

COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE

In order to enhance student-centered educational processes, and abide by the principles of transparency and accountability, the University of Western Macedonia has adopted the present "Complaints Management Procedure" for students. This procedure involves all complaints related to the quality of the educational and administrative services provided by Departments.

The process is described below.

Students can submit their complaints to UoWM Legal Services using an e-form - "Complaint Submission Form"- available at the e-mail address: complaints@uowm.gr, in which they briefly, clearly and objectively state the problem - complaint. Upon receiving the form, the Legal Advisor examines it, informs the Rector, and reports it accordingly by e-mail, depending on the nature of the complaint to:

1) the Head of Department, when the complaint involves exams and grades. The Head examines the students' complaint, along with any additional material, and takes the appropriate action. Within 20 days, the student is duly informed about the actions that have been taken and the complaint submission proceedings, as well as any decisions of the competent University Administration body.

2) the Student Ombudsman, for issues other than grades and exams, at the email address: synigorosfoititi@uowm.gr. UoWM has set up a self-governing service, "STUDENT OMBUDSMAN", to which every student can report (using the form "Application Form") any problem in order for the Ombudsman to mediate. The Student Ombudsman can investigate cases on his/her own initiative.

The Student Ombudsman may, ex officio, request the university services any information, document or other evidence about the case, examine persons, perform an autopsy and order an expert opinion. In case of law infringement, maladministration or university malfunction, s/he reports to the competent professor / s or administration service and the complainant, and mediates in any appropriate way to resolve the issue.

Students can submit their queries using the special application form, which is attached below:

- via email at: synigorosfoititi@uowm.gr
- in person or by mail to:

UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN MACEDONIA
Students Ombudsman's Office
50100 Kila Kozani

3) UoWM Ethics Committee, at: ethics@uowm.gr. The Ethics Committee was established by a Rector's Act and examines ex officio or after a written report/complaint by students, academic staff, teaching support staff (E.E.P., E.D.I.P. and E.T.E.P.), researchers, visiting teachers and administrative staff, issues within its jurisdiction, in

order to determine any violation of the Code of Ethics; it also investigates relevant incidents by the Rector's order.

Ethics Committee Responsibilities:

1. Respect for Human Rights
2. Meritocracy and equal opportunities
3. Academic excellence
4. Protection of intellectual property
5. Integrity, Transparency, Efficiency, Accountability as regards the use of Public Funds, Protection of UoWM assets
6. Dissemination of a culture of fair conduct and ethics

4) the Gender Equality Committee for harassment incidents. The Gender Equality Committee should investigate the incident and suggest a way to handle it, to provide, if appropriate, mediation, remedial justice services and any assistance to victims of discrimination, harassment or abusive behaviour. In particular, depending on the case, the Gender Equality Committee either:

- (a) Encourages victims to explain abusers with undesirable behaviour that this is not welcome, it is offensive, it causes resentment and it interferes with their work / study, or
- (b) undertakes mediation.

It is worth noting that the Gender Equality Committee takes action only if harassment and / or sexual harassment occurs for a short period of time, if abusers are willing to discuss and only if victims accept mediation. In the event that abusers do not accept mediation, they are reminded by letter of the Gender Equality Committee of the ethics and behavioural issues related to the specific abuse. In case victims prefer direct communication with abusers, then the Gender Equality Committee is responsible for monitoring outcomes. In the event of mediation, the Gender Equality Committee assumes responsibility for communicating with abusers. In any case, the Gender Equality Committee handles the case in complete confidentiality and ensures that it is completed within a reasonable time.

If any of the above is not possible or if this informal approach does not yield satisfactory results, the case is serious or harassment continues, the case is reported to the Ethics Committee or the Disciplinary Board.

Once complaints have been handled, the above competent bodies must inform the students involved and the Legal Services about the actions taken and the outcome of the case. The Legal Services then reports to the Rector.