

Appeals and Complaints Procedures for Applicants

1. General principles

1.1 Athens Tech College is committed to operating a high quality admissions service which is fair, efficient and transparent, and in line with the policies outlined in this document.

We aim to handle appeals and complaints in a way that:

- encourages informal resolution;
- is fair and efficient;
- is sensitive to, and understanding of, the concerns of applicants;
- allows for the greatest degree of confidentiality, involving only those who need to be part of the resolution process.

1.2 Appeals and complaints are handled separately from the application for entry. An appeal or complaint made in good faith will not prejudice Athens Tech's opinion of you or our assessment of current or future applications. It is important to note that most appeals and complaints are resolved amicably and without recourse to the formal stage of the procedure.

1.3 Appeals and complaints may be submitted by an individual applicant but not by a third party (school, parent or other representative), unless the third party has the explicit consent from the applicant to act on their behalf.

1.4 We are only able to consider appeals or complaints relating to applicants, i.e. those who have submitted a formal application to Athens Tech College. We cannot consider appeals or complaints about responses to general enquiries prior to or outside the application process.

2. Scope of the procedure

2.1 This procedure concerns admissions decisions only. Admissions decisions are defined as decisions relating to the academic selection of candidates for entry to Athens Tech College and the terms on which candidates are selected, including the assessment of fee status and tuition fee. Admissions decisions do not involve setting the level of the tuition fee, determining arrangements for paying the tuition fee, awarding funding or allocating accommodation.

2.2 This procedure is relevant to applicants applying for entry to courses where the admissions regulations and selection procedures are the sole responsibility of Athens Tech College.

2.3 The Appeals and Complaints Procedure cannot be used where our decision resulted from:

- a failure on your part to fulfil academic or non-academic requirements for admission;

- feedback from a third party, such as a provider of a work or training placement which forms an integral part of the course to which you have applied.

Appeals

- 2.4 For the purposes of this procedure, an appeal is defined as a request by an applicant for a formal review of the outcome of an admissions decision.
- 2.5 Applicants may appeal an admissions decision by Athens Tech College if they feel that Athens Tech did not appropriately consider their application in accordance with the Student Admissions Policy and other published procedures, or that it did not take account of all the information provided in the application.
- 2.6 Applicants may not appeal against an admissions decision based on the academic judgement of Athens Tech's staff about their suitability for entry to a particular course. Academic judgment is defined as a judgment where only the opinion of an academic expert is sufficient to decide on the matter in question. Academic judgment is not involved in determining: the fairness of procedures; whether procedures have been correctly interpreted; what the facts are; the appropriateness of Athens Tech's communications; whether an opinion has been expressed outside the area of an academic's competence; the way the evidence has been considered; or whether there is evidence of bias or maladministration.
- 2.7 In order for issues to be dealt with and if necessary rectified in a timely manner, appeals should normally be received by the Admissions Office no more than 30 working days after the issuance of the admissions decision that is being appealed.

Complaints

- 2.8 For the purposes of this procedure, a complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction about:
- Athens Tech and/or departmental admissions policies and procedures which have been used to reach an admissions decision;
 - the actions, or the lack of actions, by Athens Tech College or its staff.
- 2.9 A complaint will not normally result in the amendment of an admissions decision.

3. The Procedure

3.1 Feedback –Phase 1

If applicants are unhappy with an Admissions decision, or with the way their application has been handled, in the first instance they should raise their concerns informally in the first instance and seek feedback from the Admissions Office for the course to which they have applied.

3.2 Formal Appeal/Complaint – Phase 2

If applicants are not satisfied with the feedback provided by Athens Tech College, they can appeal an Admissions decision or submit a complaint using our Admissions Appeals and Complaints form (<https://www.athtech.gr/rules-regulations/>) or by stating that they are appealing/complaining under Phase 2 of Athens Tech College’s Admissions Appeals and Complaints Procedure.

3.3 We will acknowledge receipt of their request for an appeal or complaint within 3 working days.

Appeals

3.4 If applicants request a review of an Admissions decision through an appeal, the process will be led by the Head of Academic Services, or nominee, who will review the available application and decision-making information with the relevant academic department.

3.5 We will aim to respond within 15 working days of receipt of the appeal. If a delay is anticipated in responding within the above timescale, we will inform the appellant in writing of the progress being made towards the consideration of their appeal.

3.6 If the appeal is upheld, Athens Tech College will take such reasonable action as is appropriate and inform the appellant of the outcome. If the appeal is not upheld, the appellant will be informed of the reasons for the decision in writing.

Complaints

3.7 If applicants submit a complaint, the Head of Academic Services, or nominee, will investigate it, seeking relevant information from the academic department or other parts of Athens Tech College, as appropriate, and from them if necessary.

3.8 In making a complaint, applicants should provide the following information:

- the nature of, and reasons for, their complaint, giving as much detail as possible;
- any steps they have already taken to resolve the matter, if appropriate;
- details of any response they have received to date and a statement as to why the response(s) is not satisfactory;
- an indication of the outcome they are seeking.

3.9 We will aim to respond within 15 working days of receipt of the complaint. If a delay is anticipated in responding within the above timescale, we will inform the complainant in writing of the progress being made towards the consideration of their complaint.

3.10 If the complaint is upheld, Athens Tech College, will take such reasonable action as is appropriate and inform the complainant of the outcome. If the complaint is not upheld, the complainant will be informed of the reasons for the decision in writing.

Case Review – Phase 3

3.11 Following Phase 2, if applicants are not satisfied with the decision taken in respect of their appeal or complaint, they may wish to request a Case Review. They may only request a Case Review on one or more of the following grounds:

- i. that there was a material procedural irregularity which rendered the process leading to the decision taken in respect of their appeal or complaint unfair;
- ii. that material which they could not reasonably have been expected to produce at the time of the decision taken in respect of their appeal or complaint casts substantial doubt upon the appropriateness of that decision;
- iii. that the decision taken in respect of their appeal or complaint was manifestly unreasonable.

3.12 The request for a Case Review must be made within 10 working days of the full written response provided in relation to the Stage 2 appeal or complaint, although the Principal may extend this time limit. Case Reviews can be requested by submitting a Case Review Request form (available to download from: <https://www.athtech.gr/rules-regulations/>)

3.13 The request will be considered by Athens Tech College’s Principal who may decide:

1. to uphold the complaint;
2. to establish a Case Review Panel;
3. that the matter should be referred for consideration in line with another Athens Tech College’s procedure;
4. that there are insufficient grounds to take further action, thus concluding the consideration of the matter under these procedures.

3.14 They will be notified of the Principal’s decision in writing within 28 working days (of the receipt of the request). If this is not possible, they will be informed in writing of the progress being made towards the consideration of their request for a Case Review. Where a department or service has provided written comments in response to their request for a Case Review, a copy of those comments will normally be sent to them at the time the decision is notified.

3.15 A Case Review Panel will comprise the Principal, an Athens Tech College’s Officer, and another member of Athens Tech College.

3.16 They will be informed of the membership of the Case Review Panel, and the procedure to be followed, at least 14 working days in advance of the review date.

- 3.17 The review will be conducted in private and all relevant facts will be taken into consideration. Applicants may attend and be accompanied by a friend or representative who may speak and act on their behalf. They may request any person to give evidence on their behalf and members of staff named in a complaint, or their representative, will also be invited to make their case to the panel. A secretary will be appointed to take notes of the meeting.
- 3.18 They will be notified of the decision of the Case Review Panel in writing. If the complaint is upheld they will be informed of the action to be taken to resolve the matter. If it is not upheld, then they can expect to be given an explanation.

4. Unacceptable behaviour

- 4.1 Athens Tech College may exceptionally terminate or suspend consideration of an appeal or complaint where an appellant or complainant's behaviour is unacceptable or disruptive, for example where aggressive or unreasonable demands are made or where repeated representations are made on matters which have already been considered under these procedures.

5. Monitoring, review and approval of the Appeals and Complaints Procedure

- 5.1 Without breaching confidentiality, all formal appeals and complaints submitted under the Athens Tech College's Appeals and Complaints Procedure for Applicants are monitored, as is the action taken to rectify any practice deemed inappropriate.
- 5.2 The Athens Tech College's Appeals and Complaints Procedure for Applicants is reviewed annually.
- 5.3 Contact information:

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