The Staff Ombuds Office

Why come to us?
Staff members come to us for many reasons. Some are reluctant to use formal channels. Some just don’t know where else to go. And some have tried other ways but have not found what they needed. No issue is too small or too big. If you are unsure whether we can help, please contact us.

We are located at:
The University of Texas at Austin
Bridgeway 300 - 301
2616 Wichita St. (next to SSB)
512-232-8010 (voice)
staffombuds@austin.utexas.edu
www.utexas.edu/staff/ombuds

Note: The Staff Ombuds Office will be moving in the fall 2011 semester. Please call 512-232-8010 to confirm our new address.
The Staff Ombuds Office
The University of Texas at Austin
Staff Ombuds Office is a place where all staff members are welcome to come in and talk in confidence about any concern. We help support collaborative conflict resolution.

Possible topics you can discuss with us
Interpersonal difficulties
Harassment or discrimination
Untangling a complicated situation
Questions about policy
Workplace disputes
Bureaucratic runarounds
Ethical dilemmas
Cultural misunderstandings
Conflicts of interest
Disciplinary actions
Appropriate ways to frame and discuss issues
Incivility
Health and safety concerns
Unprofessional conduct
Ways to make or seek an apology
Threats or retaliation

What we do
Our responses are tailored to the particular visitor’s situation and needs. We may:
• Listen
• Offer information about UT Austin policies and procedures
• Discuss your concerns and clarify issues
• Help identify a range of options for solving problems
• Gather information and offer referrals to other resources
• Offer coaching to help you prepare for a difficult conversation
• Facilitate communication
• Track perceived issues and trends
• Make recommendations for institutional improvements

What we do not do
• Make decisions or findings of fact
• Establish, change or override policies
• Offer legal advice
• Offer psychological counseling
• Participate in grievances or other formal processes
• Serve as an agent of notice for the university
• Serve as an advocate for any person

Our principles
CONFIDENTIALITY – We will not identify you or discuss your particular concerns with anyone without your permission. The only exception is when we believe that disclosure is necessary to address imminent risk of serious harm to self or others.

NEUTRALITY – We advocate for fair processes, consider the rights and interest of all parties and do not take sides. We have no decision-making authority and do not discipline or reward anyone.

INDEPENDENCE – The Staff Ombuds Office reports to the Office of the President. We do not provide the president or any other individual with any personal, identifying information concerning anyone who uses the services of the Ombuds Office, unless requested by the person and agreed to by the Ombuds Office.

INFORMALITY – We are an off-the-record, voluntary resource. Contacting our office does not provide notice to the university.

Let’s talk
We will arrange a confidential meeting at a time and a place convenient for you. It is helpful if you make an appointment. We believe we can be most effective if we meet with you face to face, but we can work with you over the phone. We generally do not work through email communication and discourage you from emailing any confidential information.