

Howard University Faculty Ombuds Standards of Practice

The Howard University Faculty Ombuds Office adheres to the Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics of the International Ombuds Association (IOA). These standards require the Office to operate with independence, neutrality and impartiality, confidentiality, and informality. The Faculty Ombuds serves as a confidential, neutral, informal, and independent resource for faculty members, including those in administrative roles with faculty retreat rights, to address concerns and resolve conflicts related to their relationship with the University.

Independence

The Faculty Ombuds Office operates independently from all other University departments and units. The Office reports directly to the President of Howard University to ensure autonomy and is not aligned with any specific University entity. The Ombuds has sole discretion over the management of concerns brought to the Office and does not share information about individual visitors with University leadership without a visitor's express permission or request.

Neutrality

The Faculty Ombuds is a neutral and impartial resource who advocates for fair processes rather than for any individual. The Ombuds considers the interests and concerns of all parties involved and avoids conflicts of interest, whether real or perceived.

Informality

The Faculty Ombuds provides informal assistance and does not participate in formal University processes. The Office does not maintain formal written records, conduct investigations, or participate in hearings, grievances, complaints, appeals, or legal proceedings. Due to the informal and confidential nature of the Office, the Ombuds will not provide notes or testimony in any formal process, even if requested.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a cornerstone of the Faculty Ombuds Office. Communications with the Office are confidential and not subject to disclosure. Visitors agree not to record conversations or call the Ombuds to testify or produce documents in any legal, administrative, or other proceedings. Exceptions to confidentiality include situations involving an imminent risk of serious harm. The Ombuds is not a mandated reporter under the University's Title IX policy.

Voluntary

Engagement with the Faculty Ombuds Office is entirely voluntary. No one is required to use the services of the Office, nor can anyone be prohibited from doing so. By choosing to engage with the Office, visitors agree to abide by its principles and practices.