

# Procedure for handling complaints from students regarding education

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<b>Responsible administrative unit</b>	Legal Secretariat, Office of the President
<b>Responsible administrator</b>	Marlene Andersson

**Description:**

The Procedure describes how students can file complaints regarding education at first-cycle, second-cycle and third-cycle level and how the University is to handle complaints.



## Introduction

The purpose of the Procedure is to describe how students can file complaints regarding education at first-cycle, second-cycle and third-cycle level and how the University is to handle the complaints. The main recipients are employees at the institutions/equivalent and students at the University.

## Regulations

The national rules for education at first-cycle, second-cycle and third-cycle level are found in the Higher Education Act (1992:1434) and the Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100). National rules governing how cases must be handled are set out primarily in the Administrative Act (2017:900), and rules for keeping records are found in the Public Access to Information and Secrecy Act (2009:400). In addition, the University's own governing documents include local regulations for education at first-cycle, second-cycle and third-cycle level. Local rules that apply to education for the whole of the University, i.e. at central level, are decided by the University Board or the President. Local rules that apply to education for the whole of the University, i.e. at central level, are decided by the University Board or the President. Examples of these rules are the governing documents *Regler för utbildning och examination på grundnivå och avancerad nivå* (*Eng. Regulations for education and examination at first-cycle and second-cycle level*), *Regler för utbildning och examination på forskarnivå* (*Eng. Regulations for education and examination at third-cycle level*) and *Regler för tentamensskrivningar* (*Eng. Regulations for written examinations*)<sup>1</sup>. These and other governing documents relating to education are published in the Rulebook on the University website. In addition, there are rules governing education that are decided by and applicable to each area, faculty and institution. These are published on each area, faculty and institution website.

## Area of use

The Procedure applies to the handling of individual students complaints regarding education at first-cycle, second-cycle and third-cycle level. The term student refers to an individual who is admitted to and is undertaking studies at first-cycle, second-cycle or third-cycle level. Complaints that are covered by the Procedure are all types of complaints that relate to education on first-cycle, second-cycle and third-cycle level (with the exception of what is stated below). For example, complaints can relate to the fact that a local rule has not been followed by an employee, that a decision has not been made by a qualified decision-maker, that a case has not been handled within reasonable time, exceptions to entry requirements, that course evaluation has not been done, the quality of a lecture, treatment from a teacher, scheduling, etc.

The following cases fall outside the Procedure:

- cases involving discrimination and harassment in accordance with the Discrimination Act (2008:567),
- disciplinary actions against students in accordance with Chapter 10 of the Higher Education Ordinance,
- cases under the Act (2019:504) on responsibility for good research practice and the examination of research misconduct and suspected deviations from good research practice, under Chapter 1, Section 17 of the Higher Education Ordinance,
- cases in accordance with the Working Environment Act (1977:1160),
- cases concerning the retraction of supervision and other resources for the education of a doctoral student under Chapter 6, Section 30 of the Higher Education Ordinance,
- cases under Ordinance (2007:989) on the expulsion of students from higher education,
- cases before the University Staff Disciplinary Board (Chapter 2, Section 15 of the Higher Education Ordinance) and
- cases before the Government Disciplinary Board under the Ordinance (2007:831) with instruction for the Government Disciplinary Board.

Where applicable, the cases listed above will be handled in accordance with other governing documents that is published in the Rulebook on the University website.

Complaints in accordance with this Procedure do not prevent a student from appealing a decision under Chapter 12 of the Higher Education Ordinance, the Administrative Act or other ordinance. Neither does this prevent a student from reporting complaints to the supervisory authorities of the Swedish Higher Education Authority or the Parliamentary Ombudsman.

## **Form of complaints**

Student complaints can be submitted orally or in writing. In the event that the complaint requires investigation and should thus be administered as a case, the student's complaint must be submitted in writing, unless deemed unnecessary by the person who handles the case. In the complaint, the student must state what the complaint concerns. The complaint should state the circumstances that according to the student form the basis for the complaint.

## **Where complaints are submitted**

The student can submit a complaint for example to the Director of Studies or Head of Department for the education or department/equivalent concerned.

When an employee receives a complaint that will not be handled by the employee, the employee must refer the student to the right recipient or alternatively ensure that the complaint is forwarded to the right recipient.

## **Handling complaints**

### **Introduction**

A complaint must be handled within the department/equivalent concerned. As far as possible, complaints should be addressed where the problem has arisen. If the complaint is incomplete or unclear, the person handling the complaint shall request that the student clarifies the complaint. How a complaint will be handled depends on what the complaint relates to. However, all complaints must be handled promptly. The following describes the two different ways in which a complaint can be handled.

### **1. Complaints that do not require investigation**

A complaint that does not require investigation can be addressed through discussions with the student who filed the complaint. If the character of the complaint changes and therefore requires investigation, it must be addressed in accordance with the next section.

### **2. Complaints that require investigation**

When a complaint requires investigation, the complaint must be filed and administered as a case. The administration of the case must be in writing. However, the student must be given the opportunity to provide information orally if needed. Information that is provided orally during the administration of a case regarding a complaint must always be documented in writing in an official note if it may be of significance to the decision of the case. For example, this applies to complaints that are filed orally. The official note must be registered. Additional case documentation must also be registered.

The investigator of the complaint should inform the student as soon as possible of the option to contact a student ombudsman or PhD ombudsman at the student union for potential support and advice in the case.

The complaint must be investigated to the extent necessary. The scope of the investigation will be determined by what the complaint concerns and the circumstances of the individual case.

Before a decision is made in a case, the student must be informed of the proposal of the decision and of investigation material that is of significance for the decision, and shall be given the opportunity to comment on it within a specified period of time.

Decisions at the department/equivalent are made by the individual to whom the decision making authority has been delegated to in accordance with applicable decision-making and delegation procedure.



For further information and a more detailed description of how case administration and decision making must be done, refer to Handbok i ärendehandläggning<sup>ii</sup> on the University website.

*Disclaimer: In case of a discrepancy between the Swedish and the English version of the decision of this Procedure, the Swedish version will prevail.*

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<sup>i</sup> Please note that the latest decisions of the documents may not have an English version.

<sup>ii</sup> An English version of Handbok i ärendehandläggning (*Eng. Handbook on case management*) is not available.