

Loyola Marymount University | Los Angeles

## OMBUDS SERVICES FOR EMPLOYEES



*Independence, Impartiality, Neutrality,  
Confidentiality, and Informality*



*Our shared mission is  
the encouragement of learning,  
the education of the whole person,  
the service of faith  
and the promotion of justice.*

## *Statement of Purpose and Goals*

During the last seven years, the Vice President for Intercultural Affairs has provided Ombuds Services for Loyola Marymount University (LMU) employees. While serving LMU in the capacity of Ombudsperson, the Vice President for Intercultural Affairs acts as an independent, impartial, neutral, confidential and informal resource for faculty, staff and administrators seeking to address on an informal basis University-related problems, disputes and complaints. According to the International Ombudsman Association (IOA, 2008) Ombudsperson services:

- Demonstrate that an organization is interested in the quality of work life for employees
- Increase employee satisfaction with work environments
- Provide all parties a voice without fear of reprisal
- Provide a safety net for issues not addressed through normal channels
- Limit the escalation of situations
- Provide savings in resources, especially if litigation is avoided

The goals for LMU's Ombuds Services are to help employees identify underlying causes of problems, facilitate fair and respectful interactions, establish problem-solving options and foster informal resolutions.

# *Standards Of Practice*

## I.1 | INDEPENDENCE

The Ombudsperson is independent from management and administrative structures, but has access to work in any office or institutional unit within the University

(IOA, 2008).

## 2.1 | NEUTRALITY AND IMPARTIALITY

The Ombudsperson “strives for impartiality, fairness and objectivity in the treatment of employees and the consideration of issues. The Ombudsperson advocates for fair and equitably administered processes and does not advocate on behalf of any individual within the organization”

(IOA, 2008, P. 3).

The Ombudsperson is a designated neutral reporting to the President, Executive Vice President and Provost, and Senior Vice President and Chief Academic Officer and operates independently of ordinary line and staff structures. The Ombudsperson neither reports to nor is structurally affiliated with any compliance function within Loyola Marymount University (IOA, 2008).

### 3.1 | CONFIDENTIALITY

The Ombudsperson holds all communication with those seeking assistance in strict confidence and takes all reasonable steps to safeguard confidentiality, including the following: The Ombudsperson does not disclose confidential communications unless given permission to do so in the course of informal discussions with an employee; the Ombudsperson does not reveal the identity of any employee who contacts or visits the office, nor does the Ombudsperson reveal information provided in confidence that could lead to the identification of an employee, without the individual's express permission.

The Ombudsperson maintains information (e.g., notes, phone messages, appointment calendars) in a secure location and manner, protected from inspection by others and has a consistent and standard practice for destroying such information (IOA, 2008).

## 4.1 | INFORMALITY

The Ombudsperson functions on an informal basis by such means as:

- Providing a confidential place for employees to express concerns
- Listening impartially
- Identifying and reframing issues
- Reviewing and explaining policies and procedures
- Helping develop a range of responsible options to resolve problems and facilitating discussion to identify best options
- Discussing a range of responsible options, including formal and informal processes
- Pointing employees towards available services and resources
- With permission and at the Ombudsperson's discretion, engaging in informal third-party intervention (IOA, 2008).

The Ombudsperson identifies trends, issues and concerns about policies and procedures, including potential future issues and concerns, without breaching confidentiality or anonymity, and provides recommendations to the President, Executive Vice President and Provost, and Senior Vice President and Chief Academic Officer for responsibly addressing them.

## *The Ombudsperson Does Not:*

- Breach confidentiality unless
  - Specifically requested by the initiating employee
  - There is imminent danger of harm to self or others
  - Suspicion of child abuse or abuse of vulnerable adults
- Act as an advocate or representative for a particular point of view or for any party
- Have any formal decision-making capability
- Determine “guilt” or “innocence”
- Provide psychological services
- Make decisions, create or change policy, nor mandate actions
- Testify in any formal process inside LMU and resists testifying in any formal process outside the University
- Keep records containing identifying information on behalf of LMU
- Provide legal advice or services such as:
  - Binding and non-binding arbitration
  - Adjudication or mediation
  - Remedies or sanctions
  - Formal investigations. If necessary, the Ombudsperson refers employees to Sara N. Trivedi, EEO Specialist in the Department of Human Resources, or other appropriate places in the University for formal investigation and/or documentation

- Provide conflict resolution services
- Record formal complaints on behalf of LMU
- Maintain formal records for LMU. Records are kept only for purposes of reporting trends in concerns and complaints

### *Employee Should Visit the Ombudsperson to:*

- Discuss problems or complaints with an independent and confidential resource
- Determine what to do or whom to speak to within the LMU community
- Acquire additional information about LMU policies or how to interpret them
- Revisit a problem or complaint that has not been resolved

Consultation with the Ombudsperson is voluntary, and is not a required step in any grievance process or organizational policy. Employees may call or visit the Ombudsperson at any time. No referral is necessary, and visits are confidential.

### *Contact*

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# Office of Intercultural Affairs

*helping loyola marymount university  
move toward inclusive excellence*

## VISION

The Office of Intercultural Affairs works with the Office of Mission and Ministry to ground its principles and practices in the Catholic identity of Loyola Marymount University (LMU) and the traditions of its sponsoring religious orders. As a unit integrated across LMU, the Office of Intercultural Affairs' collaboration with faculty, staff and students increases student learning and citizenship outcomes that facilitate the development of men and women for others.

## MISSION

LMU understands and declares its purpose to be: the encouragement of learning, the education of the whole person, the service of faith and the promotion of justice. The mission of the Office of Intercultural Affairs aligns with LMU's mission by serving as a focal point for the promotion of inclusive excellence throughout the campus community.

## APPROACH

In an effort to help LMU move toward inclusive excellence, the office uses theoretically sound and evidence-based, faculty-, staff- and student-led initiatives to educate and inform the campus community, reduce inequities in educational outcomes, expose students to an inclusive curriculum and pedagogy, and sustain an environment wherein all constituents can thrive and succeed.



**LMU|LA**

**Loyola Marymount  
University**

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