

COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDS OR CAMPUS OMBUDSPERSON

This document is intended to assist anyone wishing to lodge a comment or complaint about or against the UCSB Ombuds or the Office of the Ombuds.

The Ombuds Advisory Committee, as one of its functions, receives and responds to comments or complaints about the Office of the Ombuds. This is to ensure that the Ombuds is held accountable and that persons who feel unfairly treated by the Office have recourse.

Complaints may be addressed to any member of the Ombuds Advisory Committee. The membership list is posted on the Office of the Ombuds website (www.ombuds.ucsb.edu/advisory.html) or is available upon request at the Office of the Ombuds, or at the Executive Vice Chancellor's Office.

When a written complaint is received, the Ombuds Advisory Committee member must alert other members of the Committee and not attempt to respond until the Committee has considered the matter.

The Ombuds Advisory Committee is free to address the complaint in a way it deems appropriate. However, it is not the role of the Committee to reconsider decisions reached by the Office; the Committee may only consider the process and behavior of the Campus Ombuds or the Office. The issue before the Committee is whether the Ombuds or the Office acted in accordance with the International Ombudsman Association (IOA) Standards of Practice (http://www.ombudsassociation.org/standards/Stds_Practice_1-07.pdf) in regard to the complainant's matter. The process outlined below is a suggested guideline for the Ombuds Advisory Committee:

- When a verbal comment is made to a member of the Ombuds Advisory Committee which suggests dissatisfaction with the Campus Ombuds or with the Office, the member will normally thank the person who made the comment, and ask if (s)he wishes to put the matter in writing. The Committee will only respond to written comments or complaints.
- When a written complaint is made to the Committee or one of its members, the Committee will determine whether the complaint is sufficiently factual and clear so that the complainant's reasons for dissatisfaction can be understood. If it is not factual and clear, the Ombuds Advisory Committee will suggest that the written complaint be amended.
- The complainant must state in writing that (s)he authorizes the Campus Ombuds to discuss the complaint with the Committee. The complainant must release the Ombuds from confidentiality to allow discussion about the complaint. If the complainant is unwilling to authorize the Ombuds to discuss the matter, it will not be possible to take any effective action in response to the complaint.
- The written complaint must state how the IOA standards of practice were breached by the Office or by the Ombuds.
- Once the Ombuds Advisory Committee is satisfied that it should look into the matter, the Committee will notify the Campus Ombuds about the complaint or comment. Additionally, the Committee may:
 1. Forward the written complaint to the Ombuds and invite the Ombuds to respond to the Committee
 2. Convene a meeting to discuss what steps to take, either with or without the Ombuds
 3. Convene a meeting with the Ombuds to discuss the substance of the complaint
 4. Convene a meeting with the complainant to gather further information about the complaint
 5. Call witnesses if relevant to the investigation of the complaint
- The Committee will give a written response to the complainant and to the Office of the Ombuds once its investigation of the matter is concluded.
- A final appeal may be directed to the Executive Vice Chancellor's Office.