

Academic Affairs Manual (ACD)

ACD 509–01: University Ombudsperson Program

Effective: 12/27/1989

Revised: 11/1/2019

Purpose

To facilitate the informal resolution of problems

Source

Office of the Provost of the University

Applicability

University employees and students

Policy

Arizona State University shall provide for the informal resolution of problems arising among employees and students through an ombudsperson program. Ombudspersons provide policy interpretations, make referrals to appropriate offices for information and/or problem resolution and serve as mediators. Ombudspersons are not empowered to change a decision, but through their efforts to clarify matters, information may emerge to assist in the resolutions of the dispute. All information given to an ombudsperson is confidential. Employees selected to serve as ombudspersons are members of the University Ombudsperson Committee.

Certain proposed personnel actions, such as proposed suspension without pay, or demotions, may be mediated prior to the required hearing that precedes the action. However, if a hearing before a university hearing officer or appropriate committee has occurred and the proposed decision has been sustained, it is then a management prerogative to proceed with the personnel action.

Issues Ineligible for Ombudsperson Intervention

The following issues are ineligible:

1. termination of a classified employee during the probationary period
2. denial of faculty tenure and/or promotion
3. denial of academic professional continuing appointment and/or promotion
4. amount of salary increases
5. allegations of discrimination based on race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, religion, citizenship, national origin, disability, special disabled veteran status, and Vietnam-era veteran status.

See [ACD 509-02](#), "Grievance Policy for Faculty," [ACD 509-03](#), "Grievance Policy for Academic Professionals," or [ACD 401](#), "Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation."

Selection/Appointment of Members

The University Ombudsperson Committee is composed of individuals representing faculty, academic professionals, classified and university staff, and all vice-presidential areas. The faculty ombudsperson, the president of the University Academic Council, the chair of the University Staff Council (selected by the council), and the president of one of the campuses' student government organizations (selected by the organizations) also serve as *ex officio* members of the committee.

Selection/Appointment of Members

Except for *ex officio* members, members of the committee are nominated by the units represented and appointed by the [president](#).

Chair

The committee chair is appointed by the president.

Services Provided by the Committee

Committee members provide information and, if needed, an informal means of problem resolution to individual [employees](#) and [students](#) who have problems working with the university or who are involved in disputes. Ombudspersons may use mediation or other problem-solving techniques to facilitate communication or problem resolution between disputing parties.

Ombudspersons are listed in the current [ASU Roster of Boards, Committees and Councils](#).

Mediation

Mediation may be requested by any individual requiring informal assistance in the resolution of a dispute at the academic and/or administrative unit or college level. The ombudsperson will mediate, conciliate, and coordinate communication activities between the disputing parties and others related to the dispute, if the parties agree voluntarily to the ombudsperson's involvement. The purpose of this mediation is to air the dispute and resolve it to the satisfaction of both parties without resorting to formal hearings. A grievant has 30 days from the receipt of the ombudsperson report to file a grievance or complaint in accord with the appropriate policy (see Cross-References). The procedures for ombudsperson mediation are in [P19](#).

If the dispute involves allegations of illegal discrimination, the ombudsperson will immediately refer the complainant to the Office of University Rights and Responsibilities, for appropriate action. (For information about complaints of discrimination, see [ACD 401](#), "Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation.")

Cross-References

For information about grievances, see:

1. [ACD 509–02](#), "Grievance Policy for Faculty"
2. [ACD 509–03](#), "Grievance Policy for Academic Professionals."

or

3. the *Staff Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual (SPP)*: [SPP 901](#), "Grievance Process."

For information about complaints of discrimination, see: [ACD 401](#), "Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation."