



RESEARCH OMBUDSPERSONS

WHAT IS A RESEARCH OMBUDSPERSON AT UMDNJ?

Research ombudspersons at UMDNJ are senior faculty members with extensive research experience and stature within the research community who are designated by their deans to hear problems, concerns, complaints, disputes and questions from any individual (faculty, non-faculty staff, postdocs, housestaff, students) concerning research activities, and to act in a neutral and confidential role to help achieve equitable and acceptable solutions. The research ombudsperson has the support of his/her dean and of the University's Office of the Vice President for Research, and can approach any individual within the University in search of solutions. He/she does not represent either the individual or the School or University, but impartially considers the interests of all parties. Solutions are achieved by recommendations to the party or parties, not decisions or actions by the ombudsperson. Methods used to achieve solutions include sympathetic listening, influence, persuasion, advice, conciliation, referral, negotiation and/or mediation. The research ombudsperson's role is as a resource additional or alternative to that provided by department chairs, research mentors, research deans and deans.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality of visits to and information shared with the research ombudsperson will be maintained to the extent possible. No permanent or official records, files or notes will be kept. However, there are limits to the confidentiality of the research ombudsperson role at UMDNJ, including:

- threat of harm to an individual or individuals
- threat of harm to the University
- evidence of a potential crime, research misconduct or serious breach of University policy.

While appropriate action must be taken in the above situations, anonymity of the reporter, if desired, will be maintained if possible.

RELATIONSHIP TO CAMPUS COMMITTEES ON RESEARCH INTEGRITY

- If an issue brought to the research ombudsperson is a report of potential research misconduct, the ombudsperson will make every effort to ensure that the appropriate Committee on Research Integrity receives the information, maintaining anonymity of the complainant if desired and if possible.
- If an issue brought first to a Committee on Research Integrity does not fall under the University's definition of research misconduct, the Committee can offer to refer the matter to the research ombudsperson.

PROBLEMS THAT DO NOT INVOLVE RESEARCH

Research ombudspersons are prepared to help with issues and problems concerning research. Other individuals and offices at the Schools, patient care units and University, including each School's student/housestaff ombudsperson, are dedicated to assisting individuals with other types of issues, such as general interpersonal problems, employment matters, sexual harassment, discrimination, academic problems, health/mental health/substance abuse, legal questions, crime, etc. The research ombudspersons will offer to refer individuals with non-research-related problems to these other offices or individuals as appropriate.

UMDNJ'S RESEARCH OMBUDSPERSONS

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