



September 2022 – September 2023
Annual report of the University of Twente's
Complaints Committee

Established on 30 October 2023



Composition of the University of Twente's Complaints Committee

The University of Twente's Complaints Committee (hereafter: the Complaints Committee:) was composed of the following members on 1 September 2022:

- Ms Y.J. Bouwman-Bakker, external president (until 1 November 2022);
- Mr R.G. Leether, external president (from 1 November 2022)
- Mr M.A.H. van Gessel, member nominated by the Consultative Body on Personnel Matters of the University of Twente (OPUT);
- Ms J. Lubking, deputy member nominated by the OPUT;
- Mr H.A. Akse, member nominated by the employer;
- Mr J.F.C. Verberne, deputy member nominated by the employer.

In the 2022/2023 academic year, a number of changes were made to the composition of the Complaints Committee.

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

The secretary, Ms V. Trifunovic LLB, professionally supported the Complaints Committee in 2022/2023.

Complaints procedure regulations

The University of Twente's complaints procedure, which took effect on 1 June 2017, applies to the working practice of the Complaints Committee. After previous adjustments were made in 2019 and 2021, we are now working to fully update the complaints procedure, which will likely enter effect in 2024.

Complaints handled in 2022/2023

On 1 September 2022, one complaint dating from 2021/2022 was still being reviewed.

New complaints 2022/2023

In the period between 1 September 2022 and 1 September 2023, two disputes were submitted to the Complaints Committee for review. Both complaints were submitted by a student.

Complaint 22/23-01 concerned the treatment of the student by a University of Twente lecturer during their studies. The complaint also covers the lack of quality of the education provided by this employee.

Complaint 22/23-02 was in reference to the supervision the complainant received from a University of Twente lecturer during the final two components of her master's programme (Research Topics and Final Thesis).

Issue of recommendations 2022/2023 and complaints handling by the Executive Board

Complaints from 2021/2022

On 1 September 2022, the handling of one complaint from 2021/2022 had not yet been completed. The complaint in question (2022-09) was filed by an employee and concerned the conduct of (employees of) the University of Twente in the context of an application procedure. Due to a challenge request, the handling of this case has been continued by another Complaints Committee which was appointed ad hoc. The complaint was subsequently withdrawn by the complainant.

Complaints from 2022/2023

The Complaints Committee handled two complaints in 2022/2023. One complaint was subsequently withdrawn by the complainant. In respect of the other complaint, the Complaints Committee issued a recommendation to the Executive Board.

The complaint in question (22/23-02) concerns the conduct of a lecturer in the context of the complainant's supervision during the final stages (Research Topics and Final Thesis) of the master's programme. The Complaints Committee recommended declaring the complaint unfounded. The Executive Board's decision on this complaint was in line with the committee's recommendation.

Total complaints handled in 2022/2023

The Complaints Committee considered a total of three complaints in 2022/2023. Two of these were subsequently withdrawn by the complainants. For only one complaint a recommendation was issued to the Executive Board.

Withdrawal of complaints

In 2022/2023 two complaints (2022-09 and 22/23-01) were withdrawn.

In one case, a settlement was reached, in another case the complainant decided not to pursue the complaints procedure on other grounds.

Summary of the Complaints Committee's activities

The table below represents the 2022/2023 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

	2022/2023	2021/2022	2020	2019	2018
New complaints received	2	12*	5	4	4
Complaints handled and completed	1	5*	4	1	4
Withdrawal of complaints	2	5	3	0	2
After reaching agreement	1	0	1	0	0
Without reaching agreement	1	0	2	0	2
Termination of complaints procedure (no recommendation/not withdrawn by complainant)	0	2**	0	1	0
Still ongoing (expected to be handled the following year)	0	1	1	4	2

* Reporting applies for a longer period than the year before and the year after.

* Ten new complaints were reported in the Complaints Committee's 2021/2022 annual report. For 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.

Other items

The number of new complaints was considerably lower during the last academic year than in previous years. It is difficult to provide a clear cause for this. On the one hand it could indicate that University of Twente has been able to successfully create a socially safe working environment. On the other hand it is possible that complaints and potential complaints are being dealt with by officials within the help structure such as confidential advisors, student counsellors and the Ombuds Officer at an earlier stage.

From talks with fellow secretaries from the Complaints Committees of five other Dutch universities, it also became clear that the number of complaints received there had also reduced significantly.

To increase awareness among employees of the existence of the Complaints Committee, an extra information bulletin was uploaded to the staff portal in 2022 as well. The reason for this was the appointment of R.G. Leether as the new president of the Complaints Committee. This opportunity was also used to publish an interview with him in U-Today, during which attention was also given to the existence of the Complaints Committee.

At the moment, the president and the secretary of the Complaints Committee are jointly working with Human Resources on an update of the complaints procedure. The goal is to improve the text and content of the procedure where necessary. The new complaints procedure is expected to be ready at the beginning of 2024.

Every six months there is a meeting of all officials within the support structure. 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 these meetings (where necessary together with the president) to improve connection with the support structure.

On 5 April 2023, the president and the secretary of the Complaints Committee spoke to the Ombuds Officer. The intention is to make this an annual event.