



ΔΗΜΟΚΡΙΤΕΙΟ
ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ
ΘΡΑΚΗΣ

DEMOCRITUS
UNIVERSITY
OF THRACE

Annex 17
Student Advocacy Office Operating Rules and
Regulations
of Democritus University of Thrace

Komotini 2024

Article 1

Student Advocacy Office Organisation and Mission

1. By virtue of decision no. 23/9/17.1.2019 of the DUTH Senate (Government Gazette, Series II, No 98/24-01-2019) an independent Office was established under the name 'Student Advocacy Office', which continues to operate pursuant to the provisions of Articles 461(2) and 130 of Law 4957/2022.
2. The Student Advocacy Office is an independent Office that comes under the authority and supervision of the Rector or competent Vice-Rector.
3. The mission of the Student Advocacy Office is:
 - a) to intermediate between the University's students (undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral candidates) and the teaching staff or administrative services; compliance with the law within the framework of academic freedom
 - c) to resolve phenomena of maladministration; and
 - d) to maintain the University's sound operation.
4. A DUTH Faculty Member at the rank of Professor or Professor Emeritus of DUTH shall be appointed as the Student Advocate by the DUTH Senate, upon the proposal of the Rector and the opinion of the Student Council. The term of the Student Advocate is one (1) academic year, renewable annually for another three (3) years. The opinion of the Student Council must be submitted within an exclusive deadline of one (1) month of the date the DUTH Rector submits a relative application requesting its opinion. If this deadline lapses without effect, the Student Advocate is appointed without the opinion of the Student Council.
5. The Student Advocate does not receive a fee or any other benefit or compensation for the performance of his duties. If the Student Advocate is also a serving Faculty Member throughout the duration of his term, he may be exempted from part of his teaching or administrative duties following a decision of the Assembly of the Department that he serves, following a relative application that he must submit.
6. The Student Advocacy Office's administrative personnel are appointed with a decision of the competent administrative body.

Article 2

Powers of the Student Advocacy Office

1. The Student Advocate:
 - a) Investigates cases following named written or oral reports from students or ex officio and mediates with the university's competent bodies for their resolution. The Student Advocate is responsible for cases concerning:
 - aa) the observance of legality, within the context of academic freedom, by any body, entity or employee lawfully providing a service to DUTH.
 - ab) the observance of academic ethics and respect for the personality of students by every category of DUTH staff.
 - ac) the smooth operation of the University's services, and in particular the observance of the principles of equality and transparency, the response of administrative services to student requests, the processing and completion of administrative action within a reasonable time, as well as the access of students to documents to which they are entitled by law.
 - b) Provides information to DUTH staff and the University's students on the operation, powers and mission of the Student Advocacy Office.
 - c) Plans and coordinates educational activities for the students and staff of the University that fall

within his/her remit, in collaboration with other University units, as well as external bodies, in particular the Student Advocacy Office and Student Councils of universities in Greece and abroad.

d) Participates in the formulation of internal policies and the development of tools for enhancing integrity and transparency, and collaborates with the competent DUTH bodies for the drafting of the DUTH Code of Conduct and the Conflict of Interest Regulation and Fraud and Corruption Protocols.

e) Informs and collaborates with the University's governing bodies, the Ethics Committee, the Internal Audit Unit, the University's Integrity Advisor and the organic unit responsible for administrative support and human resources issues, for the development and implementation of integrity policies and standards within the institution.

f) Prepares an Annual Report and submits it to the Rector, the Governing Council and the Senate of DUTH, on the work carried out and the progress of the cases handled, as well as proposals for improving the efficiency of the University services.

2. The findings of the Student Advocacy Office, as well as the annual report, are published on the University's website, without prejudice to Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation, OJ L 119) and Law 4624/2019 (Official Government Gazette, Series I, No 137).

3. The Student Advocacy Office is not responsible for matters of student examinations and grades.

4. For the cases described in paragraph 1a hereof, the Advocacy Office is responsible only if the reported events occurred on DUTH premises, including student halls and restaurants. If the reported events took place online, subject to the previous paragraphs of this article, the Advocacy Office is responsible only for DUTH websites.

Article 3

Reporting to the Student Advocacy Office

1. Students submit reports on matters that fall within the remit of the Student Advocacy Office electronically to the office's email address, by post or in person.

2. Students have the right to request anonymity. If, in the opinion of the Student Advocacy Office, the investigation is not possible without disclosing the name, the student is notified that his/her complaint will be shelved unless he/she consents to the disclosure in writing.

3. If the report received by the Student Advocacy Office concerns the competence of another University body or another public authority, the Advocate shall do the following:

a) by a document justifying his/her lack of competence, he/she forwards all information relevant to the case to another University service which he/she considers competent.

b) communicates and forwards the case to another competent authority, in particular a judicial or police authority if it concerns a criminal offence that is prosecuted ex officio, after informing the Rector or the competent Vice Rector;

c) inform the involved parties of his/her actions.

4. If the report to the Advocate concerns a faculty member or other category of teachers or staff of the DUTH University who serves in the same Department in which the Advocate serves, or has any family relationship or registered partnership with him/her, then the Advocate is excluded from the case by decision of the Rector or the competent Vice Rector. In this case, the Advocate refers the reports to the Rector or the competent Vice Rector, who temporarily appoints a faculty member with similar qualifications as the Advocate in order to handle this specific case.

5. If the report is directed against the Advocate himself/herself, then the reporting student sends it

directly to the Rector or the competent Vice Rector, who acts in accordance with the provisions of the previous paragraph. If the complaint against him/her results in the Advocate's liability, he/she shall be relieved from his/her duties and the procedure set forth in these internal rules and regulations shall be followed.

6. To fulfil its duties, the Student Advocacy Office shall apply the applicable laws, the DUTH Internal Rules and Regulations and this Regulation.

Article 4

Investigation Process

1. Following the filing of the named report regarding any of the aforementioned matters within his/her competence, the Advocate investigates the case. The investigation includes:

a) hearing within 30 days of the parties involved and third parties are considered to have direct or indirect knowledge of the case;

b) collection and evaluation of documents, digital data, and any other information that may contribute, in order for the Advocate to form an opinion on the events reported and to reconstruct the facts of the case.

2. The parties involved or third parties shall be heard following an invitation emailed by the Advocate at a specified time and day, which is notified at least five working days in advance to the interested parties.

3. During the hearing, the invited persons may express their views, relevant facts and answer the Advocate's questions. Minutes shall be drawn up for the content of each hearing, which shall be signed by all parties and shall describe the main points of the hearing.

4. While collecting evidence and carrying out the investigation, the Advocate may request in writing any information, document or other evidence for the case from the University services, examine persons, conduct an on-site inspection and order an expert report. The above acts are carried out by applying the relevant provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure *mutatis mutandis*. Refusal to respond by those invited for examination is a disciplinary offence.

5. In the event that specialised knowledge is necessary to form an opinion, the Advocate may request the assistance of an expert through a written opinion, who may not be a Faculty Member or administrative or other staff of DUTH; otherwise the expert opinion is invalid.

6. The Advocate may also request opinions on matters within his/her remit from the Greek Ombudsman, the National Commission for Human Rights, Judicial Authorities, Bar Associations and other bodies and authorities as appropriate. Expert assistance is based on a list of specialists, executives of the public and wider public sector, which is drawn up by the Advocate and approved by the DUTH Senate. The list is posted on the website of the Student Advocacy Office.

7. If the Attorney collected objects, documents, evidence and data during his/her search, a relevant report shall be drawn up and signed by him/her.

Article 5

Completion of investigation – Drafting of minutes

1. After completing the process to establish the complaint, providing explanations and/or hearing the involved parties, the Advocate prepares a findings report, which he/she notifies to the teacher or the employee concerned or the competent administrative service and the student who submitted the report, and mediates in any appropriate way for to resolve the issue (see article 6).

2. If indications of disciplinary offences committed by teachers or other staff of DUTH arise from the

Advocate's findings report, the Advocate refers the findings report to the Rector or the competent Vice Rector for any further legal action.

3. The Advocate may close the case if he/she considers it to be manifestly vague, unfounded or unsubstantiated, and if he/she finds that there are indications that a disciplinary offence has been committed, he/she shall forward the case to the competent disciplinary body.

4. The findings reports of the Student Advocacy Office in the handling of cases and a report on his/her annual activities shall be submitted to the Senate and published anonymously on the university's website, without prejudice to the applicable laws on the protection of personal data.

Article 6

Mediation-Restoration Process

1. If the Advocate's findings report indicates that the issue can be resolved either on the Advocate's initiative through mediation and the creation of a climate of trust between the parties, or through the intervention of another body or committee of DUTH, the Advocate proceeds to the relevant procedure.

2. Mediation between the parties

2.1. In the case of mediation between the parties, the Advocate shall, with the written consent of the parties, bring them into communication in order to resolve the dispute and restore the relations between them. To this end, the Advocate informs the parties in detail about the procedure, the institutional framework pertaining to the specific case and the position of everyone in relation to this framework, conveys proposals to resolve the dispute and reconcile the parties, for example the provision of explanations, the expression of an apology before the Advocate, the immediate handling of an administrative case and the removal in general of the problems mentioned in the submitted report.

2.2. The mediation process includes:

- a) a separate meeting of the Advocate with every party, in which the Advocate informs about the problem and the report;
- b) joint meetings to bring the issue to a solution acceptable to all, based on the proposals of the Advocate and every party; and
- c) the process is completed with the complainant's declaration of satisfaction and the restoration of relations between the parties in accordance with the provisions the provisions of the previous paragraph.

2.3 When the mediation is completed, a relevant report shall be drawn up, signed by the parties involved and the Advocate. If the mediation does not produce a positive result and the problem described in the report is not resolved, then the Advocate, with a reasoned document, refers the case to competent bodies of the University.

3. The process of mediation and restoration of relations between students and DUTH staff under any capacity or employment relationship shall not apply to cases referred for handling to another University body.

Article 7

Register, files, personal data

1. Student reports shall be entered in a special register kept at the Office.

2. Reports which do not fall within the remit of the Student Advocacy Office or which are manifestly vague, unfounded or unimportant or which are repeated in an abusive manner and without newer

information, shall be shelved by decision of the Student Advocacy Office and the interested party shall be notified in writing.

3. The Student Advocacy Office respects and protects the personal data of persons who use its services as well as of those who are under investigation, and complies with the applicable laws on the protection of personal data.

4. The data processed by the Advocate exclusively concern the cases for which he/she receives reports and is responsible.

5. The Student Advocacy Office does not transfer, send or grant authorisation to other services or Authorities to access or process data of the persons whose reports and cases it has handled, apart from the Rector or the Competent Vice Rector within the scope of their responsibilities, or the judicial authorities upon relevant request, with the exception of cases where anonymity was requested in accordance with Article 3(2) hereof, where prior written consent of the student who submitted the report is required.

ANNEX



**STUDENT COMPLAINT
FORM**

Complaint No & Date

(To be filled in by the Secretariat)

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TO:
Secretariat of the Department of

Submission Date:

Please fill in the following **mandatory** fields and submit this document to the following e-mail address: (enter the e-mail of the Secretariat)

Full name:		
Title:	Undergraduate student <input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate student <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral Candidate <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Reg. No.:	
	Year of Study:	
	Phone / Mobile:	
	Email:	
The complaint concerns		
	Student issues:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Study issues:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Communication issues:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Relations with educational staff:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Personal Data:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please state briefly and clearly the problem you encountered or your complaint

Solemn Declarations

I hereby declare that I expressly and unreservedly consent to the processing of my personal data for the purpose of handling this complaint.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that the confidentiality of communications will be ensured, as provided for in the DUTH Internal Rules and Regulations and the applicable legislation.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I declare that I am aware of the Study Guide and of the University's general operating rules, and I am clearly aware of my rights and obligations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have been informed about the Personal Data Protection Regulation https://duth.gr/Πανεπιστήμιο/Προστασία-Δεδομένων-Προσωπικού-Χαρακτήρα-GDPR	<input type="checkbox"/>

To be filled in by the body investigating the complaint (Academic Department)	
Investigation of the complaint with s/n	
Participants	
Full name:	Capacity:
Reason	
How to address the problem – Corrective action	
Complainant Notification	
Competent officer:	
Date:	

The Head of the Department