

Operating Principles

- **Independence**

The Office of the Ombud functions independently of all administrative structures of the University. To ensure accountability the Ombud submits a bi-annual report of the activities of the Office to Council through the Chair of Council.

- **Confidentiality**

The Ombud will treat all communications with those seeking assistance in strict confidence, and will take all reasonable steps to safeguard confidentiality. The Ombud does not reveal information unless given express permission to do so by the individual contacting the Ombud's office or where there appears to be imminent threat or risk of serious harm.

- **Neutrality**

The Ombud seeks to resolve disputes in a fair and equitable manner and does not advocate on behalf of any individual or University authority.

- **Informality**

The work of the Ombud is on informal basis. Any discussion with the Ombud is off-record. Referral of the matter to the office of the Ombud does not provide the University with legal notice.

How to refer a matter to the Ombud?

To submit a complaint or concern to the Ombud, you must complete a Complaint's Registration Form which can be accessed on the website and e-mail it to ombud@ukzn.ac.za or fax it to 031 2607504. You may also visit the Office for a consultation.



Visit us at: The University of KwaZulu-Natal;
Office no 011; L Block; Westville Campus
Contact us on: +27(0)31 260 3602
Fax: +27(0)31 260 7504
E-mail: ombud@ukzn.ac.za

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Information Brochure

The Ombud's Office
is an independent
dispute resolution
forum for staff
and students

<http://ombud.ukzn.ac.za>



INSPIRING GREATNESS

Welcome to UKZN Office of the Ombud

The office of the Ombud was established in July 2010 to provide the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) community with an independent, neutral dispute resolution resource that deals with complaints and concerns in a fair and equitable manner.

About the Ombud

An Ombud is an independent neutral dispute resolution practitioner who is appointed by the University to confidentially and informally deal with complaints, concerns and enquiries about alleged acts, omissions or improprieties and to look into broader systemic problems within the institution. The University Ombud is Justice Pius Langa, the Former Chief Justice of the Republic of South Africa and Head of the Constitutional Court of South Africa, a position he held from 2005 - 2009. He also served as the Chancellor of the former University of Natal.

When do you need the Ombud's help?

The office of the Ombud does not replace existing internal dispute resolution structures but serves to supplement them. Referral of matters to the Ombud should be the last resort after all other channels and internal processes have been exhausted. You may approach the Office of the Ombud when:

- You feel you have been treated unfairly;
- You are not sure how to solve a complicated problem;
- You need a confidential and an impartial listener;

- You need a neutral mediator or facilitator to resolve a problem;
- You are unsure of what policies and procedures are applicable to your problem;
- When you have a sensitive complaint or concern you want to discuss.

The office of the Ombud provides assistance to all members of the University including staff and students.

How can the Ombud assist you?

The Ombud may assist a visitor to resolve the problem in one of the following ways:

- **Problem Solving**
The Ombud will actively listen to you and discuss concerns to help you explore, identify and assess a range of options for resolving the problem. A range of dispute resolution techniques such as mediation, facilitation, and shuttle diplomacy are used to assist visitors to identify issues and reach mutually acceptable solutions.
- **Referral**
The Ombud can assist visitors to resolve their disputes by directing their concerns to other offices that may be better suited to deal with the problem.
- **Information and advice**
The Ombud may offer information and advice about University policies, procedures and processes.
- **Upward feedback**
The Ombud can assist in providing feedback to the University about patterns of complaints and systemic problems and making recommendations for change in addressing those issues.

What the Ombud does not do?

The Ombud has discretion to accept or decline to deal with a matter that is outside his or her mandate. In addition, the Office of the Ombud does not:

- Provide legal advice or psychological counseling.
- Make a determination of right and wrong.
- Grant punitive, declaratory or restorative orders such as compensation and interdicts.
- Review legal judgments and orders.
- Participate in grievances and other formal processes.
- Establish, change or set aside policies or decisions of University officials.
- Accept legal notices on behalf of the University or its structures.
- Act as a representative for any individual or University authority.

