

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION AND PROCESSING OF THE STUDENTS' APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS

CHAPTER I GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. Guidelines for Submission and Processing of the Students' Appeals and Complaints (hereinafter – Guidelines) regulate the procedure for submission and processing of the appeals and complaints of the students and unclassified students (hereinafter – Student) of the first, second and third cycle, integrated and professional studies of Kaunas University of technology (hereinafter – University) in as much as it is not regulated by other internal legislation.

2. Guidelines are prepared in accordance with the Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania, the University's Statute and regulations for doctoral studies of scientific fields.

3. Appeal is Student's written reasoned request to analyse a written decision with regards to the Student made by the University's employee, commission or other body functioning at the University, when making of such decision could allegedly violate academic ethics, procedures and/or include technical errors.

4. Complaint is Student's written reasoned request to examine actions or omissions of the University's employee, other Student, department, commission or other body functioning at the University, when such actions or omissions allegedly cause violation of the Student's rights and legitimate interests.

5. Appeals and complaints are submitted and processed, and decisions are made within the terms specified in the Guidelines.

6. Appeals and complaints are submitted in Lithuanian or English languages.

7. Board of Appeals and Commission for Handling of Complaints (hereinafter referred to as Commission and collectively referred to as Commissions) are temporary commissions assembled by the order/decreed of the University's Rector, Vice-Rector or first level manager after receipt of the Student's appeal or complaint.

8. Head of the first level department (Dean, director) composes:

8.1. Board of Appeals, when an appeal is submitted regarding a written decision made regarding the Student at his/her subordinate academic department;

8.2. Commission for Handling of Complaints, when submitted complaint is related to the area administered by his/her subordinate academic department.

9. Vice-Rector or first level manager (director) of subordinate non-academic departments, assembles:

9.1. Board of Appeals, when an appeal is submitted regarding a written decision made regarding the Student at his/her subordinate department;

9.2. Commission for Handling of Complaints, when submitted complaint is related to the area administered by his/her subordinate department.

10. Rector assembles the Commission:

10.1. For processing of an appeal or complaint when an appeal is related to the decision made by the Vice-Rector or other first level manager, or complaint is submitted regarding his/her actions or omissions;

10.2. When processing of an appeal or complaint is responsibility of several departments, include the areas administered by several first level departments. Representatives of various departments are included in the joint Commission.

11. Commission follows these Guidelines and other regulating legislation of the University.

12. Commission members and other employees who have access to an appeal or complaint do not disclose confidential information, unless it is necessary for the processing of an appeal or complaint and decision making.

CHAPTER II

BASIS FOR SUBMISSION OF APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS

13. Appeal is submitted regarding the written decision made in regards to the Student, when making of such decision (for example, during the Student's assessment for study results and/or evaluation of the achieved study results, learning outcomes, during the attestation of doctoral students or in other cases) could allegedly violate academic ethics, procedures and/or include technical errors.

14. Appeal cannot be submitted aiming for repeated evaluation of the performed tasks or aiming for permission to repeat an assessment when the Student considers that his/her evaluation is incorrect, or aiming for repeated processing of the made decision without providing any arguments related to the conditions specified in paragraph 13.

15. Before the submission of appeal the Student has to get acquainted with the documents regulating the area of the alleged violation, other important information, and, if needed, consult the Vice-Dean for Studies of his/her faculty (students of the third cycle studies – with the head of the International Doctoral School). If possible, first of all it is recommended to solve the issue with the University's employee, head of the department, commission or other body functioning at the University, who made the decision. Before the submission of appeal, the Student has a right to review his/her written work or other performed task, get acquainted with the conclusions of the made decision. Appeal is submitted if the reasoned arguments regarding the alleged violation remain present after reading the documents regulating the area of the alleged violation, review of the performed work, tasks or getting acquainted with the conclusions.

16. Complaint is submitted regarding the alleged violation of the Student's rights and legitimate interests caused by the actions or omissions of the University's employee, other Student, department, commission or other body functioning at the University in the following areas:

- 16.1. Quality assurance in studies;
- 16.2. Compliance with processes and procedures of the organisation of studies;
- 16.3. Quality assurance in learning resources and learning environment;
- 16.4. Compliance with provisions of the Code of Academic Ethics;
- 16.5. Quality assurance and compliance with procedures in additional services (for example, allocation of financial support, accommodation, leisure activities, etc.);
- 16.6. In other cases.

17. Before the submission of appeal the Student has to get acquainted with the documents regulating the area of the alleged violation, other important information, and, if needed, consult the Vice-Dean for Studies of his/her faculty (students of the third cycle studies – with the head of the International Doctoral School). University's representative, who is not able to provide consultation to the Student, directs him/her to another employee after making sure that the employee is able to provide the required information to the Student. If possible, first of all it is recommended to solve the issue with the employee or head of the responsible department, commission or other body functioning at the University. Complaint is submitted if the reasoned arguments regarding the alleged violation of the Student's rights and legitimate interests remain present after reading the documents regulating the area of the alleged violation or other important information and the issue could not be solved directly.

18. Appeal is submitted individually while complaint can be submitted by one Student or by the group of students. When complaint is submitted by the group of students it is signed by all students, but one Student is indicated as the representative of the group; the addressee accepting the complaint and Commission for Handling of Complaints directly communicate with the representative.

19. Student's request for information or explanation of the University's procedures and other regulating documents, proposals for improvement of quality, improvement of processes and procedures are not considered appeals and complaints.

CHAPTER III

SUBMISSION OF APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS

20. Terms for the submission of appeals and complaints:

20.1. Appeals regarding the written decisions related to the Student's assessment for study results and/or evaluation of the achieved study results, results of the attestation of doctoral students are submitted no later than within 3 working days after publication of the evaluation or record in the Academic Information System or notification of the Student about the made decision;

20.2. Appeals regarding other written decisions are submitted no later than within 10 working days after the date of making of the written decision;

20.3. Complaints are submitted no later than within 30 working days after the violation of the Student's rights and legitimate interests is identified.

21. Appeal or complaint is submitted by filling in an approved form (Appendixes 1 and 2).¹

22. Appeal or complaint is addressed to the:

22.1. Dean of the Student's faculty, when:

22.1.1. Written decision with regards to the Student is made at the same or another academic department and appeal is submitted regarding the alleged procedural or technical errors;

22.1.2. Complaint is related to the area of the same or another academic department's responsibility.

22.2. Director of the Student Services, when:

22.2.1. Written decision with regards to the Student is made at the non-academic department and appeal is submitted regarding the alleged procedural or technical errors;

22.2.2. Complaint is related to the area of the non-academic department's responsibility.

22.3. Vice-Rector for Research and Innovation, when the Student of the third cycle submits an appeal regarding the procedural or technical errors in the process of doctoral studies, or complaint related to the area administered by the Vice-Rector for Research and Innovation;

22.4. Chairman of the Board of Academic Ethics, when appeal or complaint is submitted regarding the alleged violation of the Code of Academic Ethics.

23. Factual circumstances mentioned in the appeal or complaint have to be substantiated by arguments, motives, providing supporting documents or copies thereof.

24. Student submits an appeal or complaint directly or by the email provided by the University to the:

24.1. Study Centre of the Student's faculty when appeal or complaint is addressed to the Dean or chairman of the Board of Academic Ethics;

24.2. Student Information Centre when appeal or complaint is addressed to the Director of the Student Services;

24.3. International Doctoral School when appeal or complaint is addressed to the Vice-Rector for Research and Innovation.

25. The date of submission of the appeal or complaint to the faculty's Study Centre, Student Information Centre or International Doctoral School is considered the date of receipt of the appeal or complaint.

¹ Prepared according to the forms for appeal and complaint of the Oxford University: <http://www.proctors.ox.ac.uk/forms/>

CHAPTER IV

RECEIPT OF APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS, AND TRANSFER FOR PROCESSING

26. Employee who receives an appeal or complaint writes the date of receipt of the document on the appeal or complaint.

27. Vice-Dean for Studies, Director of the Student Services or Head of the International Doctoral School assessed whether a received appeal or complaint is eligible for processing. Appeal or complaint is not processed and is rejected, if:

- 27.1. It is illegible, provided incomprehensibly;
- 27.2. Not all the form's fields are filled in;
- 27.3. It is submitted after the deadline specified in paragraph 20 of the Guidelines;
- 27.4. It is anonymous;
- 27.5. Processing of this complaint is under the competence of the external institutions;
- 27.6. Commission or Board of Academic Ethics has already made decision on the same issue (-s).

28. If appeal or complaint is not processed, conclusions and reason (-s) for rejection are written on the appeal or complaint submitted by the Student. The person specified in paragraph 27 of the Guidelines notifies the Student who submitted appeal or complaint regarding the rejected appeal or complaint specifying the reasons for rejection via the email provided by the University within 3 working days after the receipt of the appeal or complaint.

29. If appeal or complaint is rejected because it is illegible, provided incomprehensibly, not filled in completely, Student has a right to re-submit the appeal or complaint within 3 working days after notification about the rejected appeal or complaint. Appeal or complaint can be re-submitted once.

30. Faculty's Vice-Dean for Studies, Director of the Student Services or Head of the International Doctoral School transfers the appeal or complaint eligible for processing to the person responsible for assembly of the Commission specified in paragraph 8, 9 or 10 of the Guidelines no later than on the next working day from the receipt of the appeal or complaint. When appeal or complaint is related to the violation of academic ethics, the document is transferred to the chairman of the Board of Academic Ethics. If appeal or complaint includes the issues of academic ethics, amongst others, the documents transferred to the chairman of the Board of Academic Ethics for individual processing and to the person specified in paragraph 8, 9 or 10 of the Guidelines, who analyse the parts of appeal or complain that are within their competence.

CHAPTER V

ASSEMBLING OF THE BOARD OF APPEALS AND COMMISSION FOR HANDLING OF COMPLAINTS

31. Board of Appeals or Commission for Handling of Complaints is assembled within 3 working days after the receipt of appeal of complaint.

32. Commission includes at least 3 members; one of them is appointed the chairman of the Commission.

33. Employees who have made a written decision with regards to the Student or allegedly violated the Student's rights and legitimate interests and members whose presence in the processing of appeal or complaint, and decision making could cause a conflict of interest cannot be members of the Commission.

34. It is recommended to appoint the following persons as members of the Commission at the academic department:

- 34.1. Vice-Dean for Studies or head of the second level academic department;
- 34.2. Lecturers or researchers of the study (research) field of the study module (if a processed appeal is related to the academic issues);
- 34.3. Delegated representative of the faculty's Student Union (Doctoral Student Society);

34.4. Other persons competent to process an appeal.

35. Amount of the Commission members and their composition has to be adequate for the Board of Appeals to analyse the written decision made with regards to the Student and, if needed, to make a new decision, to perform evaluation.

36. If Board of Appeals makes a decision to re-evaluate the tasks performed by the Student (implementation of the work plan of the doctoral student), Commission members, who are not lecturers and researchers of the module's study field, as well as representative of the Student Union (Doctoral Student Society) are absent while making decision regarding the evaluation of the study module. Decision to uphold or reject an appeal is made by at least 3 members of the Board of Appeals who have the right to make decisions regarding the evaluation of study module.

37. Persons, who are competent to make decision regarding the violation of the Student's rights and legitimate interests, are appointed as members of the Commission for Handling of Complaints. It is recommended to appoint the representative delegated by the Student Union as one member of the Commission for Handling of Complaints. It is recommended to include the Vice-Dean for Studies or Dean in the Commission for Handling of Complaints while analysing the complaints related to the academic issues.

CHAPTER VI

PROCESSING OF APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS

38. First of all Commission makes decision regarding the appeal's or complaint's validity. Only valid appeals or complaints that are substantiated, based on objective facts instead of the Student's subjective opinion, are processed. Unsubstantiated appeal or complaint is rejected. Commission notifies the Student who submits an appeal or complaint regarding the rejected appeal or complaint due to their validity by the email provided by the University. Student has a right to re-submit a corrected appeal or complaint and additional proof to the Commission within 3 working days after the date of notification.

39. Commission notifies the University's employee, other Student, head of the department, commission or other body functioning at the University that made decision with regards to the Student or allegedly violated the Student's rights and legitimate interests about the received appeal or complaint.

40. If needed, Commission can request explanations from the Student, and the person who made decision with regards to the Students or allegedly violated the Student's rights and legitimate interests, request additional information from the Student who submitted appeal or complaint, University's employees, other students and unclassified students. Explanations and/or information have to be provided to the Commission within 2 working days. Student and other related persons can be invited to the Commission's meeting.

41. Commission processes an appeal or complaint, makes decision and notifies the persons specified in paragraph 45 within 10 working days from the date of receipt of the properly submitted appeal or complaint. In exceptional cases, when more time is needed for processing of the appeal or complaint, or decision making, processing term can be extended for 10 working days. Student who submitted an appeal or complaint is notified about the extension of the term for processing of the appeal or complaint no later than within 10 working days from the date of receipt of the properly submitted appeal or complaint.

42. Board of Appeals can make the following decisions:

42.1. Not to uphold an appeal and retain the written decision made with regards to the Student;

42.2. Uphold an appeal, revoking the written decision made with regards to the Student and make a new decision or return this issue to the University's employee or body that made this decision for repeated processing;

42.3. Partially uphold an appeal, specifying which of the Student's requests are justified and should be upheld and which ones are not.

43. Commission for Handling of Complaints can make the following decisions:

- 43.1. Not to uphold a complaint;
 - 43.2. Uphold a complaint and authorise to correct the committed violation of the rights and legitimate interests;
 - 43.3. Partially uphold a complaint, specifying which of the Student's requests are justified and should be upheld and which ones are not.
44. Commission makes decision in an open voting procedure by a simple majority; decision is recorded in the protocol of the Commission's meeting. In case of equal number of votes of the Commission members, chairman of the Commission shall have the casting vote. Commission can have e-meeting using electronic means of communication.
45. Commission notifies the following persons about the processed appeal and complaint by the email provided by the University:
- 45.1. Student who submitted an appeal or complaint;
 - 45.2. University's employee, head of the department, head of the commission or other body functioning at the University regarding whose written decision the appeal is submitted or University's employee, Student, head of the department, commission or other body functioning at the University regarding whose actions or omissions the appeal is submitted;
 - 45.3. Vice-Dean for Studies of the faculty of the Student who submitted an appeal or complaint, if he/she is not a member of the Commission or head of the first level non-academic department administering respective field and Director of the Student Services.
46. Faculty's Study Centre, Student Information Centre and International Doctoral School keep a register of received appeals and complaints, specifying data of the Student submitting an appeal or complaint, short description of the appeal or complaint and Commission's decision. Appeals and complaints processed in the academic department, Commission's protocols and supporting documents are transferred for storage at the faculty's Study Centre. Appeals and complaints processed in the non-academic department, Commission's protocols and supporting documents are transferred for storage at the Student Information Centre, in case of the students of the third cycle – International Doctoral School.
47. Electronic copies of the appeals and complaints of the Students of the first, second and third cycle, integrated and professional studies are transferred to the Director of the Study Quality Assurance and Development at the end of each academic year. Director of the Department can request to provide the processing documents of the appeal or complaint.

CHAPTER VII

FINAL PROVISIONS

48. Students who disagrees with the Commission's decision or have not received a response within 10 working days from the date of the appeal's or complaint's submission to the University has a right to apply to the University's Commission for Dispute Settlement within 10 working days, except when the Student is notified about the extension of the term for processing of the appeal or complaint.
49. Guidelines can be amended, supplemented or repealed by the order of the University's Rector.
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