REGULATION

OPERATION OF THE STUDENT COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS MANAGEMENT MECHANISM
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

(Session of the School of Medicine Assembly No. 13/31-1-2023)

In the context of strengthening a student-centered educational process, as well as upholding the principles of transparency and accountability, the "Complaint Management Procedure" for postgraduate students of the School of Medicine of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (A.U.Th.) has been adopted.

This procedure concerns all complaints related to the quality of the educational services provided by the postgraduate programs (MScs) of the School of Medicine.

The Complaint Management Procedure is implemented as follows:

For the recording of complaints and appeals of postgraduate students, a "Complaint Submission Form" is available in both printed and electronic form, which the student must complete (attached at the end).

The Responsible Officer, after examining the complaint, undertakes all necessary actions and informs the governing bodies of the specific postgraduate program concerned.

The **Complaint Officer** is a member of the academic staff of the postgraduate program and is appointed at the beginning of the academic year for a two-year term, following a proposal by the Coordinating Committee and approval by the Assembly/Program's Governing Board (E.P.S.).

The Complaint Officer may propose solutions to academic, educational, or administrative issues that arise between students and instructors, or among students.

For complaints concerning academic procedures, students may first contact the appointed Complaint Officer, and subsequently the Director of the postgraduate program.

The student may initially approach the Complaint Officer to discuss the issue of concern.

If the problem cannot be resolved by the Complaint Officer, the Officer refers the matter to the Coordinating Committee (S.E.) or the Governing Board (E.P.S.) of the postgraduate program or interdepartmental postgraduate program (ΔΠΜΣ).

The Complaint Officer handles all matters confidentially and, after the resolution of the student's issue, archives any information containing personal data -such as contact details, grade records, or other personal information- in accordance with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

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OPERATION OF THE STUDENT COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS MANAGEMENT MECHANISM

ARISTOTLE UNIVERSITY OF THESSALONIKI (A.U.Th.)

(Decision of the Senate of A.U.Th. No. 78656/23.06.2023 – Government Gazette 4084/B-23.06.2023)

According to the Decision of the Senate of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki No. 78656/23.06.2023, titled

"Approval of the Regulation for Postgraduate Study Programs of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (A.U.Th.)"

(Government Gazette 4084/B-23.06.2023), the following provisions apply:

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Article 22 – Mechanism for Handling Postgraduate Student Complaints

Postgraduate students may express any complaint or appeal related to their studies. For this purpose, each Postgraduate Program (MSc/PhD) applies its own **complaint management mechanism**.

The goal is to ensure the qualitative improvement of the program's operation, with full respect for all those involved in the educational and research process—especially the students, who are its primary beneficiaries and to whom the institution is accountable.

This procedure covers all complaints and appeals concerning the quality of the educational, research, and administrative services provided by the Department.

A **Complaint** is defined as the expression of dissatisfaction (verbal or written) by a student of the Department, due to unmet expectations regarding the quality of the services provided.

An **Appeal** is defined as any written and official expression of doubt or objection by the student regarding a decision made by the Department's competent body on their submitted request.

The complaint management policy applies to active postgraduate students and aims to resolve disagreements or problems such as:

- Disagreements concerning studies and attendance,
- Inappropriate behavior by a member of the academic or administrative staff,
- Inadequate communication or information provided by members of the postgraduate program.

Postgraduate students have both rights and obligations during their studies, as described in the program's regulations.

They are also required to contact their **Academic Advisor** for guidance and support on matters concerning their studies and attendance.

Students may submit a verbal or written complaint when an action or decision by a member of the Department or a collective body does not comply with:

- The regulations on studies and attendance,
- The **Code of Ethics** and the prescribed procedures related to teaching and research,
- The proper and rational use of facilities and infrastructure,
- The protection of intellectual property and copyright,
- Appropriate professional conduct,
- Principles of **equal treatment and equality**,
- The **prevention of harassment and sexual harassment**.

Postgraduate students may express any request or appeal related to their studies as follows:

- **Academic issues** related to studies:
  Students may contact the **Academic Advisor** of the program.
- **Matters requiring mediation** between postgraduate students and professors or administrative services, ensuring legality within the framework of academic freedom, addressing mismanagement, and safeguarding the proper functioning of the institution:
  Students may contact the **Student Ombudsperson** of the university.
  The Ombudsperson ensures compliance with legality, academic ethics, and order within the framework of academic freedom, and addresses incidents of mismanagement in order to preserve the smooth operation of the university.
  The Ombudsperson does **not intervene** in substantive issues of teaching or grading in examinations but examines only cases of arbitrariness or violations of ethical rules during exams (written or oral).
- **Violations of codes of ethics and quality of studies:**
  Students may contact the **Ethics Committee** of the institution.
- **Issues of gender discrimination:**
  Students may contact the **Gender Equality Committee**.
- **Issues concerning the protection of personal data:**
  Students may contact the **Data Protection Officer (DPO)**.

The complaint/appeal management mechanism may include the following stages:

Stage 1: Direct Resolution

Hearing: Examination of the postgraduate student's complaint by a faculty member of the postgraduate program.

The student reports the complaint to a faculty member (the course instructor or academic advisor) or to administrative staff (e.g., the head of the secretariat), depending on the nature of the issue.

The staff member reviews the complaint together with the student and proposes a solution.

If, after this direct resolution process, the student disagrees with the proposed solution or the problem persists, they may submit their complaint **in writing** to their **Academic Advisor** within **30 days** from the occurrence of the issue.

Stage 2: Formal Resolution

Mediation: Examination of the student's complaint by their Academic Advisor.

The Academic Advisor reviews the complaint in cooperation with the student and proposes a solution.

If necessary, the Academic Advisor may contact other department members for assistance in resolving the issue, as required by their duties.

Administrative Review: Examination of the student's complaint by the **Chair of the Department**.
If, after mediation, the student is still dissatisfied or the issue remains unresolved, they may submit their written complaint to the **Department Secretariat**, addressed to the Chair, using the official **Complaint & Appeal Submission Form**, which includes information on the hearing and mediation procedures already followed.

The Chair of the Department then takes the necessary actions to investigate the matter. Depending on the nature of the issue, the Chair may:

- Invite the student for a hearing,
- Request assistance from other members or bodies of the Department or University, or
- Refer the complaint to the **Department Assembly**.

If the Chair refers the complaint to the Department Assembly, **its decision is final**, and the student may not proceed to the third stage (appeal).

Within a reasonable timeframe -depending on the urgency and nature of the issue- the student is duly informed of the outcome and decisions taken regarding their complaint.

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

Appeal: Examination of the appeal by the **Department Assembly**.

If, after the administrative review, the postgraduate student remains dissatisfied or the problem persists, they may resubmit their complaint **in writing** to the Department Assembly or the **Program Committee**, through the official protocol, using the same

Complaint & Appeal Submission Form, which documents the previous hearing, mediation, and administrative review stages.

If the Chair of the Department has already sought the Department Assembly's assistance during the administrative review stage, the student **cannot** file another appeal or use this third stage.

The **decision made by the Department Assembly is final.**

Personal Data

The Postgraduate Program archives and manages all information containing students' personal data in accordance with current legislation.

It is emphasized that all the above procedures must comply with the **A.U.Th. Data Protection Regulation** and operate in accordance with it to fully ensure the protection of postgraduate students.

Note:

The terms "student," "students," "professor," and "professors" are used in a gender-inclusive manner and refer to **all genders**.