



Office of the University Ombudsperson (Ombuds)

Not sure where to go?

Student, staff, faculty and other visitors to the Ombuds may simply not know where to find assistance or support for a university-related matter. Ombuds aid visitors in identifying appropriate resources, services, and processes to address their specific needs.

Need to talk?

The Ombuds will actively listen to visitors in order to help to clarify concerns and generate viable options. Visitors are empowered to determine which, if any, course of action to pursue.

Ombuds will:

- Listen without judgment to visitor concerns
- Share information such as relevant policy and procedures
- Suggest appropriate resources for visitor consideration
- Clarify concerns to determine a course of action
- Help generate options for possible resolution
- Aid in weighing benefits and risks associated with different options
- Regularly look to their caseload to discern trends, patterns, and possible systemic issues to share with appropriate leadership – while maintaining the confidentiality of their visitors

Ombuds may:

- Elevate individual experiences in an anonymized fashion or when expressly permitted, share visitor identity or case particulars
- Facilitate dialogues for group and interpersonal issues
- Provide mediation, shuttle diplomacy, and conflict-coaching services
- Develop workshops, trainings, and presentations to meet community, unit, or constituent need; this may be collaborative

Ombuds do not:

- Advocate for individuals, groups, or other entities, but rather, advocate for procedural fairness and equitable treatment
- Play a role in formal processes
- Investigate matters brought to their attention
- Represent an individual party to a dispute

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IOA Certified Organizational Ombuds Practitioner, CO-OP® | Certified Mediator

The Ombuds serves in accordance with CMU's core values of integrity, respect, compassion, inclusiveness, social responsibility, excellence, and innovation by welcoming students, staff, and faculty into a confidential space for discussion regarding university-related matters of concern. The Ombuds assists in opening avenues of communication for those in pursuit of resolution and in promoting fair and equitable treatment for all members of the community.

The ombuds will act with honesty and integrity; promote fairness and support fair process; remain non-judgmental, with empathy and respect for individual differences; promote dignity, diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and belonging; communicate accurate understanding through active listening; promote individual empowerment, self-determination, and collaborative problem-solving; and endeavor to be an accessible, trusted, and respected informal resource (International Ombuds Association, IOA).

CONFIDENTIAL

Visitors may speak openly to the Ombuds. Information shared is presumed to be confidential. Specifics will not be disclosed without explicit permission **except when the Ombuds discerns an imminent risk of serious harm.**

IMPARTIAL

The Ombuds is a designated neutral for all visitors, not an advocate for a party to a dispute, but rather a resource and champion for fair and equitable treatment for all community members and affiliates. The Ombuds will avoid conflicts of interest and the appearance of a conflict of interest.

INFORMAL

The Ombuds is a voluntary and off-the-record resource for conflict resolution. The Ombuds does not act on the university's behalf, has no authority or role in formal processes, and is not a point of notice to the institution.

INDEPENDENT

With interests in maintaining an accessible, unaligned, and trusted practice, Ombuds operate independently from other university entities and offices. The Ombuds has sole discretion in determining how (and on occasion whether) to serve a visitor.