



PGME Ombudsperson Guidelines

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| Category: | Resident Health, Safety and Wellness |
| Responsibility: | Associate Dean, PGME |
| Approval: | PGME Committee |
| Date: | Date initially approved: March 2022 Date(s) reformatted or revised: n/a |

Purpose:

To provide guidelines for the selection of an Ombudsperson to act as an impartial representative for residents and other members of the Postgraduate Medical Education (PGME) community. To provide structure for the capacity of the Ombudsperson when providing advice or mediation for resident issues or concerns in a safe and positive environment.

Issues for discussion with the Ombudsperson may include (but are not limited to):

- Assessment and progression in training
- Learning environment
- Discrimination, harassment, mistreatment
- Safety, wellness, personal issues

Scope:

This document applies to all medical residents, faculty, staff in Postgraduate Medical Education programs at the College of Medicine, University of Saskatchewan.

Guidelines:

1. Ombudspersons are not mandatory. Should a program choose to have an Ombudsperson, these guidelines will apply.
2. The residency training program will identify a person who agrees to act as an Ombudsperson for residents in that program. To ensure a fair and transparent process, resident input is required for the selection of the Ombudsperson. The person selected will be acceptable to the resident body. The Ombudsperson may be a member of the Department of the same program, but must not be a faculty who evaluates residents, is in a supervisory role, or is a member of that program's Resident Program Committee or Competency Committee. The Ombudsperson may be from outside of the home

program. It is recommended to avoid selecting a current Program Director or Division Head for this role.

3. The Ombudsperson role is voluntary. The ombudsperson will recuse themselves from situations where there is an identified conflict of interest.
4. The Ombudsperson will operate at arm's length of the residency training program and the PGME office to maintain confidentiality. Identified systemic issues within a residency program will be reported in a timely manner to the PGME Associate Dean to address (if appropriate).
5. All information and records will be confidential. The Ombudsperson will treat all discussions as strictly confidential unless the resident consents to share their information to other individuals or organizations. In extraordinary circumstances resident information may be shared with the PGME Resident Resource Officer without the resident's consent where there is a serious concern for the life, health or safety of the resident.
6. Ombudspersons are advisors and mediators, not decision makers. Ombudspersons will not offer psychological counselling or legal advice. Ombudspersons will not participate in or assist with student appeals.
7. The Ombudsperson has no formal or binding authority; however, they do have the ability to recommend and discuss with all parties involved. The Ombudsperson must consider all sides of a question in an impartial manner and is guided by the following:

Standards

- Objectivity
- Accessibility
- Fairness
- Independence
- Confidentiality

Purpose

- Advocates for fairness
- Direct the resident to the PGME Resident Resource Office if a resident is unsure where to go for help

Role

- Listen and clarify
- Listen carefully and on a confidential basis to the concerns, and ask questions of the resident to help clarify his or her concerns
- Gather all of the relevant facts
- Make inquiries on behalf of the resident

Advise and inform

- Advise the resident how to access appropriate decision makers
- Refer the resident to another appropriate agency if necessary
- Refer the resident to the appropriate PGME Coordinator regarding relevant academic or non-academic policies and/or procedures
- Guide the resident through the preparation of an articulate and informative case to help the decision maker come to a fair resolution

Mediate and explore

- Mediate or negotiate with the resident and other parties
- Explore options with the resident, regardless of the outcome of the case

Responsibilities:

The program is responsible for:

- Selecting the Ombudsperson
- Introducing the Ombudsperson to any new residents entering the program
- Providing residents and the PGME office with the Ombudsperson's contact information

Residents are responsible for accessing the services of the Ombudsperson.

Non-compliance:

Instances or concerns of non-compliance should be brought to the attention of the Associate Dean, PGME.

Procedures:

n/a

References:

These guidelines have been adapted with permission from [Dalhousie University](#).

Contact:

Coordinator, Academic & Non-Academic Processes, PGME Office
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