

Office of the Ombuds: Chair's Guide to Our Services

The Office of the Ombuds is a place where members of the UC San Diego community can receive help resolving conflicts, disputes or complaints on an informal basis. The office serves the entire UC San Diego Community. We refer to clients as "visitors."

We Serve:

- Faculty (Senate and Non-Senate)
- Staff
- Students
- Non-instructional Academic Appointees
- Postdoctoral Trainees and Visiting Scholars
- Employees of UC San Diego Health System

Examples of issues brought to the Ombuds office

Benefits questions
Departmental concerns
Discrimination, harassment and bias
Grade questions & disputes
Retaliation
Roommate issues
Whistleblowing

Communication issues with colleagues
Discipline/promotion/demotion
Ethical considerations
Performance evaluations
Research data ownership/usage/authorship
University policies & procedures

How to Contact the Office of the Ombuds

Phone: (858) 534-0777

Walk-ins: Pepper Canyon Hall, Suite 402

Because of our confidentiality, we discourage the use of email for any visitor-related communications.

The Ombuds Office is:

Confidential

An ombudsperson does not keep any permanent records about visitors or information shared. The ombudsperson will not share information with anyone outside the office, unless permission has been provided at the time services are being rendered. Confidentiality may be breached when the ombudsperson has determined that an imminent threat of serious harm exists.

Neutral

The ombudsperson will not take sides in any conflict, dispute or issue, and will consider the interests and concerns of all parties involved with the aim of achieving a fair and equitable resolution to the issues presented.

Informal

The ombudsperson facilitates communication when conflict arises and provides the opportunity for informal dispute resolution. The ombudsperson does not arbitrate, adjudicate, formally investigate or participate in any internal or external formal process. The office supplements but does not replace other resources at the university.

Independent

To ensure objectivity and effectiveness, the office functions independently with respect to case handling and issue management. The office reports to the Office of Ethics and Compliance within the Chancellor's office for administrative and budgetary purposes, but not regarding the substance of matters discussed in the office.

What can the Ombudsperson do?

The Campus Ombudsperson has been given broad access to information and resources that can be of assistance in developing options to help people resolve their issues. This includes access to University administrators, faculty and staff, and records.

An Ombudsperson:

- Actively listens to and discusses questions and concerns
- Helps to evaluate options and suggests approaches for addressing concerns
- Serves as a neutral "third party" in conflict resolution
- Advocates for a fair resolution process
- Coaches/role-plays to provide new ways for individuals to resolve a problem on their own
- Provides information about policies, procedures, services and programs
- Facilitates communication between people
- Refers to other campus resources
- Advises about steps to resolve the problem informally
- Advises about formal and administrative options and ways to bring issues to the attention of those able to address the concerns
- Recommends institutional review or change in policies or procedures that generate conflict
- Collaborates with other campus offices on issues of general concern

What can't the Ombudsperson do?

Ombuds services do not compromise or replace policies or procedures established under collective bargaining agreements. In addition, see below for other services an ombudsperson does not provide.

An Ombudsperson does not:

- Provide legal advice
- Provide psychological counseling
- Render judgments or make decisions on issues brought to the office
- Make decisions for administrators or others
- Determine "guilt" or "innocence" of those accused of wrong-doing
- Conduct formal investigations
- Assign sanctions or discipline to individuals
- Participate in formal hearings (grievance, union, or arbitration), processes or lawsuits
- Advocate for either party in a dispute
- Accept notice on behalf of the university