

1.460 OMBUDS OFFICER

- A. The chief may appoint full time employee of the department with at least 3 years of service to serve in an ancillary capacity as the agency's ombuds officer.
- B. Duties and responsibilities of the ombuds officer include, but are not limited to:
 - 1. Creating a positive work environment by providing feedback and assistance to employees while maintaining confidentiality, third party neutral assistance for those who seek guidance in resolving conflicts within the workplace;
 - 2. Helping employees candidly discuss issues and explore options;
 - 3. Opening channels of communication;
 - 4. Working to achieve fair and equitable solutions to problems;
 - 5. Making referrals to appropriate resources;
 - 6. Suggesting approaches for addressing and managing conflict through mediation and conciliation;
 - 7. Collaborating with other university offices on matters of general concern;
 - 8. Helping to obtain interpretations of university or agency directives;
 - 9. Offering recommendations for change;
 - 10. Abiding by the code of ethics and standards of practice for The Ombudsman Association (TOA); and
 - 11. Reporting directly to the chief in matters relating to the management and operations of the ombuds program.
- C. In order to serve as the ombuds officer, an officer must:
 - 1. Be selected by the chief; and
 - 2. Successfully complete training authorized on conducted by TOA.
- D. Ombuds officers serve at the pleasure of the chief for indefinite terms.
- E. The relationship between the ombuds officer and agency employees seeking assistance is confidential.
 - 1. Excepting as otherwise provided, no information about cases will be released without the written permission, where practical, of client employees. However, this does not preclude the ombuds officer from conferring with persons inside or outside the agency while attempting to resolve matters of concern.
 - 2. Situations that require the ombuds officer to report information to appropriate authorities, including the OSA when appropriate, include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Serious threats by employees of harm to self or others;
 - b. Criminal misconduct;
 - c. Threats to national security;
 - d. Sexual harassment;
 - e. When compelled by the President's Legal Office or court subpoena; or
 - f. Serious misconduct as otherwise described in agency directives.
 - 3. The ombuds officer will discuss exceptions to confidentiality guidelines with client employees as the needs arise.
- F. Only minimal information will be documented for each case handled by the ombuds officer.
 - 1. Case disposition information will be entered into a secure tracking system once cases are settled, closed, or assigned to other authorities. All case notes, working papers, email messages, etc. will be destroyed.
 - 2. The ombuds officer will prepare a yearly report to the chief summarizing case loads and dispositions.