

WHY CALL THE OMBUDS:

- The Ombuds Office at the University of Louisville provides informal, impartial, and confidential dispute resolution services for staff, faculty, postdocs.
- The Ombuds assists people with interpersonal misunderstandings or disputes as well as those with concerns about academic or administrative issues.
- The Ombuds attempts to help individuals resolve their concerns fairly and, if possible, [informally](#).
- The Ombuds Office operates independently as a supplement to existing administrative or formal grievance procedures and has no formal decision-making authority.
- The Ombuds does not act as an advocate for either side in a dispute.
- Perhaps most importantly, the office operates [confidentially](#), which means we do not acknowledge who has--or has not--used the Ombuds Office without the permission of the individual.
- The Ombuds Office deals with a wide range of conflicts and disputes every year

REDBOOK POLICIES:

4.4.1

- Respect for Difference of Opinion
All members of the university community must respect diversity of opinion and no one should fear retaliation for expressing dissent. When differences occur, all parties are expected to adhere to the university's Code of Conduct (The Board of Trustees 1.0 Policy Statement,) and maintain professional standards.
- This section identifies the individuals who manage the dispute resolution processes when faculty members are unable to resolve the issue through direct, informal discussion. These offices provide assistance to faculty who are seeking to resolve a dispute, although none functions as an advocate for individual faculty members or on specific issues. Consultation with the Ombuds Office or the Faculty Grievance Officer does not constitute notice of claims against the university or any of its administrators.

4.4.2

- Ombuds Office
The Ombuds Office provides information about a range of neutral and informal dispute resolution services to all faculty and staff at the university, including on matters not covered in this article. Use of the services of this office is required for faculty members with Type 1 disputes before participating in more formal dispute resolution services.

MEDIATION PRINCIPLES:

- Listen and discuss questions, issues, and concerns
- Help evaluate various options to address concerns
- Answer questions or help find others who can
- Facilitate communication between people
- Advise individuals about steps to resolve problems [informally](#)
- Advise individuals about formal and administrative options
- Facilitate discussions to seek "win-win" resolution
- Make appropriate referrals when informal options don't work

BENEFITS OF INFORMAL RESOLUTION

- The Ombuds Office at the University of Louisville is designated as a neutral, independent, informal complaint-handlers.
- The Ombuds Office is **NOT** punitive. It exists to show people care about their jobs, colleagues and the university.
- Facilitated discussion/mediation has been proven to positively resolve conflicts.
- The Ombuds Office helps **deescalate** disputes and negative behavior.
- The Ombuds is charged to take into account the rights and interests of every person who is known to be involved in any given case or concern, and also the welfare of the University.
- The University of Louisville Ombuds Office is completely **confidential**. The Ombuds does not answer questions about people whom they may or may not have seen in the office, except in informal complaint-handling when they have been given permission to do so by the visitor requesting help.
- They will take action only with the permission of a visitor-except for the unusual situation of imminent risk of serious harm.
- The Ombuds can listen to people, offer information about University policies and procedures, and help to work for orderly and responsible systems change. The office welcomes all faculty, staff and postdocs.
- The Ombuds Office welcomes any kind of University of Louisville-related concern or problem.
- The Ombuds Office is a resource for University of Louisville faculty, staff and postdocs who want to examine their options for dealing with a particular concern or who may wish to consider learning how to deal with problems directly on their own.
- Ombuds may serve as shuttle diplomats or [assist in the resolution of disputes](#). They have no power to make, change or set aside administrative decisions or University of Louisville policy.
- The Ombuds Office keeps no formal written records.
- The Ombuds Office do not "accept" notice of problems for the University and talking with the Ombuds does not constitute notice to University of Louisville.
- The Ombuds Office does not adjudicate or arbitrate and does not do formal investigations.
- The Ombuds does not accompany disputants in formal hearings, nor serve as a witness in formal grievance processes either in-house or externally.