



UNIVERSITY OF THE AEGEAN
INTERNAL RULES OF THE ORGANIZATION
OF THE “COMPLAINTS – RECOMMENDATIONS” SERVICE – “C-R”

COMPLAINTS / complaints@aegean.gr

1. Generally

The “Complaints – Recommendations” Service was constituted in November 2018 in the meeting of the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) (MO.DI.P.) Committee of the Institution under number 1/28.11.2018. The Service was established and operates within the framework of the implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) of the University of the Aegean, as approved by the no. 830/9.3.2018 Government Gazette, and, specifically, in accordance with ***Process 5: Quality Data Collection: measurement, analysis and improvement and Procedure 5.3. Management of Complaints-Recommendations.***

The purpose of this procedure is the collection by the QAU (MO.DI.P.) of the complaints/suggestions data sent to the institutional address complaints@aegean.gr regarding all the activities of the University of the Aegean, and their connection to a series of actions, which aim to improve the quality of the services provided by the Institution.

2.Right to Submit Complaints - Recommendations

The University of the Aegean, in the context of its continuous effort to improve its services, provides the right to submit suggestions, comments, complaints or recommendations not only to the members of its academic community and to the direct beneficiaries of its services, but also to all citizens of the local communities where the University is located, as well as to all stakeholders, both on a national and international

level. Communication with the Service takes place by name or anonymously, if there are reasons why citizens do not wish their identity to be disclosed during the processing of their request, in accordance with the specifications resulting from Regulation 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of the European Union (GDPR) on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data.

3.Competent Bodies

The competent bodies for the provision and management of the services in question are:

a) **the QAU (MO.DI.P.) Office**, which receives the proposals, comments, complaints, or recommendations from citizens, which are sent to the e-mail address complaints@aegean.gr . All complaints/recommendations submitted are collected and recorded in a special file by the QAU (MO.DI.P.) Office and in each case, the Office keeps a detailed record of the progress of their implementation.

b) **the QAU (MO.DI.P.) Committee**, which issues annual progress reports on the complaints/recommendations received and the status of their settlement, while utilizing the above reports in the context of Process 4 of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS), that is during the internal evaluation and review of the IQAS, with the ultimate goal of improvement of the Institution's operation at all levels.

4.General Guidelines and Management Procedures of the "Complaints-Recommendations" - "C-R" Service

4.1 General guidelines:

- i. The QAU (MO.DI.P.) Office receives the Complaints-Recommendations ("C-R") messages from stakeholders. In case the interested parties do not wish their identity to be disclosed, they shall indicate this in their initial message.
- ii. The QAU (MO.DI.P.) Office shall forward the signed 'C-R' messages to the institution's Service/Department concerned/referred to by the message. The forwarding of the "C-R" messages to the Departments concerned/referred to shall take into account the following:

o If the sender to the "C-R" wishes to remain anonymous, in accordance with what is stated on the Institution's website (<https://www.aegean.gr/%CF%80%CE%B1%CF%81%CE%AC%CF%80%CE%BF%CE%BD%CE%B1-%CF%83%CF%85%CF%83%CF%84%CE%AC%CF%83%CE%B5%CE%B9%CF%8>)

In this case, the QAU (MO.DI.P.) Office does not forward the name of the sender.

o If it is a "C-R" message which contains general comments/recommendations that do not necessarily involve the sender himself/herself, respectively the QAU (MO.DI.P.) Office does not need to forward the name of the sender.

o If, on the contrary, the "C-R" message is linked to the sender, in which case the QAU (MO.DI.P.) Office shall also forward the name of the sender (unless the sender has requested anonymity) so that it can be taken into account in the preparation of the reply.

iii. In case when the "C-R" message does not clearly indicate the addressee(s) or when the "C-R" message contains ambiguous signs or multiple comments with different addressees, then, the QAU (MO.DI.P.) Office shall carry out a preliminary cooperation with the General Directorate of Administrative Support and/or the competent Directorate and/or the competent Vice Rector and/or the Legal Advisor of the Institution (as appropriate), in order to identify the Department/Service concerned to which the "C-R" message should be forwarded.

iv. Before the reply is forwarded to the sender of the "C-R" by the Department/Service concerned to the "C-R" message, it is necessary to be checked by the relevant Directorate and/or the Legal Advisor of the Institution, in case of questionable points both in terms of content and wording of the response.

v. The final reply shall be sent by the QAU (MO.DI.P.) Office to the person who submitted a "C-R" and shall not be communicated to any other recipient. Similarly, the Departments concerned are instructed not to communicate to other recipients the replies sent to the QAU (MO.DI.P.) Office.

4.2 General Procedures for the management of the “Complaints - Recommendations” – “C-R” Service:

- i. **Informing** of the person concerned is carried out by the QAU (MO.DI.P.) Office, if, from the initial check (see general guidelines), there is no need for special management.
- ii. **Forwarding** of the "C - R" to the Department/Service concerned takes place by the QAU (MO.DI.P.) Office. Upon receipt of the correspondence, it is checked whether the "C - R" refers to the wrong department, in which case it is forwarded to the relevant one.
- iii. **Reception and checking of the reply** by the Department/Service is carried out in accordance with the general guidelines.
- iv. **Forwarding of the reply to the concerned person(s)** shall be done exclusively by the QAU (MO.DI.P.) Office of the Institution.
- v. **Informing the concerned Department/Service** shall be completed with the forwarding of the above reply exclusively by the QAU (MO.DI.P.) Office of the Institution.

4.2.1. Special Procedure: 1

When **the "C-R" has already been dealt with**, if, for whatever reason, a period of time has elapsed since the date of the "C - R"'s dispatch and the necessary actions have been initiated or completed in the meantime by the competent Department/Service, then the following actions shall be implemented:

- The QAU (MO.DI.P.) Office checks and confirms that the "C- R " has been dealt with and in what way, either through written or verbal communication with the relevant Department/Service.
- The QAU (MO.DI.P.) Office forwards the "C - R" to the relevant Department(s)/Service(s), if, nevertheless, the Department(s) concerned wishes to respond, in accordance with the general guidelines and the general procedure ii. *“Forwarding the "C - R" to the Department(s)/Service(s) concerned.”*
- The QAU (MO.DI.P.) Office shall inform the person concerned, in accordance with the general procedure i.

- The verification of the reply by the department/service concerned and the forwarding of the reply to the person concerned shall take place in accordance with general procedures iii and iv.
- Otherwise, if the service does not wish to reply further, the reply will be sent directly by the QAU (MO.DI.P.) Office.
- If it is considered that, in addition to the finding that the "C-R" has been dealt with, there is the scope for further justification/clarification, as a general stance on the issue, and the Department/Service concerned does not wish to respond further, then the additional justification/clarification shall be sent by the QAU (MO.DI.P.) Office to the sender of the "C-R", but without notification to the department concerned, in accordance with general guidelines (iv) and (v).

4.2.2. Special Procedure: 2

In cases in which the "C - R" implicitly contains a form of charge, it is first of all necessary to clarify the data and to carry out the necessary preliminary work with the Department/Service involved, in the broader context of the self-evaluation and self-improvement procedures of the services provided by the Institution. The relevant processing actions of the "C - R" are carried out as follows, in accordance with the general guidelines:

- Preliminary cooperation with involved stakeholders
- Informing the sender, as in Procedure I.
- Forwarding of the "C-R" to the Department/Service concerned, as per general procedure II.
- Thorough review of the Department's/Service's response, as per general guideline iv.
- Forwarding the response to the person concerned.
- Forwarding the reply to the Department/Service concerned
- Forwarding the same response to the Head of the Institution for his/her information (e.g., to the Chair of the Department for "C-R" concerning the Academic Secretariat).

4.2.3. Special Procedure: 3

In cases where the "Cs - Rs" are "unreasonable, vague, incomprehensible or repeated in an abusive manner", in accordance with Article 4 par.3 of the Code of

Administrative Procedure, Departments/Services are exempted from the obligations under paragraph 1 of the above article, if it is considered that the "C - R" has the above characteristics. In this case, and in cooperation with the Institution's Legal Advisor, who is requested to confirm the above finding, the sender will be informed by the QAU (MO.DI.P.) Office, exclusively by means of a message only, that he/she will not receive a reply for these reasons.

4.2.4. Special Procedure: 4

In cases in which the "C -R" contains a direct form of charge, the "C - R" is forwarded to the Institution's Legal Advisor, who will determine the procedure to be followed.

4.3. Filing of Complaints-Recommendations

The QAU (MO.DI.P.) Office keeps the Service's "Complaints-Recommendations" file:

- By imprinting the history (tracks) of each "C - R", i.e., by recording all the necessary processes, e.g., input, check, response, forwarding, completion of procedure.
- By grouping per thematic category the "Cs - Rs", e.g. administrative, academic, student.
- By grouping the "Cs - Rs" by relevant Directorate for their information.

4.4 Evaluation-Feedback

According to and in accordance with the specifications of the Institution's IQAS, the record of the Service accompanied by relevant observations and comments are annually presented by the responsible Vice Rector to the QAU (MO.DI.P.) Committee. The Committee, in order to prepare the annual report, is asked both to evaluate the data and contact the respective Department(s)/Service(s) for feedback, and to suggest procedures for self-evaluation/improvement of the involved Department(s)/Service(s) with the "C-R".