

Ombudsperson For Students in MATSE

Why is there an ombudsperson?

Students may serve in many roles during their academic careers such as students, teaching assistants, advisees, co-workers, colleagues or employees. Varying rules/policies apply for the many roles. As long as the expectations for behavior are understood and accepted by all parties, there is rarely a problem. However, challenges can arise when there are differing expectations or conflicting policies, or when one group is accused of violating the rules. The ombudsperson serves as a neutral party who is equally open and accessible to all parties including students, faculty, staff, and administrators.

When would I need an ombudsperson?

- you have an issue or a concern that you and others cannot resolve, or that you would prefer not to address through formal channels.
- you have a matter to explore "off the record", or those for which you need informal consultation.
- you have a problem, and are unsure with whom to speak or what options are available to address it.
- you have a problem that requires an outside party to negotiate a solution, or facilitate your communication with others.

What does the ombudsperson do?

- assists members of the MATSE community in solving problems and conflicts
- serves as a neutral listener, information resource, advisor, intermediary, and mediator
- considers all sides of a question impartially and objectively
- facilitates communication between you and others involved in an issue
- provides information on resources and processes for handling particular conflicts or issues

The Ombudsperson...

- is accessible to all those involved in undergraduate and graduate education in MATSE and attempts to find timely and satisfactory solutions to problems without bias.
- treats all matters with confidentiality, although in certain cases, the law may require disclosure of certain information (i.e. subpoena or sexual harassment).
- is governed by a commitment to equity, neutrality, and fairness.
- helps solve problems informally, in the least intrusive manner possible so as to minimize negative consequences.
- has an obligation to bring to administrators' attention any policies, programs, personnel or institutional decisions which he or she believes violates the rights of students, faculty, or staff.

What kinds of concerns could be brought to the ombudsperson?

The ombudsperson can help you with any concern, but some of the issues brought to the office typically involve:

- Disagreements/misunderstandings with university policy
- Human or legal rights violations
- Discrimination
- Cultural conflicts
- Reporting unethical behavior
- Student, staff or faculty conduct

Ombudsperson contact information:

We suggest that you make an appointment with the ombudsperson and discuss your concerns in person.