the person or service concerned, with the aim of resolving any problems through fruitful dialogue. Alternatively, students may formally report their complaint to the relevant department/service.

The complaints handling procedure applies to all complaints relating to the quality of the educational and administrative services provided by the University.

Article 1 Definitions

1. Complaint: the expression of dissatisfaction on the part of the student, due to the fact that his/her expectations regarding the level of quality of the services provided have been disappointed.
2. Objection the process of expressing objections or reservations on the part of a student regarding the pending or even problematic resolution of a topic/problem of concern. This procedure should not be confused with the objection (appeal under Article 24 of Law 2690/1999) which is defined by law.
3. The objection is either lodged after the complaint or directly (see Article 6 below).

Article 2 Purpose

The Complaints Management Policy is addressed to active students of the University of Crete of all levels of study and aims to resolve any disagreement or problem in the most appropriate way and to ensure the smooth operation of the Institution in matters such as:

- i. Disagreement on matters of study, attendance and service provision.
- ii. Inappropriate behavior by a member of academic or administrative staff.
- iii. Inadequate guidance of students by a member of academic or administrative staff.
- iv. Deliberate or negligent failure on the part of a member of the teaching and teaching assistants (faculty, teaching assistants, teaching assistants, academic fellows, etc.) to fulfil their academic obligations towards the student.

Article 3 Scope of application

Students are encouraged to study the regulations and the general rules of the University in order to know their rights and obligations. Students may submit a verbal and/or written complaint when an action or decision by a member of the University of Crete is not in accordance with:

- a. The regulations of study and attendance, the regulations for the operation of services, the approved decisions of the Senate regarding student welfare issues, the contractual obligations for services provided by a contractor.
- b. The Codes of Conduct in accordance with the institutional framework of the Foundation's operation
- c. The principles of Academic Teaching and Research
- d. The proper use of facilities and infrastructure
- e. The protection of intellectual property and copyright
- f. The protection of personal data
- g. appropriate work behavior
- h. The principles of gender equality and the principles of combating discrimination, bullying, harassment and sexual harassment.

Article 4 Management of complaints

1. In any case, filing a complaint is not a reflexive response to any unmet request of a student. Good-natured discussion and a willingness to resolve a problem interpersonally is a basic academic strategy and should be chosen before the problem acquires the potential rigidity of a grievance.
2. If a complaint is finally submitted, the student should submit it anonymously within 30 days from the day the problem occurs, in writing or by e-mail, to the competent institution/service, using his/her institutional mail. The contact details of each competent institution/service are posted on the respective website of the University of Crete.
3. The members of the academic and administrative services of the Institution or the competent bodies involved in the Complaints Management process shall handle the procedure in terms of confidentiality, transparency, objectivity and respect for the personal data of the parties concerned. The obligation of confidentiality shall extend to the content of consultations necessary for the assessment of the data and the taking of a decision. The University of Crete treats personal data protection and security issues with seriousness and sensitivity in accordance with the provisions of the 2016/679 General Data Protection Regulation.
4. In each Step of the Complaints Management the complainant has the option to address one or more of the competent bodies requesting parallel action to resolve the case.

Article 5 Complaints management procedure

The steps followed in the event of a complaint are detailed below and summarized in the Flowchart, which shall form an integral part of these Rules

1. **APPROACH:** The student can meet directly with the member of the academic community with whom he/she has the problem. Alternatively, he/she may contact the faculty advisor seeking advice and guidance on how to resolve the problem. Similarly, the student may meet directly with the relevant departmental officer. At the end of the Hearing process, if the teacher advisor is involved, the student informs him/her of the successful or unsuccessful outcome of the process. If the outcome is successful, it is recorded by the advisor and reported to the supervisors only if requested and under conditions of confidentiality and anonymity, for use in statistical analyses.
2. In cases where the student does not wish to opt for the hearing procedure or if, after the completion of the direct resolution procedure, the student still objects to the way of resolution or the situation is still problematic, then he/she may submit his/her complaint to the appropriate competent institution/service requesting mediation for the resolution of the case.
The student may contact the competent institution to take over the case. The competent bodies are:
 1. The Student Advocate
 2. The Gender Equality Committee
 3. The Data Protection Officer(s)
 4. The Ethics Committee
3. The representative of the competent institution mediates with the persons or competent institutions/agencies that could resolve the case, always with the consent of the complainant. If the competent body chosen is not competent to deal with the matter, it must inform the person who approached it. The contact details of each competent body are posted on the relevant link on the University's website.
At the end of the resolution process, the student informs the Competent Body of the successful or unsuccessful outcome of the process. If the outcome is successful, it shall be recorded by the person in charge of the competent institution and reported to the higher authorities only if requested and under conditions of confidentiality and anonymity, for use in statistical analyses.
4. If the problem is not resolved in accordance with par. 2 and 3 of this Article, then, if the complainant so wishes, the

representative of the competent institution may represent the complainant in the procedures provided for in the following Article.

Article 6 Objections procedure

1. In cases where, after the completion of the procedure referred to in par. 2 and 3 of the previous article for the resolution of the problem-complaint, the student objects to the resolution or the situation is still problematic, then he/she may submit his/her complaint in writing to the competent administrative bodies of the PC.
2. The competent bodies are the General Directorate, the Department Chair, the Dean and the Rector and the Rectoral Authorities.
3. The objection must be submitted by confidential protocol using the specific COMPLAINT OR OBJECTION FORM (see ANNEX).
4. The procedure of this article may be chosen at the outset if the student considers that the matter concerning him/her will not be resolved by following the procedure of the previous article.
5. The procedure of this article does not apply in cases of a complaint by a student of all cycles of study, for which at this stage the assistance of the Departmental Assembly/Curriculum Committee has been requested. At the end of the resolution process, the student shall inform the Competent Body of the successful or unsuccessful outcome of the process. If the outcome is successful, it is recorded by the person in charge of the competent institution and reported to the higher authorities only if requested and under conditions of confidentiality and anonymity, for use in statistical analyses.

ANNEX:



FORM FOR LODGING COMPLAINTS/OBJECTIONS

To:

Protocol Number:.....

NAME (required field)::

Student Registration Number:.....

Department

Telephone/mobile phone:

Institutional E-mail (required field):

Subject

Complaint:

Please state briefly and clearly the problem you have encountered or your complaint about the services offered (educational, administrative, etc.).

The University of Crete informs you that it collects and processes the personal data you have provided, namely: first and last name, registration number, department, telephone number, institutional email address and description of the incident. The collection and processing of this data was solely for the purpose of investigating your complaint.

The collection and processing of your data (simple) is based on article 6 par. 1 case (e) and for special categories of personal data (sensitive data) Article 9 para. 2 case (g) of the General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 (EU) in conjunction with Article 33 of Law 4589/2019. Your personal data will remain at the disposal of the University of Crete for as long as required for the investigation of your case until the completion of the legal procedures and then become anonymous.

Members involved in the handling of complaints have a duty of confidentiality in respect of the information they become aware of in the context of investigating and handling complaints.

The University of Crete may further process your personal data for archiving or research/statistical purposes, in compliance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 (EU) in accordance with Article 86 of the General Data Protection Regulation.

You have the right to report to the Personal Data Protection Authority at the following address www.dpa.gr.

The University of Crete has appointed a Data Protection Officer who can be contacted at dpo@uoc.gr".

☐ ☐ I agree and accept the terms and conditions

☐ ☐ Further documents on the subject are attached.

Rethymnon/Heraklion,