



## Recommendations for establishment of Ombudsman Office – AESOP Georgia

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Ombudsperson is an independent body whose main function is the defense and promotion of the rights and legitimate interest of students within the University. Ombudsperson should play a role of mediator in conflict situation, help in analyzing the problems and generating solutions.

Ombudsperson should be not be an advocate for any individual or organization. He/she is an advocate for fairness, who acts as a source of information and referral and assists in answering questions and in resolution of concerns and critical situations.

Ombudsperson's Office should be elected under the cooperation from the governing body of the university, but outside of its structure ensuring 3 core principles:

- Neutrality – to ensure that every student can be heard without judgment
- Confidentiality – so that students can present sensitive information
- Independence – to assure that the ombudsperson operates in the best interests of the organization as a whole.

The competences of the Ombudsperson is providing information, assistance and consulting to students; supporting individuals and organizational units of the University in problem resolution; providing proper information on procedures and legal regulations applicable at the University; assisting in obtaining information to isolate, eradicate and prevent conflicts and issues; identifying sources of problems which hinder the proper functioning of the University; informing and advising Rector with aim to improve the functioning of the University.

- Ombudsperson should be available to all interested parties during the office hours in the office located in the building of the university
- Ombudsperson Office should be promoted as a useful/ beneficial/ flexible structure / effective tool for students, university staff and administration.
- Ombudsperson should accept cases reported to him/her in person, by phone, by e-mail and by post and assist students in writing such claims. No anonymous claims should be accepted.
- In case the inquiry is not within the range of Ombudsperson's competence, he/she directs the interested person to proper institution responsible for dealing with such case.

The training course for the ombudsperson should be focused on the topics that will provide knowledge and understanding on how the organization works and what is its structure; what basic law principles are regarding both university and students; what are the financial and managerial regulations of the university; what are the ethics and internal policy of the university; Student registration, rights and obligations; etc.. Furthermore, an introductory meeting with the main Units (Offices/Faculties/Departments) is advised, to provide precise procedures and rules of the units.

