



2021/2022 Annual Report Complaints Committee of the University of Twente

Established on 26 October 2022



Composition of the Complaints Committee of the University of Twente

On 1 January 2021, the Complaints Committee of the University of Twente (hereinafter: the complaints committee) consisted of the following members:

- Ms Y.J. Bouwman-Bakker, external chairperson;
- Mr M.A.H. van Gessel, member nominated by the Consultative Body on Personnel Matters of the University of Twente (OPUT);
- Mr L.J.M. Ketting, deputy member on the nomination of the OPUT;
- Mr H.A. Akse, member on the nomination of the employer;
- Mr J.F.C. Verberne, deputy member nominated by the employer.

In 2021/2022, a number of changes were made to the composition of the complaints committee.

In 2020, Mr Ketting indicated that he did not wish to be reappointed; his appointment expired on 7 June 2021. As a result of his departure, OPUT nominated a new member for the complaints committee. The Executive Board nominated Mr J. Lubking with effect from 15 April 2021 for a period of four years.

Chair, Ms Bouwman-Bakker, stepped down on 1 November 2022. The Executive Board has appointed Mr R.G. Leether the new chair of the complaints committee with effect from 1 November 2022 for a period of four years.

The secretary, Ms V. Trifunovic LLB, officially supported the complaints committee in 2021/2022.

Complaints procedure regulations

The complaints procedure of the University of Twente, which took effect on 1 June 2017, applies to the working practice of the complaints committee. From 31 December 2019, the complaints procedure was amended following the coming into effect of the Public Servants (Standardisation of Legal Status) Act on 1 January 2020. This amendment has no consequences for the working practice of the complaints committee. With effect from 25 January 2021, the complaints procedure was amended with respect to the provision regarding the deputy chairperson of the complaints committee. This amendment also has no consequences for the working practice of the complaints committee.

On 1 April 2011, the University of Twente instituted a clear and accessible system that enables current, prospective, former and external students to submit their complaints, appeals and formal objections. The University of Twente complaints desk is part of the Centre for Educational Support's Student Services department. Its duties include forwarding complaints, appeals and formal objections to the correct, competent authority.

Complaints handling in 2021/2022

On 1 January 2021, one complaint dating back to 2020 was still being processed.

New complaints 2021/2022

In the period from January 2021 until September 2022, ten complaints were submitted to the complaints committee for handling and recommendations. Six complaints were filed by a student or former student, two by an external person and two by an employee.

Complaint 2021-01 was filed by a student and related to the information provision about the admission requirements for higher professional education graduates to a master's degree programme. The information as shown on the website and the publications by the University of Twente was incomplete. The answer to the question about the admission requirements for University of Applied Sciences students to the Master of Business Administration was also incomplete.

Complaint 2021-02 was filed by a student and related to the supervision the complainant received from two lecturers during the writing of her master's thesis. An unnecessary study delay was the result.

Complaint 2021-03 was also filed by a student and related to the way they were treated by an employee of UT during the admission to a programme. The employee had rejected him based on the matching activities.

Complaint 2021-04 was filed by an external person and concerned the posting of a column on U-Today, the University of Twente's independent news website. U-Today is accused of violating the university's code of conduct and for this reason the request was made to remove the column.

Complaint 2021-05 was filed by a student and concerned the conduct of a semester co-ordinator. The semester co-ordinator was inconsistent in his explanation and did not respond adequately to the request for an explanation to the decision taken.

Complaint 2021-06 was filed by a student and concerned the marking of a bachelor's degree assignment. The mark registered in Osiris was incorrect and was not amended.

Complaint 2021-07 was filed by an external person and concerned a reaction to his blog posted by a UT employee. The employee responded in a personal capacity, and due to this fact is now accused of violating the university's code of conduct. The complainant also did not agree with the employee's comment and requested the comment to be removed from his blog.

Complaint 2021-08 was filed by a former student and related to the processing time for the official diploma and a certificate of completion.

Complaint 2022-09 was filed by a member of staff and concerned the conduct of (employees of) the University of Twente in the context of an application procedure. The University of Twente is said to have violated the privacy of the complainant.

Complaint 2022-10 was filed by a member of staff and concerned the treatment of the employee by employees of the university, specifically unacceptable behaviour and abuse of power, resulting in an unsafe working environment.

Issue of recommendations 2021/2022 and complaints handling by the Executive Board

Complaints from 2020

On 1 January 2021, one complaint from 2020 had not yet been completed or brought to an end. In 2021, the complaints committee issued a recommendation in respect of this complaint to the Executive Board.

Complaint 2020-05, which concerned the conduct of an education co-ordinator/student adviser and the programme director against a former student, was handled in 2021. According to the complainant, no good answer was given for three years to a question about the grade II secondary school teaching qualification through the educational module. The complaint was partially in reference to behaviour that was shown more than a year prior to the submission of the complaint. Due to the lack of clearly excusable reasons for the delay, the complaints committee advised to leave part of the complaint out of consideration and to declare the rest of the complaint unfounded. The Executive Board's decision on this complaint was in line with the committee's recommendation.

Complaints from 2021/2022

The complaints committee considered eight complaints in 2021/2022. Five were later withdrawn by the complainants and one will be taken up again in the 2022/2023 academic year. In respect of two complaints, the complaints committee issued a recommendation to the Executive Board.

Complaint 2021-01 was in reference to the provision of information and the response to a question about the admission requirements for University of Applied Sciences graduates to a master's degree programme, which was handled in 2021. Due to the manner in which the complainant had formulated the complaint, the complaints committee decided to divide it into two sub-complaints, each concerning the conduct of a specific department of UT. The complaints committee recommended in regard to the sub-complaints that one should be declared well-founded and one should be declared unfounded. The Executive Board's decision on this complaint was in line with the committee's recommendation.

Complaint 2022-10 which concerned the treatment of an employee by employees of the university was handled in 2022. Due to the manner in which the complainant had formulated the complaint, the complaints committee decided to divide it into two sub-complaints, each concerning the conduct of a UT employee. With regard to the two sub-complaints, the complaints committee recommended that both sub-complaints should be declared unfounded. The Executive Board's decision on this complaint was in line with the committee's recommendation.

In 2021/2022, a case involving a request for challenge was handled which was then honoured by the Executive Board. The current complaints committee has closed the file and the case will be forwarded to another, newly appointed ad hoc complaints committee.

Total complaints processed in 2021/2022

The complaints committee considered nine complaints in 2021/2022. Five of these were subsequently withdrawn by the complainants, three were handled and resulted in a recommendation to the Executive Board, and one complaint will be completed in the 2022/2023 academic year.

Withdrawal of complaints

In 2021/2022, five complaints were later withdrawn by the complainants.

Complaint 2021-02, complaint 2021-03 and complaint 2021-05 were later withdrawn by the respective complainants. No settlement was reached in these cases, but the complainants decided for other reasons not to pursue the complaint.

Complaint 2021-06 and complaint 2021-08 were later withdrawn by the respective complainants. In these two cases the complaints were not continued because the matters were solved.

Termination of complaints procedure

In 2021/2022, two cases were not handled by the complaints committee.

Complaint 2021-04 and 2021-07 related to matters that fall outside the purview of the complaints committee.

Summary of the complaints committee's activities

The table represents the 2021/2022 activities of the complaints committee in figures. For a complete picture, the numbers for the past five years are also provided.

Table: Quantitative overview of the complaints committee's activities

	2021/2022	2020	2019	2018	2017
New complaints started	12*	5	4	4	14***
Complaints handled and completed	5*	4	1	4	8
Withdrawal of complaints	5	3	0	2	2
After reaching a settlement	0	1	0	0	2
Without reaching a settlement	0	2	0	2	0
Termination of complaints procedure (no recommendation/not withdrawn by complainant)	2**	0	1	0	0
Still ongoing (handling expected the following year)	1	1	4	2	4

* Applies for a longer period than the years before.

* Ten new complaints were reported in the complaints committee's 2021/2022 annual report. In complaint 2021-01, the complaint was divided into two sub-complaints. The complaints committee issued a recommendation with regard to each of these two separate complaints. This also applies to complaint 2022-10. From 2011 onwards, complaints of this kind have been treated separately, even if they are formulated in a single letter of complaint. This is why Table 1 shows the number of new complaints in 2021/2022 as 12 and the issue of recommendations in that year as 5.

** Two complaints have not been handled by the complaints committee because they were in reference to matters that do not fall under the purview of the complaints committee.

*** The number of new complaints in 2017 was considerably higher than in previous years. For more information about this please see <https://www.utwente.nl/.uc/fb829e6880102cbfc2b00e42ca702f61034ce3bf7ace200/klachtencommissie-jaarverslag-2017.pdf>.

Other

In reference to a proposal to change the timeline of the reporting, the decision was made for the complaints committee to link its annual report to the academic year. The initiative for this change comes from the Executive Board's desire to equalise the timeline of the reporting of all assisting bodies within the University of Twente. As a result, the complaints committee's reporting period, as a one-off occasion, covers the period from 1 January 2021 to 1 September 2022. The basic principle remains that the complaints committee is independent and responsible for the contents of its annual report and determines these itself.

From 2020, the university has had an integral integrity programme called the House of Integrity. In this context, the university has created flowcharts indicating who students and staff can contact if they wish to file a complaint or make a report.

<https://www.utwente.nl/en/service-portal/topics/integrity/?lang=nl>

The University of Twente's website contains information about the complaints committee and the complaints procedure that is available to students and staff. The complaints procedure was determined by the University of Twente, and the information about the complaints committee is periodically updated by the secretary of the complaints committee.

For a better connection within the auxiliary structure there is a semi-annual meeting of all officials. This is a broad consultation in which the officials get to know each other and each other's roles and discuss developments/dilemmas. The secretary of the complaints committee is taking part in this consultation structure.