



General Complaints Procedure

Section I General provisions

Article 1

1. Everyone has the right to submit a complaint to the Board of the University (PO Box 72, 9700 AB Groningen) about the way in which the Board of the University has treated them or another person regarding a particular matter.
2. Any conduct of an individual working under the responsibility of Board of the University will be regarded as conduct of the executive body.
3. Complaints relating to conduct which can be classified as harassment (sexual or otherwise), aggression, violence or discrimination will be handled in accordance with the '*Klachtenregeling (Seksuele) Intimidatie, Agressie, Geweld en Discriminatie RUG*' (University of Groningen Code of Conduct Concerning Sexual Harassment, Aggression, Violence and Discrimination).

Article 2

The Board of the University will ensure that oral and written complaints about its conduct and about the conduct of executive bodies working under its responsibility are handled properly.

Article 3

A decision about the handling of a complaint about the conduct of the Board of the University cannot be appealed.

Section II Submission of complaints by students

Article 4

1. Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 1.1, students (including prospective students, 'extraneous' students and prospective 'extraneous' students) must submit a complaint about the conduct of the Board of the University or of bodies or individuals working under its responsibility to the Central Portal for the Legal Protection of Student Rights in accordance with the Central Portal for the Legal Protection of Student Rights Regulations.
2. Complaints can be submitted to the Central Portal for the Legal Protection of Student Rights either orally or in writing. Oral complaints can be submitted to a student counsellor through the Student Service Centre. Written complaints can be submitted at www.rug.nl/studenten.
3. The complaint will be handled at the Faculty or Service to which the complaint relates, by a complaints coordinator designated by the Faculty Board or the management or director of a Service.
4. The procedure set out in this University of Groningen General Complaints Procedure (and Chapter 9 of the General Administrative Law Act) will apply *mutatis mutandis*.

Section III The handling of complaints

Article 5

1. If a written complaint relates to conduct against the complainant and meets the requirements of Article 5.2, then Articles 6 to 13 will apply.

2. The complaint will be signed and will include at least:
 - a. the name and address of the person submitting it
 - b. the date
 - c. an account of the conduct about which the complaint is being submitted.

Article 6

As soon as the Board of the University has addressed the complaint to the complainant's satisfaction, the obligation to apply these regulations will lapse.

Article 7

The Board of the University will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing.

Article 8

1. The complaint will be handled by a person who was not involved in the conduct to which the complaint relates.
2. Article 8.1 will not apply if the complaint relates to conduct of the Board of the University itself or of the President or a member of the Board.

Article 9

1. The Board of the University will not be obliged to handle a complaint if it relates to conduct
 - a. about which a previously submitted complaint was handled with due observance of Article 5ff
 - b. which took place more than a year before the complaint was submitted
 - c. to which the complainant objected or could have objected
 - d. against which the complainant can appeal or could have appealed
 - e. which has been or was submitted, through the initiation of proceedings, to the judgment of another judicial authority or an administrative court, or
 - f. so long as a criminal investigation at the request of the Public Prosecutor or criminal proceedings are taking place relating to that conduct, or if that conduct is part of the investigation or prosecution of a criminal offence and a criminal investigation at the request of the Public Prosecutor or criminal proceedings are taking place with regard to that offence.
2. The Board of the University will not be obliged to handle the complaint if the complainant's interest in or the gravity of the conduct is obviously insufficient.
3. The complainant will be informed in writing as soon as possible, but within no more than four weeks of receipt of the complaint, that the complaint will not be handled.

Article 10

The person to whose conduct the complaint relates will be sent a copy of the complaint and of any documents accompanying it.

Article 11

1. The Board of the University will give the complainant and the person to whose conduct the complaint relates an opportunity to be heard.
2. The complainant need not be heard if the complaint is obviously unfounded, or if the complainant has stated that he or she does not wish to exercise the right to be heard.
3. A report of the hearing will be prepared.

Article 12

1. The Board of the University will deal with the complaint within six weeks or – if Section IV applies – within ten weeks of receiving the complaint.
2. The Board of the University may postpone the settlement for four weeks at the most. Written notice of the postponement will be sent to the complainant and the person to whose conduct the complaint relates.

Article 13

1. The Board of the University will notify the complainant in writing of the findings of the investigation into the complaint and any conclusions the Board has drawn, stating the reasons.
2. If another complaint can be submitted to a person or body designated to handle complaints about the Board of the University, this will be stated in the notice.

Article 14

The Board of the University will be responsible for registering any written complaints submitted to it. The complaints registered will be published annually.

*Section IV Additional provisions for an advisory procedure for handling complaints***Article 15**

The procedure for handling complaints provided for in this section will be followed in addition to Section 3 if this is determined by order of the Board of the University.

Article 16

1. The Board of the University may put a person or committee in charge of handling complaints and giving advice about them.
2. The Board of the University may only give the person or committee general instructions.

Article 17

1. The notice of receipt referred to in Article 7 will state that a person or committee will give advice about the complaint.
2. The case will be heard by the person or committee referred to in Article 16. If a committee has been set up, it may entrust the hearing to the chair or a member of the committee.
3. The person or committee will decide regarding the application of Article 11.2.
4. The person or committee will send a report of their findings, accompanied by their advice and any recommendations, to the Board. The report will contain an account of the hearing.

Article 18

If the conclusions of the Board of the University depart from the advice given, the reasons for that departure will be stated in the conclusions and the advice will be sent along with the notice referred to in Article 13.

Article 19

These regulations can be cited as the 'General Complaints Procedure' and will take effect as of 1 September 2010.

Drawn up by the Board of the University of Groningen at its meeting on 27 July 2010.