



## **School of Physics ATh**

### **Postgraduate Studies Program: Advanced Functional Materials**

A13. Regulation for the management of student complaints and objections

December 2023

**According to the decision of the Assembly of the School of Physics of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki No. 05/23-10-2023, the "Regulation of the operating mechanism for the management of student complaints and objections" is as follows:**

Postgraduate students can express any complaint or objection related to their studies and for this reason each Postgraduate Program has a separate complaints management mechanism. The aim is to improve the quality of the operation of the M.Sc. with full respect for all those involved in the educational and research process, but even more so for the recipients of the M.Sc., to whom it must be accountable. This procedure concerns all complaints/objections related to the quality of the educational, research and administrative services provided by the MSC Course.

A **Complaint** is defined as the expression of dissatisfaction (verbal or written) on the part of the student of the MSC Course, due to the refutation of his/her expectations regarding the quality level of the services provided.

An **Objection** is defined as any written and formal expression of doubt or objection on the part of the student to the decision of the competent body of the MSC Course, regarding the request submitted by the student.

The **complaints management policy** is addressed to active postgraduate students and aims to resolve a disagreement or problem, such as:

- i. disagreement on matters of study and attendance
- ii. misconduct by a member of academic or administrative staff
- iii. inadequate information to students by a member of academic or administrative staff.

During their studies, postgraduate students have both rights and obligations, as described in the Regulations of the M.Sc. They are also required to contact their **Academic Advisor for**

**guidance and support on issues that concern them and are related to their studies and attendance.**

Students may submit a verbal or written complaint when an action or decision of a member of the MSc or a collective body is not in accordance with:

- the regulations of study and attendance,
- the Code of Conduct and/or the prescribed procedures concerning academic teaching and research,
- the rational use of facilities and infrastructure,
- the protection of intellectual property and copyright,
- appropriate working behavior,
- equal treatment and equality
- the fight against harassment and sexual harassment.

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

- For academic issues related to the studies, postgraduate students may contact the **Academic Advisor** of the Program (see Appendix A14).
- For issues that require mediation between graduate students and professors or administrative services of the Institution, the observance of legality in the context of academic freedom, dealing with phenomena of maladministration and safeguarding the proper functioning of the Institution, students may address the **Student Advocate** of the Institution. The Student Advocate ensures the observance of legality and academic ethics and order within the framework of academic freedom and the treatment of maladministration in order to safeguard the proper functioning of the Institution. The Advocate does not intervene in substantive matters of teaching or marking of

examinations but only examines cases of arbitrariness or violation of ethical rules in the conduct of examinations (written or oral).

- For violations of ethical rules and quality of studies, students can appeal to the **Ethics Committee** of the Institution.
- For issues concerning gender discrimination, students may address the **Gender Equality Committee**.
- For issues relating to the protection of personal data, students may address the **Data Protection Officer** (DPO).

The complaint/grievance handling mechanism includes the following stages:

#### **Stage 1: Direct Resolution**

**HEARING:** Graduate student's complaint is reviewed by a faculty member of the MSc. The graduate student reports the complaint to a faculty member (the professor in charge or the course instructor or the academic advisor) or a member of the administrative staff (the head of the secretariat), depending on the nature of the complaint. The faculty member reviews the complaint with the student and proposes a solution. In cases where, after the direct resolution process is completed, the student objects to the proposed resolution or the situation is still problematic, then the student may, within 30 days of the date the problem occurred, submit the complaint in writing to his/her Academic Advisor.

#### **Stage 2: Formal Resolution.**

**INTERMEDIATION.** The Academic Advisor reviews the grievance/complaint with the graduate student and proposes a resolution. In this case, the Academic Advisor, at his/her discretion, shall also contact other members of the Department in order to seek their assistance, as is their duty, in resolving the problem.

**ADMINISTRATIVE EXAMINATION:** Consideration of the student's complaint by the **School's Chair**. In cases where, after completion of the Academic Advisor's mediation process, the student objects to the resolution or the situation is still problematic, the student may submit

the complaint in writing to the Registrar's Office, addressed to the School's Chair, using the Complaint Form which indicates, among other things, the hearing and mediation process followed. The School's Chair shall take the necessary steps to review/investigate the problem. He/she may, depending on the nature of the problem, call the student for a hearing and seek the assistance of any member or body of the School or Institution or refer the grievance to the School's Assembly. In cases where the Chair refers the complaint to the School's Assembly, the decision is final and the student may not lodge an appeal and use the third stage of this procedure.

**Stage 3: Objection and Final Review of the problem/complaint.**

**APPEAL:** Examination of the appeal by the School's Assembly. In cases where, after the administrative review of the grievance has been completed, the graduate student objects to the resolution or the situation is still problematic, then the student may resubmit his/her grievance in writing to the School's Assembly or the Curriculum Committee, via protocol, using the Grievance & Objection Form which indicates, among other things, the hearing, mediation and administrative review process followed. In cases where the School's Chair has already requested the assistance of the School's Assembly at the Administrative Review stage, the student may not submit a grievance and use this step of the process. The decision taken by the School's Assembly is final.