

Brandeis University Ombuds

Members of the University Ombuds staff are available as a confidential, independent, impartial and informal resource for all members of the Brandeis Community, including undergraduates and graduate students, faculty, staff, and alumni. In our role as ombuds staff, we support the dignity, well-being, and safety of each visitor by providing a safe space to confidentially talk off the record about difficult situations. We meet personally with you to actively listen to your concerns and discuss options for conflict resolution. We operate outside of official or sanctioned university processes. We provide feedback to University officials on trends in an effort to promote an inclusive community where individuals from all backgrounds and life experiences are heard and valued in our community.

Some Frequently Asked Questions

You say the process is confidential – really, how confidential is it?

Very. As in: no notes (or notes destroyed post meeting(s)), no use of your name, no reporting to another office or individual, no retained email, a separate phone line, and a safe and private meeting space. There are only two instances where this changes, and you would be aware of each: 1) If you are a danger to yourself or other(s), and 2) if you give explicit permission for your Ombuds to speak with someone. Those really are the only instances where strict confidentiality changes.

Does anything get reported back to the university?

Yes. Ombuds are charged with reporting trends and other information that helps the University create a supportive and effective working and learning environment. These trends and information could include something as simple as noting the need for a campus bus route to be altered, or pointing out that a campus policy is consistently misinterpreted. However, in no instance will the individuals raising these issues be identified or named.

What is the relationship between the Ombuds and various grievance and/or appeal procedures?

There is not a formal relationship between Ombuds and University grievance and/or appeal procedures. Ombuds are in a position to know about all of the policies and procedures that are available to you to resolve a particular issue. Your Ombuds can help you think through various strategies, formal and informal, for resolving an issue.

Why would Brandeis support an office where people can go to complain about Brandeis?

Brandeis is committed to social justice and to ensuring that all members of the Brandeis community are working and learning in an environment that is diverse, equitable, and inclusive. The two roles of the Ombuds support Brandeis' commitment to social justice. These roles are to support all students and employees in addressing issues that impede their ability to work and learn, and to serve as a centralized resource for the university on the extent to which campus policies and practices are equitable and effective. The Ombuds Office supports an ethical and civil culture encouraging mutual understanding and resolution through respectful dialogue and fair processes.

Ombuds Staff



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For more information:
www.brandeis.edu/ombuds

Who Visits the Office?

We are open to all faculty, staff, students, researchers, alumni, trustees, and anyone who has an issue related to Brandeis University.

Visitors come to the Ombuds Office to informally discuss any issues affecting their work or studies. Options range from just talking to requesting information on policies and procedures at Brandeis.

The Ombuds Role

Our role is to listen and help the visitor(s) identify issues, goals and options; visitors are empowered to make their own decisions regarding next steps.

Uniqueness of the Office

Confidentiality: Information shared by all visitors will never be disclosed without visitors' permission except as required by law or when the Ombuds determines there may be an imminent risk of serious harm. The Ombuds Office maintains no records that identify visitors to the office.

Neutrality: Ombuds do not serve as an advocate for anyone to any matter brought to the office. Ombuds do advocate for productive communication and fair processes.

Independence: Ombuds Office is independent in structure, function and appearance.

Informality: Ombuds Office does not participate in any formal adjudicative or administrative procedures.

Typical concerns brought to the office: Career management, work/academic environment, research-related concerns, harassment, bullying, discrimination, illness and disability, communicating difficult and sensitive information, University policies and requirements, and any other issue may be brought to the Ombuds Office.

What We Offer to Visitors

- **Coaching** on verbal and written communications
 - **Facilitation** of one on one or group meetings to raise and address issue or concerns
 - **Shuttle Diplomacy** to help deliver information between people
 - **Mediation** of face-to-face discussions to overcome differences or build options to reach an agreement that works for everyone involved
 - **Information** about resources, policies and procedures
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