Annual report 2022

Team of confidential advisors



May 2023



Date: 13 April 2023

TU Delft confidential advisors:

- Bernard Dam
- Jenny Dankelman
- Giorgia Giardina
- Ada van Gulik
- Christiaan Mooiman
- Sandra van der Hor



Contents

1	IN	FRODUCTION	5
2	TU	DELFT WORK OF CONFIDENTIAL ADVISORS	6
	2.1 2.2	TEAM AND TARGET GROUP CORE ACTIVITIES OF CONFIDENTIAL ADVISORS	6
	2.3 2.4	TEAM BUILDING AND QUALITY ASSURANCE INFORMATION AND NETWORK	
3	CO	NFIDENTIAL ADVISORS FOR SOCIAL AND ORGANISATIONAL INTEGRITY	10
	3.1 3.2 3.3 3.4	REPORTS AND ADVISORY MEETINGS FORMAL COMPLAINTS GIVING OF NOTIFICATIONS WHAT STANDS OUT?	13 13
4	CO	ONFIDENTIAL ADVISORS FOR ACADEMIC INTEGRITY	16
	4.1 4.2 4.3	REPORTS AND ADVISORY MEETINGS Formal complaints What stands out?	16
5	AC	TION POINTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	18
	5.1 5.2 5.3	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE EXECUTIVE BOARD, FACULTIES AND DEPARTMENTS ACTION POINTS FOR THE TEAM OF CONFIDENTIAL ADVISORS ACTION POINTS FOR THE INTEGRITY OFFICE	19
6	SE	CTORAL DEVELOPMENTS	21
	6.1 6.2	REPORT OF THE ROYAL NETHERLANDS ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES (KNAW) COMMITTEE SAFESCIENCE	
7	JU	STIFICATION FOR USE OF EXTERNAL CONFIDENTIAL ADVISOR	22



1 Introduction

Before you lies the annual report of the team of confidential advisors at TU Delft for 2022, the first full year in which we as a team were working in a new composition. In words and figures, we will report on our work within the university and what has stood out to us, and make recommendations in this regard. In January 2022, two new ombuds officers were appointed at TU Delft: one for staff and one for students. They are producing their own annual report based on their specific perspective.

As a team of confidential advisors, we are looking back at a year in which the public debate about unacceptable behaviour was intensified in the Netherlands, partly due to notifications of abuse in popular television programmes, elsewhere in the media and culture sector and in sport. Closer to home, the publication of the *Sociale veiligheid in de Nederlandse wetenschap* – *Van papier naar praktijk* (Social safety in Dutch science – From paper to practice) report, produced by a KNAW (Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences) committee under the leadership of Prof. Naomi Ellemers, marked an important moment. For TU Delft, the year ended with the announcement that the Education Inspectorate had set up an investigation in response to reports of unacceptable behaviour towards employees.

In 2022, universities also made the news in other ways with matters relating to integrity and safety. For example, in June, the Netherlands Board on Research Integrity (LOWI) presented its judgement on the much-discussed Majorana case. Various media reported on incorrect recording of ancillary activities by scientists and risks of conflicts of interest in public-private partnerships that could be detrimental to academic freedom. An example from a different angle is the establishment, in November 2022, of the national SafeScience (WetenschapVeilig) hotline, the aim of which is to help scientists facing threats, via social media, for example, quicker and more effectively.

Amidst these and other developments, we, as confidential advisors of TU Delft, aim to be an easily accessible facility for students, employees and guests facing undesirable behaviour or other forms of failure to act with integrity in the workplace, in the study environment or in student life, and who need a listening ear, a referral or advice.

Our annual report has revealed that considerably more reports were made in 2022 than in 2021 and 2020, which we interpret as a positive development. Policy, of course, must focus on preventing unacceptable behaviour and other breaches of integrity as much as possible, but if problems persist, it is very important that they aren't left undiscussed, that everyone involved receives the support they need and that mistakes can be learned from. We would like to contribute to this, including in the years to come.



The team of confidential advisors at TU Delft contributes to a safe, professional work and study environment by offering an accessible facility for people facing undesirable behaviour and/or suspected breaches of integrity. The confidential advisors are available for the entire academic community, in other words: for all students and staff, including external doctoral candidates and researchers/staff with a hosting agreement.

The core of the work of confidential advisors revolves around support and guidance. Confidential advisors assist reporters, provide information and help devise possibilities for reaching a solution. Then it is always up to the reporter themselves to make choices; the confidential advisor doesn't take over the situation and confidentiality is maintained.

2.1 Team and target group

In 2022, the team of confidential advisors had six members: five internal confidential advisors and one external one. The internal confidential advisors are employees who fulfil this role alongside their regular duties (0.1 FTE). Two of them focus on academic integrity. The other three internal confidential advisors and the external confidential advisor focus on problems related to social integrity (undesirable behaviour) and organisational integrity.

The team is composed as follows:

Internal confidential advisors for academic	Online information:
<u>integrity:</u> Jenny Dankelman Bernard Dam 	Contact information for all the confidential advisors can be found on TU Delft's website: <u>https://www.tudelft.nl/over-tu-</u>
Internal confidential advisors for social and organisational integrity: Giorgia Giardina Ada van Gulik Christiaan Mooiman	delft/strategie/integriteitsbeleid/vertrouwenspersonen. A series of 'frequently asked questions' (FAQs) can be found there too. The answers give a good idea of what students and employees can expect from a confidential advisor.

External confidential advisor for social and organisational integrity:

• Sandra van der Hor (BMW Voor Elkaar)

2.2 Core activities of confidential advisors



The team of confidential advisors at TU Delft has three core activities:

- 1. **Support and guidance** This is the primary activity of a confidential advisor. We act as a safety net, sounding board and referrer for students, employees and guests of TU Delft facing questions, violations and potential violations in one or more of the following areas:
 - Social integrity (e.g. bullying, discrimination, aggression, violence, sexual and other forms of harassment and stalking);
 - Organisational integrity (such as suspected or confirmed conflict of interest, abuse of power, financial fraud, theft);
 - Academic integrity (such as stating of authorship, fraud, falsification, plagiarism).

It is important to bear in mind that a confidential advisor:

- Does not, in principle, do anything without the consent of the reporter;
- Does not take over any of the reporters' meetings or problems;
- Does not play a role in the resolution of labour disputes (or the threat thereof) or discussions concerning performance;
- Does not fulfil the role of intermediary or mediator between parties;
- Does not engage in ascertaining the truth, does not investigate notifications, does not hear witnesses;
- Is not an 'emergency contact point' where an appeal can be made 24/7; of course in urgent cases, an appointment can be scheduled quickly;
- Does not accept reports from groups; only from individuals.
- Notification and advice The team of confidential advisors provides solicited and unsolicited advice on developments observed within TU Delft in the area of social, organisational and/or academic integrity. We do that via our annual report, but it may also be discussed in the interim.
- 3. Information Insofar as that lies within our remit, we provide information on campus about the work of confidential advisors and integrity, for example to students, during employee participation, in teams or to managers.

We regularly receive questions about what sets the work of confidential advisors apart from the work of ombuds officers at TU Delft. Please find below a list of the main differences:

- The confidential advisor is not impartial and so is always on the side of the reporter. The ombuds officer is impartial (neutral). Both occupy an independent position compared to TU Delft as an organisation.
- Unlike the confidential advisor, the ombuds officer (in consultation with those involved) may personally intervene in a situation, for example by acting as intermediary or setting up an investigation.
- Confidential advisors play a role in individual case studies in particular. If they draw attention to potential patterns within the organisation, they may be able to draw attention to this within the line. Ombuds officers can map out more structural problems themselves (by investigating them).



2.3 Team building and quality assurance

In 2022, the three internal confidential advisors for social and organisational integrity at TU Delft successfully completed a four-day confidential advisors' programme. The programme was provided by an external agency and led to certification.

At the end of August 2022, the same external agency supervised a team day with a specially tailored programme for all internal confidential advisors and the external confidential advisor. Part of the day was attended by policy advisors from the Integrity Office, the ombuds officer for students and the ombuds officer for staff. The intention is to organise a team day on site more frequently over the coming years.

The team of confidential advisors holds regular consultations and keeps to a fixed agenda. In addition, non-traceable case studies are discussed in peer-to-peer learning form, with the aim of continuing to learn and reflect together. All participants observe the confidentiality in keeping with the role of confidential advisor.

An internal work description has been drawn up in collaboration with the Integrity Office. This is intended as a handbook for the confidential advisor themselves, as well as a source of information for everyone within TU Delft who, due to their role or position, needs to be kept informed of what the work of a confidential advisor involves in practice. The work description is updated every year.

2.4 Information and network

In 2022, the confidential advisors provided information to students and employees in various ways. Various interviews were given and presentations held. A contribution was also made to information meetings, information markets and panels on the themes of social safety and unacceptable behaviour. One example was the 'How are u?' week for students. The team received a diverse range of requests for advice from the line, HR and boards of associations.

Just like in previous years, there was contact and/or coordination with:

- University health service doctors and practice nurses;
- University social services;
- University psychologists;
- Ombuds officers for staff and students;
- Graduate School Programme Managers;
- TU Delft Women's Network of Scientists (DEWIS), EEMCS Diversity and Inclusion Team (EDIT), Diversity & Inclusion Office (D&I);
- Introduction Week (OWee) Board;
- Safety and Security;
- Integrity Office;



- Executive Board;
- Student Council, Works Council and Personnel Committees (and their members).



3.1 Reports and advisory meetings

A report made to confidential advisors revolves around a subjective and personal experience. When the reporter shares this experience with the confidential advisor, the primary aim of the contact is that that experience is listened to. If the reporter so requires, options can be explored to express or resolve matters.

Table 1 shows the figures relating to reports that arrived to the confidential advisors for social and organisational integrity in 2022. A total of 194 confidential meetings were conducted. Around half of these (95 meetings) concerned a report of undesirable behaviour from one of the five categories of work-related psychosocial stress (PSA) included in the Working Conditions Act. In the other half of cases, it concerned different types of notifications or requests for advice, or follow-up meetings with reporters. The figures from 2021 and 2020 are also included by way of comparison. Next to the table are the reporting figures for 2022 split into contacts with the internal confidential advisors on the one hand, and the external confidential advisors on the other.

It is important to bear in mind that these are not official complaints and that no fact-finding has been carried out into the reports made. That means that nothing about the 'truth content' of reports and the severity of what has occurred can be derived from the tables.

Table 1: Rep	2020	2021	2022	20	22	
meetings for	meetings for social and				Internal	External
organisation	al integrity				CAs	CA
Reports of	Harassment	22	22	38	25	13
undesirable	Discrimination	3	6	9	8	1
behaviour	Sexual harassment	4	3	24	21	3
(PSA	Bullying	3	4	19	11	8
categories	Aggression & violence	4	0	5	3	2
of the						
Working						
Conditions						
Act)						
Subtotal		36	35	95	68	27
Follow-up me	39	40	99	63	36	
requests for advice/notifications						
Total number of meetings		75	75	194	131	63

Tables 2 to 4 provide an impression of the origin and background of the people who turned to a confidential advisor in 2022. Table 2 shows how the reports of undesirable behaviour have been



divided between the units of TU Delft. Some reporters chose – out of fear of traceability and negative consequences – not to say to what faculty or service unit their report related.

The relatively high number of reports from the Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Mathematics and Computer Science (EEMCS), especially from doctoral students, springs to mind. One of the confidential advisors works at that faculty's Graduate School. That may be contributing to a greater willingness to report. Another possible explanation is that the work and/or promotion culture at this faculty is comparatively more under pressure.

Table 2: Origin of reports of undesirable behaviour (2022)				
Unit	Staff member	Doctoral	Student	
		student		
A&BE	4	2	3	
CEG	2	3	1	
EEMCS	8	10	5	
IDE	3	2	1	
AE	4	3	2	
3mE	9	1	2	
TPM		3	1	
AS	7	2		
University	13			
Services				
Student clubs			4	
Other				
Total (95)	50	26	19	

Table 3: Language of communication			
Dutch	61		
English	133		
Total	194		

Table 4: Gender		
Male	68	
Female	114	
Other/unknown	12	
Total	194	

In order to make the above information more accessible to the reader, a few graphs have been produced based on the figures. These can be found on the next page. Paragraph 3.4 contains a substantive reflection on the figures.



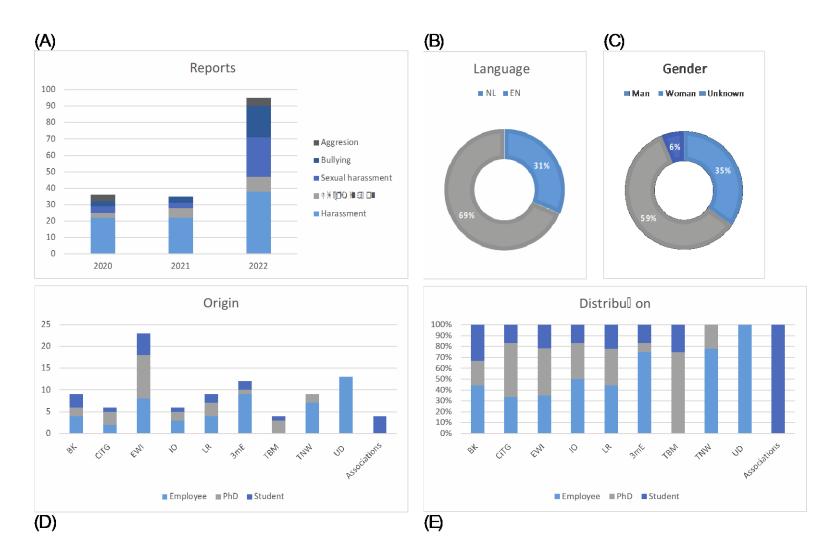


Figure 1: (A), the total number of reports of the last three years divided between the five PSA categories (work-related psychosocial stress, Working Conditions Act): harassment (light blue), discrimination (grey), sexual harassment (blue), bullying (dark blue) and aggression and violence (dark grey). (B), the distribution per language of instruction of the meetings in Dutch (light blue) and English (grey). (C), the distribution of reporters between the categories male (light blue), female (grey) and other/unknown (blue). (D), the origin of the reports divided into units of TU Delft and the categories of employees (light blue), doctoral students (grey) and students (blue). (E), the distribution of the reports per unit of TU Delft between employees (light blue), doctoral students (blue).

3.2 Formal complaints

In 2022, no complaints were lodged with the Complaints Committee for Undesirable Behaviour (KOG) in which the team of confidential advisors was involved. Neither was there any involvement in formal reports of violations of organisational integrity.

It is relevant to note that the complaints committee's procedure is not the only route for ascertaining the truth in the case of alleged unacceptable behaviour or other breaches of integrity. In 2022, various notifications of this that reached Safety and Security (whether or not following contact between the reporter and a confidential advisor) were assessed in a preliminary investigation, which in a number of cases led to an investigation of the facts.

3.3 Giving of notifications

Confidential advisors may also draw attention and provide advice outside of the annual report, for example with the aim of notifying managers in such a way that, in light of their professional responsibility, they are able to act in a targeted manner to resolve indicated problems and/or prevent them from recurring.

As a rule of thumb, the confidential advisors say that a notification can be given within the line if the team has received at least three separate reports about an individual or organisational unit. The usefulness and need of such a notification is weighed up carefully, as well as any risks for those involved. The confidentiality of reports means that information can only be shared with third parties if the reporters are known in advance. Non-traceability is a requirement at all times, unless reporters have explicitly stated that their identity may be known.

In January 2022, two concerning notifications were given. One notification was communicated to a head of section with the consent of and without the possibility of tracing it back to the reporters, following three reports of derogatory and threatening comments by a superior. The other notification was given to the director of a support service. This happened after six reporters had shared experiences of discrimination, threats, bullying and a corresponding culture of fear with the external confidential advisor. With the agreement of the reporters, this notification was given without traceability. The concerns were tackled seriously and an external agency (Bezemer & Schubad) was brought in to conduct a culture study. During this process, the external confidential advisor always kept the reporters involved in the loop. She was also heard by an external agency. Following the results of the investigation, advice was issued in April 2022.



3.4 What stands out?

It is clear that in 2022, the confidential advisors are found to be improving all the time – not just by employees, students and doctoral students wanting to tell their story, but also by managers wanting to submit a request for advice. Compared to previous years, the total number of meetings conducted in 2022 has more than doubled. Incidentally, compared to the size of the TU Delft community, it is still not high.

What is striking is the number of reports of sexual harassment. This may be related to the increased social attention to this matter, in the media and in politics.

There is also an increase in the number of conversations about managers communicating in what is found to be a dominant and respectless manner in relation to issues relating to terms of employment (in particular in the fields of absenteeism and conflicts). Employees from abroad are often unfamiliar with the Dutch approach to sickness-related absences as regulated in the Gatekeeper Improvement Act. If this process, including rights and obligations, is not explained properly prior to re-integration, these people may experience unnecessary pressure from the organisation, which could be interpreted as intimidation.

With many reports, distrust (or a culture thereof) appears to play a role. In order to make matters discussable, mutual trust is necessary, both top down and bottom up. This requires commitment from all those involved, not just from managers. Given their role and position, they have an additional responsibility. Employees and doctoral students often say they are missing suitable forms of leadership. In that area, failure to know what to do or even incompetence is often experienced. This occurs in all layers where willing and inclusive leadership should be expected, even of deans. One of the reporters noticed that in the work environment, there was a culture of judgement rather than a dialogue culture.

The impression exists that some of the case studies are becoming worse because the line is responding insufficiently to notifications and taking insufficient action. If managers and higher managers don't follow through, feelings of a lack of safety and defeatism will grow. This doesn't just affect those directly involved, but colleagues too. It undermines the willingness to report within the line and can even lead to employees turning their back on the university.

In addition, there are also a few notifications that managers (academic staff and administrative and support staff) are feeling less safe and free because they are experiencing an increasing sensitivity and assertiveness in their contact with colleagues. They also fear undermining of work relationships and damage to reputation.

It was worrying that a person with a managerial position said to a woman that the university is no place for women. Other serious cases that occurred in 2022 concerned suspensions following unacceptable behaviour, initiations that have gotten out of hand, serious threats and sexual assaults. Safety and Security and the police were also involved in these cases.



It is positive that awareness surrounding social safety and unacceptable behaviour is on the increase. New, positive initiatives are being developed within the faculties. We wish to note here that it primarily concerns separate, independent projects and that contact or coordination is rarely sought with, for example, the central Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) Office or the Integrity Office. The team of confidential advisors regularly notices that employees and managers are not aware of the existence of these organisational units, so expertise remains unutilised.



4 Confidential advisors for academic integrity

4.1 Reports and advisory meetings

The tables below show how many meetings the two confidential advisors for academic integrity have conducted in 2022 and the parts of the university from which reporters came.

Table 5: Reports and advisory meetings on academic integrity	2022
Reports of possible violations of academic integrity	8
Other notifications and follow-up meetings with reporters	17
Total	25

Table 6: Origin of reports and notifications					
Element	Staff	Doctoral	Student		
	member	student			
A&BE	1	1			
CEG	3	2	2		
EEMCS	3	1			
IDE					
AE	2	1			
3mE	1	1			
ТРМ		2			
AS	2				
University	2		1		
Services/other					
Total (25)	14	8	3		

4.2 Formal complaints

In 2022, no complaints were lodged with the Committee for Academic Integrity in which the confidential advisors were involved.

4.3 What stands out?

Academic integrity issues often coincide with conflicts. An important observation is that people don't dare to escalate to a higher level in the organisation. They don't have any confidence that they will be heard and are scared of repercussions. This is especially true of people who are relatively low on the academic ladder.



Not all managers convey the message well within their team that escalation is normal if a conflict cannot be resolved between the parties involved. If people do take that step, managers, together with the complainant and the person against whom the complaint is being lodged, are not always able to start looking constructively for a solution. Neither are managers themselves generally very open to feedback on their performance. It is true that this is heard in R&D meetings, but this is not the safest place for subordinates to lay their vision and experiences on the table.



5 Action points and recommendations

5.1 Recommendations for the Executive Board, faculties and departments

1. Invest in the knowledge and skills of managers

The line needs to tackle integrity problems and notifications about a lack of social safety more effectively. Handling notifications and critical feedback requires two-way communication, but the position of power occupied by a person in a higher position brings with it additional responsibility. Complaints present us with opportunities. Managers seem to be insufficiently aware of this. Reporters say that they fear being 'judged' if they indicate that things aren't going well; this means that the organisation is missing out on opportunities for improvement. Reporters need to be able to trust that they won't become the victim of their report. It is important that managers show through words and deeds that they are open to feedback, even if it's critical. After all, they ask the same of their employees. Employees don't always expect managers to have an answer prepared; saying that you don't know or have doubts about something can even be a sign of professionalism and power.

Invest in the knowledge and skills of all managers. Allow deans, directors and the Executive Board to go first in this by providing a suitable range of facilities and setting a good example yourself. Ensure that managers possess sufficient information to be able to fulfil their integrity duties in an appropriate manner. HR's Leadership Programme, among others, provides a suitable context for this; further develop the 'ethical performance & trust' component within this. Consider making some training courses compulsory. Also pay more attention to the issues of social safety and integrity when selecting and onboarding new managers.

2. <u>Revise the system of formal grievance procedures</u>

Also prioritise a well-considered revision of the grievance procedures for social, academic and organisational integrity. The current system of formal procedures and corresponding committees no longer seems to be in keeping with the reality within TU Delft and wider social developments, so the number of reports is lagging behind and important notifications can be missed (which also means that management information is not up to par). A good first step would be to clearly map out the problem. You should therefore consider having a broad analysis of the integrity system conducted by an external party, with specific attention to different regulations, helplines and facilities and the roles of study advisors, confidential counsellors at study and student associations, managers, HR advisors, lawyers, Safety and Security, the Complaints Committee for Undesirable Behaviour (KOG), the Committee for Academic Integrity (CWI), the ombuds officers and the confidential advisors etc.¹

¹ An interesting example of an alternative framework can be found at Utrecht University, where the complaints committee for undesirable behaviour has been converted into a committee for interpersonal integrity (see https://students.uu.nl/nieuws/ongewenst-gedrag-tolereren-we-niet-aan-de-uu).



3. <u>Care for sufficient cohesion in policy and communication in relation to social safety and integrity</u>

Based on good intentions, new initiatives are regularly being started within TU Delft to offer forms of support and information in relation to social safety and integrity. That is worthwhile in itself, but if there is a lack of coordination and cohesion, routes won't get any clearer for reporters. A lack of centralisation also makes it much more difficult, if not impossible, to reach a reliable overview of what is going on within the university and to learn from each other's best practices. You should therefore ensure that there is sufficient focus on social safety and integrity when developing and implementing policy. Invest in central coordination, unambiguous communication and coordination of initiatives and forms of work, with a view to strengthening support and effectiveness. Also strengthen the interaction between organisational units on the one hand and internal experts (including Communication, HR, ESA, the Diversity & Inclusion Office and the Integrity Office) on the other, who, over the past few years, have focused on the matters of social safety, inclusion and integrity.

4. Work together, be open to everyone's contribution and learn from one another Continue to involve all parts of the academic community – students, employees, managers, directors – in the further development of a TU Delft that has integrity. Do that, for example, by constantly drawing attention to the code of conduct, a productive feedback culture, route maps, training courses, 'contact points' and grievance procedures, but also by entering into discussions even more to glean information and input from various angles. The culture in the workplace generally doesn't focus sufficiently on discussing behaviour. Encourage a change by actively starting the conversation about behaviour, in a wide circle. The aim of this conversation is to gain greater insight into the causes and consequences of behaviour and thereby contribute to shared rules for a constructive and people-oriented collaboration ('people over product'). Also, consciously make space for colleagues whose voice isn't automatically heard in reflections on the everyday state of affairs. Precisely those people who - for whatever reason - belong to a minority, come from abroad and/or are at the beginning of their careers, are often well-equipped to question habitual behaviour and existing practices. Keep your ears open for what is going on among students as well. Where possible, explore new ways to support study and student associations in initiatives they take to guarantee social safety and integrity. Keep learning from each other, across generations, back and forth.

5.2 Action points for the team of confidential advisors

In 2023, we will continue to pursue the same path:

- 1. We will continue the work meeting and peer-to-peer sessions.
- 2. The regular socio-medical consultation (SMO) between the confidential advises and occupational health and safety professionals will be continued. We will also continue to invest in the contacts with the ombuds officers.
- 3. From 2023 onwards, the confidential advisors for academic integrity will be adopting the same system for recording reports as the rest of the team.



4. To retain certification, once obtained, additional training, as well as peer-to-peer learning, will be required. We arrange this in consultation with the Integrity Office.

5.3 Action points for the Integrity Office

We are pleased to continue the pleasant and constructive collaboration with the Integrity Office. A number of points require attention:

- 1. Start expanding the team of confidential advisors with preferably two new confidential advisors for social and organisational integrity (to extend the current team) and two new confidential advisors for academic integrity (who, over time, will be able to take over from Bernard Dam and Jenny Dankelman).
- 2. Organise a joint extended basic training for new confidential advisors, provided by an external agency.
- 3. Support experienced confidential advisors in organising tailor-made additional training and potentially also allow the external confidential advisor to contribute to this.
- 4. Turn an annual team day on site into a tradition. Guests may also be invited to this if desired.
- 5. Continue to communicate in all kinds of ways about who the confidential advisors are and what employees and students can contact them for.
- 6. Continue to organise training sessions for confidential counsellors at study and student associations. We are happy to discuss the possibilities of contributing to intervision sessions.
- 7. Make sure that FAQs and route maps containing information about contact points, reporting and complaint regulations remain up to date. Make films/infographics and bring them under widespread attention, including via the integrity policy pages on the TU Delft website.
- 8. Update the internal work description for the team of confidential advisors every year.



6 Sectoral developments

6.1 Report of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) committee

In the summer of 2022, Utrecht professor Naomi Ellemers presented an important KNAW recommendation to Minister Robbert Dijkgraaf. The committee members didn't want to write yet another report that would receive a positive reception just to land at the bottom of a drawer. The report was designed as a practical 'travel guide' with the basic principle being that good science requires social safety and that that safety requires more than protocols and regulations alone.

To combat undesirable behaviour at academic institutions, it is necessary to do much more about prevention. According to the committee, the current approach mainly focuses on handling complaints, but there will only be any real improvement if behaviour in the workplace is made a regular subject of discussion. This requires a different culture, embedded in a new way of leadership.

To go from paper to practice, the recommendation of the Ellemers committee maps out invisible forces and shows how you can organise opposing forces.

6.2 SafeScience

In 2022, the Universities of the Netherlands, the KNAW and the Dutch Research Council (NWO) with support of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences set up the 'SafeScience' hotline.

SafeScience helps scientists to find the right help in the case of threat, intimidation and online and offline hate responses. All affiliated institutions will provide reporters with further assistance within no more than one working day. SafeScience also offers relevant information about what employees, managers and institutions can do to prevent threats and intimidation or in response to these. As a partnership, SafeScience offers a platform to share expertise on the protection of scientists, for example by monitoring and sharing good examples.

It is sometimes difficult for managers to know what to do for the best in the case of intimidation or threat of employees. From interviews with scientists who have faced threats, we've learned that the response of the immediate manager is very important for the support experienced by the employee. This continues until long after the incident.



The appointment of the external confidential advisor is estimated at an average of 18 hours per week. So far, this has been more than sufficient to fulfil all the tasks that fall within the context of social safety.

In 2022, the growth and professionalisation of the team of confidential advisors ensured that the external confidential advisor was required to work even fewer hours than expected. In addition, the proportion of confidential meetings dropped comparatively more (from 74 to 59 hours) than the proportion of other contacts and activities (from 116 to 102 hours).

Table 8: Timekeeping for external confidential advisor (2022)				
Confidential meetings	Other contacts and activities	Total		
59 hours	102 hours	161 hours		

For information about the nature of the confidential meetings, see the tables in chapter 3.

