When you have a university-related problem or conflict, we help you look for fair and equitable solutions.

**As a student you can consult us:**

- When you face an issue that you are not sure how to resolve
- When you think you are not being treated fairly or a decision is not fair
- When you have questions about procedures, options, steps
- When you need help interacting with a person or service
- Anytime before, while or after you use other available resources

**About any University-related concern, e.g.:**

- Academic issues (grades, progression, withdrawals, supervision, accommodations, etc.)
- Administrative matters (fees, admission applications, student association services, housing, etc.)
- Interpersonal and conflict situations (interactions with individuals or services)

**We can help you with, as appropriate:**

**Information:**

- Identifying your options and resources
- Clarifying your rights and responsibilities
- Explaining regulations and procedures

**Advice and coaching:**

- How to raise your concerns effectively
- How to plan for a difficult conversation
- How to communicate in conflict situations

**Third-party interventions:**

- Facilitating communication between you and a person or service
- Problem-solving or mediating
- Reviewing or investigating your concern

**We may also:**

- Recommend changes and improvements to policies, procedures and practices affecting students

**Independence**

Our services function independently of the University and student association administrations.

**Impartiality**

We approach situations impartially using the fairness triangle: how a person is treated, what process is used, what decisions are made.

**Confidentiality**

Consultations are confidential. We need your consent in writing before we can intervene.
**Examples of Undergraduate and Graduate Cases**

**Investigation:** A new student de-registered for personal reasons by the deadline to receive a financial credit. The faculty denied her appeal saying she had de-registered a month later (when the student followed up). The ombuds investigation clarified that the student had been assigned two separate student numbers by error, and that she had de-registered on time. The $3,000.00 reimbursement was granted.

**Facilitated communication:** A student was denied back-dated withdrawals from courses. He had suffered a concussion as a result of an accident and missed many classes. Although he wrote mid-terms, he didn’t complete finals. We reviewed his doctor’s note and explained to him why it didn’t support his request and what points to clarify. We contacted the Vice-Dean who accepted an updated note and granted the request.

**Confidential advice and coaching:** A student had difficulties communicating with her supervisor. They disagreed about aspects of the draft thesis, and they had irregular meetings with little feedback. We coached the student on how to change communication patterns, using a combination of in-person meetings and email follow-ups to identify and discuss points of agreements and points of divergence. Together they agreed on a thesis draft to forward to other committee members and on questions to resolve with their help.

**Examples of Recommendations from the Ombuds Office to the University**

**Accessibility:** Developing comprehensive policies and procedures on accessibility and accommodation. (The policy was adopted in 2018 and a comprehensive procedure has been drafted.)

**Fairness when dealing with allegations of cheating or plagiarism:** Correcting errors in the application of the regulation on academic fraud. (The University has revised the regulation and is developing a best practice guide for faculty members and decision-makers.)

**Clarity of information about graduate funding:** Improving the clarity of information sent to students at the time of admission, for example renewable versus non-renewable funding. (The University has updated the form letters.)

**Right of appeal:** Ensuring that Faculties consistently inform students of their right to appeal at the time when they communicate their decisions. (The University implemented the recommendation, reported results to Senate and instituted a process to continue monitoring compliance.)

**Requests for late withdrawals from courses:** Ensuring that Faculties review each request on its merit, as required by law, rather than adopting generic practices (such as the practice to allow the request only when a student withdraws from all courses). The University communicated the requirement to the Faculties and invited the ombudsperson to a meeting with Vice-Deans for a follow-up discussion.

**Protocol for situations where a student exhibits at-risk behaviour:** Developing guidelines and parameters for decision-making with attention to due process and the protection of students’ rights. (The University’s protocol is being updated into a guidelines document.)

**Grade appeals:** Clarifying the process related to grade appeals for group work. Clarifying next steps when the instructor is not available or does not respond to a student. (Both updates to be adopted in spring 2019.)