

Examples of issues addressed by the Ombuds Office:

- Benefits
- Behavior that makes you uncomfortable
- Civility/disrespect
- Communication
- Departmental concerns
- Discipline, promotion and demotion
- Ethics/improper practices
- Inappropriate treatment by a co-worker or supervisor
- Policies and procedures
- Research data usage/authorship
- Retaliation
- Unfair treatment

Making an appointment

When you make an appointment with the Ombuds Office, you will meet with one of the following ombudspersons:

Anu Rao, Ph.D., Director

William Brock, Ph.D.

Janice Freeman, R.N.

Rita Burns, Ph.D.

To inquire, contact Patty Guajardo at:

M. D. Anderson Ombuds Office-Unit 175

Houston Main Building, Room 5.526

(713) 792-4896

For further information, check the Ombuds Office intranet site inside.mdanderson.org/departments/ombuds

The Ombuds Office adheres to the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice of the International Ombudsman Association (www.ombudsassociation.org).

Impartial

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Ombuds Office

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Ombuds: ɔm'bʊdz' noun

a neutral, confidential office where trained professionals create a safe space for a fair resolution of issues and concerns.

Conflict is present in all forms of human endeavor — from families to complex organizations. If managed well, the result can lead to improved working relationships, creativity and productivity. If suppressed or ignored, conflict can result in loss of time, productivity and even destroyed collaborations.

The M. D. Anderson Ombuds Office offers a confidential, impartial and informal process to facilitate fair and equitable resolutions to issues that arise in the workplace. This is an alternate channel of communication that supplements, but does not replace, formal communication channels such as Human Resources, Compliance or speaking directly with your supervisor.

Advocate for fairness

The Ombuds Office serves all members of the M. D. Anderson workforce, including trainees, by responding promptly and fairly to concerns, complaints or disputes arising from or affecting their work environment. It provides a safe place to discuss these issues without fear of retaliation.

Consult with the Ombuds Office if you:

- Have a work-related problem, concern or issue.
- Do not know where to turn for help.
- Are reluctant to go through normal channels.
- Are unsure which policies, procedures or regulations apply to your situation.
- Wish to seek guidance on your options.
- Have a situation requiring communication or negotiation skills.
- Want to discuss a sensitive issue in confidence.
- Have tried every other avenue and have seen no progress.

The Ombuds Office is made available to all employees with the express understanding that it provides them with a confidential, neutral and alternate channel of communication. Because communications with the Ombuds Office are considered confidential and privileged, it is inappropriate for employees at any level of M. D. Anderson to call an ombuds as a witness in formal or administrative proceedings to reveal confidential communications. Employees who use the office will be considered to have agreed to abide by these features of the office.

What to expect

Ombuds Office staff are available to:

- Provide confidentiality — your identity or concerns are not discussed unless you give us permission in the course of our discussions or in cases of an imminent risk of serious harm to life or property. We do not keep permanent records of confidential communications.
- Listen to you and discuss your issues, concerns or complaints.
- Assist with identifying, constructing and evaluating options in the process of resolving conflict.
- Facilitate mutually acceptable outcomes through mediation and negotiation.
- Provide an “off-the-record” channel for communication and alternate dispute resolution without fear of retaliation.
- Identify problem areas, recommend changes in policies and procedures, and identify trends.

The Ombuds Office does not:

- Advocate for any party. The ombuds is not a substitute for a lawyer or counselor.
- Make administrative or policy decisions.
- Testify in judicial or administrative proceedings about confidential communications.
- Participate in any formal disciplinary process.
- Serve as a place to give the institution notice of claims against it.



Confidential