

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDS

The Office of the Ombuds is a place where students and members of the University of Michigan-Flint community can go for assistance in resolving conflicts, disputes, or complaints on an **informal** basis. In order to afford students and members of the University community the greatest freedom in using the services of the Ombuds, the office is **independent, neutral, and confidential**.

***Informal:** The Office of the Ombuds is informal. The Ombuds facilitates communication when conflicts arise and provides the opportunity for informal dispute resolution. The Ombuds does not arbitrate, adjudicate, or participate in any internal or external formal process.

***Independent:** The Office of the Ombuds, with a reporting structure under the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, is independent. The office operates independently of administrative authorities to ensure objectivity.

***Neutral:** The Office of the Ombuds is neutral. The Ombuds will not take sides in any conflict, dispute, or issue, but consider the interests and concerns of all parties involved with the aim of achieving a fair and equitable outcome.

***Confidential:** The Office of the Ombuds is confidential. To the extent practicable, the Office of the Ombuds will not share any information you give them with anyone outside the office without your permission. An exception to maintaining any such confidentiality would be if the Ombuds had a reasonable concern about possible violence or physical harm. In addition, the Office of the Ombuds will not keep any permanent records about you or the information you share with the Ombuds other than general demographic, classification, and incident data.

By telling the Ombuds about your conflict, dispute, or complaint you have **not** informed or notified any University official of your conflict, dispute, or complaint, and therefore the University cannot and will not take any action to remedy the situation. In order for the University to take action to remedy your conflict, dispute, or complaint, you must share it with someone who represents the University. The Office of the Ombuds cannot receive formal complaints or accept notice on behalf of the University. However, the Ombuds can help you find the appropriate person to speak to in order to request that the University take some action, if that is what you want.

***Confidentiality, Neutrality, Informality, and Independent** tenets are absolute and non-negotiable (i.e., the tenets belong to the Office of the Ombuds and not the student or visitor). Therefore, a student or visitor cannot request the Ombuds to breach any of the above mentioned tenets.