

Complaints Policy

Procedure: Handling General Complaints

Introduction

TIAS Business School has a complaints procedure and a Complaints Desk.

Framework

- The Executive Management Team ensures the proper handling of complaints about the conduct of persons and departments working under its responsibility.
- The implementation of the complaints policy is mandated to Academic Services. Below is an explanation of the procedure and the establishment of a group that is formed depending on the substantive nature of the complaint.
- Filing a complaint with the Complaints Desk must not lead to adverse treatment of the complainant by TIAS.
- The Complaints Committee is required to maintain confidentiality regarding all matters that come to its knowledge during the complaints procedure.
- The handling of the complaint is carried out by a (temporary) Complaints Committee, whose members are not involved in the conduct to which the complaint relates.

Purpose of establishing a complaints procedure

- To provide participants, guests, and employees with an institutionalized opportunity to file complaints and be heard;
- To adequately handle complaints by providing a well-considered and substantiated response;
- To use complaints and their resolution as an instrument for quality improvement.

Where in the organization is the Complaints Desk located?

The Education Office functions as the mailentrance of the Complaints Desk. The complaints policy is part of the larger code of conduct with roadmap indicating which body should be used for which type of complaint. This roadmap has been created for both internal staff and participants in study programs as well as external parties. See appendix.

What does the Complaints Desk do?

The Complaints Desk handles all complaints and objections that do not fall under the authority of the following bodies or types of complaints:

- Examination Board: requests relating to education-related matters such as exemptions, exceptions, facilities for study impediments, examination matters (related to the OER), and granting extra opportunities to take exams or submit assignments.
- Examination Appeals Board: complaints concerning examination results and assessment, the quality of grading of exams and assignments, complaints regarding admission, and complaints relating to the Examination Board.
- Confidential Counsellors: reports concerning transgressive and undesirable behavior.
- Committee on Scientific Integrity.
- Whistleblower policy.
- IT complaints, privacy issues, and data breaches.

Difference between an objection and a complaint

An objection is submitted when you disagree with a written decision communicated by a person or body within TIAS.

A complaint concerns the way in which an employee or body of TIAS has behaved towards you.

No appeal can be lodged against the decision on a complaint; the complainant must take legal action independently.

An appeal can be lodged against the decision on an objection by the participant/employee with the Appeals Committee (Academic Council).

Procedure for submitting a complaint

A (former) employee, participant, or guest submits a complaint to the Complaints Desk, including any necessary supporting documents, via the Complaints Desk email address: complaints-desk@tias.edu.

The Complaints Desk reviews the complaint, confirms receipt within 5 working days (automatic reply upon receipt), and responds in one of the following ways:

- The complaint is referred to one of the other (above-mentioned) committees if it concerns a matter outside the jurisdiction of the Complaints Desk. In such a case, the rest of this procedure does not apply.
- The Complaints Desk determines whether the complaint is clear and complete (see appendix) and then either:
 - Takes the complaint into consideration;
 - Requests additional information if necessary.

The Complaints Desk determines the nature of the complaint and which (sub-)issues are raised. It may be that the complaint can be resolved by a specific person or department. In that case, the person or department handles the complaint directly, with the Complaints Desk copied in the written resolution.

The Complaints Desk always requests additional information from the person against whom the complaint is directed. Sometimes additional information is also requested from the complainant, such as further substantiation of issues mentioned.

In some cases, the complaint may be resolved by another department within TIAS; in such cases the complaint is forwarded (the complainant is informed), and the Complaints Desk monitors how the handling progresses.

The recipient of the complaint from the Complaints Desk determines who needs to be involved in handling the complaint and establishes a temporary committee.

When gathering necessary information, the Complaints Desk may hold a hearing.

Once all information is received, the group under the leadership of the Complaints Desk makes a decision. In formulating the decision, the Complaints Desk sets out the considerations that led to the decision.

The decision is sent to the complainant, with a copy to the person against whom the complaint was directed, if applicable.

The Complaints Desk handles the complaint within 3 weeks of receipt. If more time is required, the complainant will be informed in writing.

No appeal can be lodged against the decision on a complaint.

An appeal can be lodged against the decision on an objection by the participant/employee with the external Appeals Committee.

Formal requirements

The complaint letter must be signed and contain at least:

- The name and address of the complainant;
- The date;
- A clear description of the conduct to which the complaint relates, including which body/department or employee (where possible with name, position, and workplace) acted in that way, where and towards whom the conduct took place;
- The reason why the complainant objects to the conduct.

If the complaint letter is submitted incomplete, it will not be processed. The complainant has the option to resubmit the letter fully.

If the complainant does not make use of this opportunity and the letter does not meet the requirements, the complaint will not be processed.

Not taken into consideration

If the Complaints Desk does not process the complaint, the complainant will be informed as soon as possible, but no later than 10 working days after receipt of the complaint, with reasons provided.

If another complaint, objection, or appeal has already been submitted regarding the conduct, the Complaints Desk immediately informs the complainant that the complaint will not be processed again.

The Complaints Desk does not process a complaint if it falls under other reporting and complaints procedures, but returns it with a request to submit it to the appropriate department/desk.

In the case of a hearing

The Complaints Committee gives both complainant and respondent the opportunity to be heard.

The invitation to the hearing states the composition of the committee.

The hearing of the complainant may be omitted if:

- The complaint is clearly unfounded;
- The complainant has stated they do not wish to exercise the right to be heard;
- The complainant does not indicate within the deadline set by the committee that they wish to exercise the right to be heard.

A report of the hearing is made. This report is sent to the parties for information.

The hearings of the Complaints Committee are not public.

All parties involved must treat the information confidentially.

Findings and conclusions

The Complaints Desk informs the complainant and the respondent in writing and with reasons of the findings of the investigation into the complaint, as well as of any conclusions it draws. A copy of the report of findings, the hearing report, and the advice of the Complaints Committee are attached as annexes to the decision on the complaint.

Registration

The Complaints Desk ensures proper registration of submitted complaints and reports once a year to the Executive Management Team on the number of complaints received and handled, as well as the nature and content of the complaints, and the findings and any conclusions.

Adoption

This procedure was adopted by the Executive Management Team in October 2021. A revision of the procedure, revision of the texts, and the addition of a roadmap in the context of the Code of Conduct took place in December 2024. The complete new Code of Conduct will come into effect in Q3 of 2025.