



TAITA TAVETA UNIVERSITY

P.O. Box 635-80300 Voi. website: www.ttu.ac.ke;

E-mail: vc@ttu.ac.ke; Tel: 020 8150240

TAITA TAVETA UNIVERSITY COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY

VISION

To be a premier institution in education, training, research, innovation and community outreach for sustainable development

MISSION

To produce leaders and professionals in engineering, science and entrepreneurship through knowledge creation, dissemination and application for socio-economic development.

Core Values

- a) **Result Oriented:** The University is committed to budgeting and planning that is geared towards achieving desired results with minimum expenses.
- b) **Quality:** All work done in the University shall ensure products of the highest standard are achieved.
- c) **Transparency and Accountability:** The University is committed in ensuring all dealings will be open and accountable to stakeholders.
- d) **Innovativeness:** In the face of many challenges, innovation is championed to ensure set targets are achieved.
- e) **Professionalism and Ethical Conduct:** The University shall ensure staff uphold the highest professional and ethical standards in their assignments

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Acronyms..... | 3 |
| 1.0 Introduction..... | 4 |
| 2.0 Objective and Purpose..... | 4 |
| 3.0 Application/Scope..... | 4 |
| 4.0 Definition of Terms..... | 4 |
| 5.0 Commitment..... | 5 |
| 6.0 Responsibility and Authority..... | 5 |
| 7.0 Guiding Principles of effective complaints handling..... | 6 |
| 8.0 Complaints mechanism..... | 7 |
| a) Communication..... | 7 |
| b) Receipt of complaint..... | 7 |
| c) Tracking of complaint..... | 7 |
| d) Acknowledgement of complaint..... | 7 |
| e) Initial assessment of complaint..... | 7 |
| f) Investigation of complaints..... | 7 |
| g) Response to complaints..... | 8 |
| h) Communicating the decision..... | 8 |
| i) Closing the complaint..... | 8 |
| 9.0 Establishment of a Complaints Handling Committee..... | 8 |
| 10.0 Complaints Handling Committee Terms of reference..... | 8 |
| 11.0 Establishment of complaint reporting mechanisms..... | 9 |
| 12.0 Complaint Handling Desk..... | 9 |
| 13.0 Complainants right to appeal their complaint to the next stage..... | 9 |
| 14.0 Complaints Handling Procedure..... | 10 |
| 15.0 Appointment of a Complaint Officer..... | 10 |
| 16.0 Training of Complaint Officers..... | 10 |
| 17.0 Confidentiality..... | 10 |
| 18.0 Quality controls..... | 11 |
| 19.0 Review..... | 11 |
| APPENDICES..... | 12 |

Acronyms

| | | |
|-----|---|--|
| AFP | - | Administration, Finance and Planning |
| ARO | - | Academic, Research and Outreach |
| CAJ | - | Commission on Administrative Justice |
| DVC | - | Deputy Vice-Chancellor |
| UMB | - | University Management Board |
| ISO | - | International Organisation for Standardization |
| ToR | - | Terms of Reference |
| TTU | - | Taita Taveta University |
| VC | - | Vice Chancellor |

1.0 Introduction

In preparing this policy, TTU has endeavoured to align its procedures with relevant legal requirements and current best practices. In particular, this policy is designed to satisfy the performance contracting guidelines issued by the Ombudsman (CAJ) and also ISO 10002-2014- Customer Satisfaction- Guidelines for complaints handling organisations.

2.0 Objective and Purpose

TTU seeks to maintain its reputation as a university delivering high quality services and commits to maintain its responsiveness to the needs and concerns of all its customers.

This Policy is designed to provide requisite guidelines on the manner in which TTU shall receive and handle complaints made against the Institution, its stakeholders and its employees.

The objective of the Policy is to assist the university, its stakeholders and its employees in resolving complaints in an efficient, effective and professional manner.

3.0 Application/Scope

This Policy shall be applicable to the Council, Management, staff, students and stakeholders of the University.

4.0 Definition of Terms

- a) **Complainant** - person, organisation or its representative, making a complaint
- b) **Complaint** - expression of dissatisfaction made to the organisation, related to its products, or the complaints-handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.
- c) **Customer** - organisation or person that receives a product or service
- d) **Customer satisfaction** - customer's perception of the degree to which the customer's requirements have been fulfilled.
- e) **Customer service** - interaction of the organisation with the customer throughout the life cycle of a product.
- f) **Executive Management** - those staff who serve in leadership positions including Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellors.
- g) **Feedback** - opinions, comments and expressions of interest in the products or the complaint-handling process.
- h) **Management** - those staff who serve in leadership positions including Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Finance Officer, Registrar, Deans, and Head/Chairs of Departments
- i) **Interested party** - person or group having an interest in the performance or success of the institution.
- j) **Objective** - complaint-handling, something sought, or aimed for, related to complaint handling
- k) **Process** - set of interrelated or interacting activities which transforms inputs into outputs
- l) **Public Officer** - as defined in Section 2 of the Public Officers Ethics Act
- m) **Staff** - an employee of TTU
- n) **Student** - a person enrolled as a learner in the University.

5.0 Commitment

TTU is actively committed to effective and efficient handling of complaints raised by her customers.

6.0 Responsibility and Authority

- a) The Executive Management shall be responsible for the following:
 - i). ensuring that the complaints-handling process and objectives are established within the University;
 - ii). ensuring all complaints are handled with fairness, accountability and in respect to diversity;
 - iii). ensuring that the complaints-handling process is planned, designed, implemented, maintained and continually improved in accordance with this Complaints Handling Policy;
 - iv). identifying and allocating the resources needed for an effective and efficient complaints-handling process;
 - v). ensuring the promotion of awareness of the complaints-handling process and the need for a customer focus throughout the Institution;
 - vi). ensuring that information about the complaints-handling process is communicated to customers, complainants, and, where applicable, other parties directly concerned in an easily accessible manner;
 - vii). appointing a complaints officer and clearly defining his or her responsibilities;
 - viii). Periodically reviewing the complaints-handling process to ensure that it is effectively maintained and continually improved.

- b) The Deans /Heads/Chairs of Department shall, within their area of responsibility, be responsible for the following
 - i). ensuring that the complaints-handling process is implemented;
 - ii). liaising with the Complaints Officer in monitoring, evaluation and reporting on all aspects of complaints handling;
 - iii). ensuring the promotion of awareness of the complaints-handling process and of the need for a customer focus;
 - iv). ensuring that information about the complaints-handling process is properly documented and easily accessible;
 - v). reporting on actions and decisions with respect to complaints handling;
 - vi). ensuring monitoring of the complaints-handling process is undertaken and recorded;
 - vii). ensuring that action is taken to correct a problem, prevent it happening in the future, and that the event is recorded;
 - viii). Ensuring that complaints-handling data are available for the Executive Management review.

- c) All employees who are in contact with customers and complainants shall:
 - i). Be trained in complaints handling;
 - ii). Comply with any complaints reporting requirements determined by TTU;

- iii). Treat customers in a courteous manner and promptly respond to their complaints or direct them to the appropriate individual; and
 - iv). Show good interpersonal and good communication skills.
- d) All employees shall:
- i). Be aware of their roles, responsibilities and authorities in respect of complaints,
 - ii). Be aware of what procedures to follow and what information to give to complainants, and
 - iii). Report complaints which have a significant impact to the Institution.

7.0 Guiding Principles of effective complaints handling

As outlined below all stakeholders and employees should consider the following guiding principles of effective complaints handling

| Principle | TTU Response |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Accessibility | Our Complaints Handling Policy is readily accessible to all customers, stakeholders and employees. The policy is easy to understand and includes details on making and resolving complaints. |
| Accountability | All customers, stakeholders and employees accept responsibility for effective complaints handling. The Complaints Officer will ensure that, where appropriate, issues raised in the complaints handling process are reflected in employee performance evaluation. |
| Charges | There will be no charge to the complainant for making a complaint. |
| Confidentiality | Personally, identifiable information concerning the complainant is actively protected from disclosure unless the complainant expressly consents to its disclosure. |
| Continual Improvement | Our complaints handling system process will be reviewed periodically, and at least annually, to aim to enhance its efficient delivery of effective outcomes. |
| Customer focused approach | All customers, stakeholder's employees, including the members of the Council, the Executive Management team, are committed to efficient and fair resolution of complaints. We shall actively solicit feedback from our clients on a regular basis and acknowledge a client's right to complain. |
| Objectivity | Each complaint is addressed in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner through the complaints handling process |
| Visibility | Our Complaints handling policy is available on the TTU website and also internally |

8.0 Complaints mechanism

a) Communication

TTU shall provide information concerning the complaints-handling process, such as brochures, pamphlets, or electronic based information readily available to customers, complainants and other interested parties. The information shall contain the following:

- i). Where complaints can be made;
- ii). How complaints can be made;
- iii). Information to be provided by the complainant;
- iv). The process for handling complaints;
- v). Time periods associated with various stages in the process;
- vi). The complainant's options for remedy, including external means;
- vii). How the complainant can obtain feedback on the status of the complaint.

b) Receipt of complaint

Upon reporting of the initial complaint, the complainant should record with supporting information and a unique identifier code. The following information shall be necessary for the effective handling of the complaint:

- i). A description of the complaint and relevant supporting data;
- ii). The requested remedy;
- iii). The service or product complained about;
- iv). The department, or persons involved;
- v). Immediate action (if any).

c) Tracking of complaint

The complaint shall be tracked from initial receipt through the entire process until the complainant is satisfied with the final decision made. An up-to-date status shall be made available to the complainant upon request and at regular intervals.

d) Acknowledgement of complaint

Receipt of each complaint shall be acknowledged to the complainant immediately (either via post, phone or e-mail.)

e) Initial assessment of complaint

Each complaint shall be initially assessed in terms of criteria such as severity, safety implication, complexity, impact, and the need and possibility of immediate action.

f) Investigation of complaints

Every reasonable effort shall be made to investigate all the relevant circumstances and information surrounding a complaint. The level of investigation shall be commensurate with the seriousness, frequency of occurrence and severity of the complaint.

g) Response to complaints

After an appropriate investigation, the Complaints Officer shall offer a response to correct the problem and prevent it happening in the future. Where the complaint cannot be immediately resolved, it shall be dealt with in a manner intended to lead to its effective resolution as the earliest time frame possible.

h) Communicating the decision

The decision or any action taken regarding the complaint, which is relevant to the complainant or to the employee involved, shall be communicated to them in writing as soon as the decision or action is taken.

i) Closing the complaint

- i). Once the complainant has been informed of the decision or action, the action shall be recorded.
- ii). Where the complainant rejects the decision or action, the complaint shall remain open. This shall be recorded and the complainant shall be informed of alternative forms of internal and external recourse available.

9.0 Establishment of a Complaints Handling Committee

TTU shall establish a Complaints Handling Committee who will comprise of the following membership:

| | | |
|------------------------------------|---|------------------|
| a) Dean of School | - | Chairman |
| b) Chairman of Department | - | Member |
| c) Student Representative | - | Member |
| d) University Librarian | - | Member |
| e) Head of Department, Procurement | - | Member |
| f) Finance Officer | - | Member |
| g) Head of Department, Security | - | Member |
| h) Head of Human Resource | - | Member |
| i) Dean of Students | - | Member |
| j) Nominee (ARO) | - | Member |
| k) Nominee (AFP) | - | Member |
| l) Complaints Officer | - | Secretary |

10.0 Complaints Handling Committee Terms of reference

The Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Committee shall be as follows but not limited to the following:

- a) To consider each complaint that reaches stage two (2) of TTU Complaints Policy and Procedure, therefore acting as the final stage in TUUC complaints process.
- b) Documentation of all complaints, their resolutions and archiving of the same on behalf of TTU management.

- c) To provide a fair hearing of the written statement prepared by the complainant(s). The statement can be presented by the complainant(s) or heard in their absence.
- d) To ensure that the complainant(s) involved is on an equal footing procedurally and able to participate fully in the proceedings. This includes the TTU Complaints Officer assisting or otherwise facilitating the complainant(s) in the presentation of their case.
- e) To approve the terms of the document sent to the complainant(s) to notify him/her of the outcome of his/her complaint.
- f) To recommend to TTU Management any changes in policy that may be necessary and which may flow from lessons learned from the complaint investigations and/or appropriate recompense issued to the complainant(s) by TTU.
- g) To ensure that no student/ stakeholder/customer is disadvantaged as a consequence of making a complaint.
- h) To ensure that confidentiality of both the complainant(s) and the subject of any complaint are respected.
- i) To recommend changes to TTU Complaints Policy and Procedure as appropriate.
- j) To recommend any changes required to the Complaints Committee Terms of Reference to the TTU Management Board
- k) Monitoring and scrutiny of the TTU Internal Complaints Handling Procedure.
- l) Co-opt additional members for a period of time or specific complaint review (in the event of a Member declaring an interest in a particular case, for example) or to provide specialist skills or knowledge and experience.

11.0 Establishment of complaint reporting mechanisms

Each department shall establish a reporting mechanism which shall include the following:

- i). Establish a Complaints Register as shown.
- ii). Provide a Complaints Box
- iii). Provide a Complaints Desk
- iv). Appoint a Complaints Handling Officer within each Department

12.0 Complaint Handling Desk

- a) The Vice Chancellor shall setup a Complaints Handling Desk to enable complainants who may wish to lodge their complaint from a central location.
- b) The Complaint Handling Desk shall constitute the following:
 - i). Email link for receiving complaints
 - ii). A web portal for lodging complaints
 - iii). Infrastructure for proper archiving of complaints and their resolutions

13.0 Complainants right to appeal their complaint to the next stage

- a) The Complaints Handling Committee will not enter into correspondence with the complainant(s) following delivery of its decision.
- b) The complainant(s) retains the right to appeal their complaint to the next stage of the complaints process as follows:
 - i). For suppliers and other customers related to provision of goods and services

- Deputy Principal (AFP)
dvc-afp@ttu.ac.ke
- ii). For customers related to provision of Teaching, research and Outreach
 - DVC (ARO)
dvc-aro@ttu.ac.ke
- iii). For customers related to provisions of work environment and Employee welfare
 - DVC (AFP)
dvc-afp@ttu.ac.ke
- iv). Where complainant is not satisfied with (i), (ii), (iii)above they may seek redress to the VC
vcl@ttu.ac.ke
- v). For external redress mechanism
The Commission Secretary/Chief Executive Officer
Commission on Administrative Justice
P.O Box 20414 -00200
Nairobi
Tel: +254 (20) 2270000
certificationpc@ombudsam.go.ke
www.ombudsman.go.ke

14.0 Complaints Handling Procedure

- a) The Complaints handling procedure shall be developed and updated/reviewed on a timely basis
- b) Complaints received shall be acknowledged within two (2) working days either in written or through telephone.
- c) Complaints will be resolved and responded to within five (5) working days. Where a complaint cannot be resolved within the stipulated time frame, the complainant shall be contacted either in writing or by telephone and will be updated until the matter has been fully resolved. Provisions of Clause 10 above shall apply.

15.0 Appointment of a Complaint Officer

The Vice Chancellor shall appoint a Complaints Officer who shall be responsible for all complaints addressed to the University.

16.0 Training of Complaint Officers

The Complaints officer shall be required to attend continuous training or capacity building on complaints handling.

17.0 Confidentiality

- a) The Complaints Officer and Committee members shall be required to sign confidentiality oath
- b) In addition to ensuring complainant confidentiality, the complaints handling process shall ensure confidentiality in case of complaints against personnel. The details of such complaints shall be known only by those directly concerned.

- c) However, confidentiality shall not be used as an excuse to avoid dealing with a complaint.

18.0 Quality controls

- a) All Complaints shall be analysed by the Complaints Officer on a monthly basis, documented and archived.
- b) The Complaints Officer shall inform the Committee chair to set up the meetings as appropriate so that the complaints are resolved in a timely manner
- c) The Complaints Officers shall identify and report on systemic or recurring problems. Once such problems are identified and reported, the Management shall consider and apply the actions needed to address them and prevent their future recurrence.
- d) The Complaints handling process shall be reviewed periodically, and at least annually, in order to enhance its delivery of efficient and effective outcomes. This review shall be performed by the Complaints Officer or an appropriate appointee. The Management shall consider what actions it may need to take to address any deficiencies identified in the review.
- e) Where appropriate, issues that arise as a result of the complaints handling process may be incorporated in the process for monitoring and evaluation of employee's performance.

19.0 Review

The Policy shall be reviewed at such intervals upon recommendation by Management of TTU and approval by the Council.

APPENDICES

Appendix A complaints register

Appendix B complaints follow up

Appendix C complaint form

Appendix D Escalation flowchart

Appendix E Audit form