

## Process for Handling Complaints within Quality Assurance Procedures

This document sets forth the process applied by the National Accreditation Bureau for Higher Education (NAB) regarding complaints submitted by higher education institutions, higher vocational schools, or individuals. The process applies to complaints regarding the conduct of NAB's accreditation processes or other quality assurance procedures, as well as against individuals involved in these procedures on behalf of NAB. It does not constitute a review or appeal against the outcome of these procedures, typically against administrative decisions of NAB, where the process is bindingly governed by the Administrative Procedure Code. Similarly, this process does not apply to submissions in the form of inquiries, requests for an opinion, or requests for a statement.

NAB handles complaints based on the principles of equality and non-discrimination. Filing a complaint must not be held against the complainant within the relevant quality assurance procedure nor otherwise harm them. The complaint handling process serves to enhance the transparency of NAB's quality assurance procedures and to build stakeholders' trust in NAB and its role in ensuring the quality of higher education and higher vocational education. The evaluation of received complaints at the systemic level forms part of the feedback mechanisms and internal quality assurance processes of NAB's activities.

### 1. Receipt of the Complaint

- a. A complaint may be submitted via standard methods of document delivery, namely via data box (IDS: k9z3e3y), to the electronic address ([posta@nau.gov.cz](mailto:posta@nau.gov.cz)), or in person or by mail to the mailing address (U Lužického semináře 13, 118 00 Prague 1). The complaint must clearly state that it is a complaint against a quality assurance procedure or against persons involved in this procedure, the substance of the complaint, the grounds for the complaint, and who is filing it (hereinafter the "complainant").
- b. NAB will register the received submission and forward it for processing in accordance with the NAB Rules of Record Management to the relevant employee, who is typically the person keeping the file on the matter. If the complaint is directed against the employee to whom the submission should be forwarded for handling in accordance with the NAB Rules of Record Management, it is instead forwarded to the NAB Chair via the Secretariat.
- c. Complaints handled in accordance with the process set forth in this regulation shall be recorded in the records management system in a manner that allows for periodic evaluation of complaints received over a specific period.

### 2. Review of the Matter

- a. The competent NAB employee shall assess whether the submission constitutes a complaint in the sense of this policy. If it does not, the employee shall proceed in accordance with other legal regulations<sup>1</sup> or internal rules, depending on the nature of the submission.

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<sup>1</sup> E.g., Section 175 of the Administrative Procedure Code; Section 14(3) of the Administrative Procedure Code; Section 12 of the Administrative Procedure Code.

- b. If the complaint is unclear, incomplete, insufficiently substantiated, or suffers from other remediable deficiencies that prevent its investigation, the relevant NAB employee shall request the complainant to supplement the complaint within a reasonable time. If the complainant fails to supplement the complaint within the specified timeframe, NAB shall set it aside and notify the complainant in writing.
- c. The relevant NAB employee shall forward the complaint for investigation to the NAB Chair, together with other supporting documents related to the matter that could contribute to determining the facts of the case. If the complaint is directed against the NAB Chair, the relevant NAB employee shall forward it to the NAB Board, which shall designate one of its members to investigate the complaint and communicate with the complainant. Other persons within NAB may participate in the investigation of the complaint if invited to cooperate by the NAB Chair or the person designated by the NAB Board.
- d. When investigating a complaint, the NAB Chair or the person designated by the NAB Board shall, to the greatest extent reasonably possible, review the information contained therein and take steps using available means to ascertain the facts of the matter. Such means may include, among other things, requesting the person against whom the complaint is directed or who has been involved in the contested procedure, to comment on the facts stated therein and to provide NAB with information necessary to investigate the matter. In such cases, NAB shall proceed in such a way that the identity of the complainant is not disclosed to that person, if the complainant is a natural person.

### 3. Resolution of the Complaint

- a. Based on the findings of the case, the NAB Chair or the person designated by the NAB Board shall assess the validity and severity of the complaint. If the complaint is found to be valid, the NAB Chair shall, within the scope of his or her authority, arrange for corrective action in the context of the relevant accreditation procedure or other quality assurance procedure to which the complaint pertains. If the NAB Chair assesses a valid complaint as serious, he or she may, depending on the nature of the matter, take measures that go beyond the scope of the given procedure. Such measures may include, among other things, personnel measures towards the person against whom the complaint was filed, or systemic measures regulating the conduct of quality assurance procedures.
- b. The NAB Chair or the person designated by the NAB Board shall inform the complainant of the chosen course of action to resolve the matter to the extent permitted by other legal regulations<sup>2</sup>. The priority is to achieve a reasonable, amicable, and acceptable resolution of the matter for the complainant; to this end, the NAB Chair or the person designated by the NAB Board may initiate a personal meeting with the complainant. The NAB Chair or the person designated by the NAB Board may also inform the complainant only in writing.
- c. If the complainant expresses written disagreement with the chosen course of action for resolving the matter, the NAB Chair shall refer the complaint to the NAB Board and schedule it for discussion at the next possible meeting of the NAB Board. In cases of complaints against the NAB Chair, where the NAB Board had jurisdiction to handle the complaint from the outset, the NAB Board shall reconsider the complaint and adopt a final position.

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<sup>2</sup> E.g., the Labor Code or the Civil Code.

- d. NAB shall resolve the complaint within 60 days from its receipt or from the rectification of any deficiencies that prevented its investigation. This timeframe may be exceeded for serious reasons, particularly if the necessary documentation for resolving the complaint cannot be secured within that period or if the schedule of regular NAB Board meetings does not allow for its resolution within the set timeframe.

Approved by: Professor Jaroslav Miller, NAB Chair