UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM

REGULATIONS CONCERNING THE UVA'S OMBUDSPERSON 2025

Adopted by decision no. 2025-124735 of the Executive Board of 11 November 2025

Having regard to the University of Amsterdam's Management and Administration Regulations (Article 43 paragraphs 5 to 7), the Regulations concerning the Ombudsperson are adopted as follows:

Article 1 Definitions

In these regulations, the following terms have the following meanings:

Ombudsperson:	the independent official appointed by the Executive Board as described in Article 43 of the Management and Administration Regulations.
Current/former staff member:	a person who performs or has performed work for the University of Amsterdam, whether or not on the basis of employment with the UvA and whether or not in an employer-employee relationship with the UvA, including trainees and guest lecturers/researchers.
Current/former student:	a person who is or was enrolled at the University of Amsterdam for his or her studies, a degree programme or course, a contract student, an external candidate, a postgraduate Master's student and anyone who makes use of the educational facilities offered by the University of Amsterdam on any other lawful basis.
Report:	a report concerning a circumstance, question, matter, dilemma or conflict, in particular with regard to, but not limited to, the safety (or lack thereof) of the working and studying environment (such as undesirable or transgressive behaviour and suspected violations of integrity).
Reporting party:	the person making a report pursuant to Article 4(1) of these Regulations.
Accused:	the person who gives rise to or causes the report and is affiliated to the UvA.
COR:	The Central Works Council of the University of Amsterdam.
CSR:	The Central Student Council of the University of Amsterdam.

Article 2 Position of the ombudsperson

1. The ombudsperson is appointed by the Executive Board, after hearing the Central Works Council and the Central Student Council, for a term of four years and can be reappointed twice for a term of the same length.
2. The position of ombudsperson is incompatible with any other position within the University of Amsterdam.
3. The ombudsperson is impartial and independent in the performance of his or her duties and is not subordinate to any body in the performance of his or her duties.
4. The Executive Board ensures that the ombudsperson is not disadvantaged in his or her position as a result of the performance of his or her duties.
5. The Executive Board provides the ombudsperson with the resources necessary for the proper performance of his or her duties, guaranteeing independence, confidentiality and impartiality (including by providing an appropriate workspace, free access to information and the necessary ICT facilities, and an adequate investigation budget).
6. The ombudsperson has free access to relevant ICT systems, information and files, buildings, staff and students that are relevant and necessary for handling reports, subject to responsibility for the confidentiality and protection of personal data, special personal data, information and

files in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The ombudsperson may additionally request any information necessary to handle reports within the organisation. The parties involved are obliged to comply with such a request from the ombudsman within the set time frame. If the nature of the data/information or the duty of confidentiality of the employee concerned prevents them from doing so, the information will be provided on condition that its confidentiality is maintained by the ombudsperson.

7. The ombudsperson is authorised to engage experts if this is necessary for the purpose of dealing with a report.
8. Each year, the Executive Board and the ombudsperson have a meeting at which the activities of the ombudsperson are discussed and evaluated. The Central Works Council and the Central Student Council inform the Executive Board of their findings prior to this meeting.
9. The Executive Board may discharge the ombudsperson of his or her duties before the end of his or her term at his or her own request, or if any action or lack thereof on the part of the ombudsperson leads to a serious undermining of trust in him or her.

Article 3 Duties of the ombudsperson

1. The ombudsperson contributes to ensuring a socially safe environment within the UvA, by handling reports with due care and advising, referring, supervising conversations or conducting or commissioning investigations.
2. The ombudsperson identifies developments, trends and patterns within the organisation in relation to a safe or unsafe learning and working environment, including any specific or systematic shortcomings in policy/regulations or their application and makes recommendations in this regard to the Executive Board, the dean of the faculty or faculties concerned and/or the Secretary General of the UvA and/or the Director of the service concerned.
3. The ombudsperson ensures the adequate recording and proper handling of reports and decides on the follow-up and most appropriate intervention after discussing this with the reporting party.
4. The ombudsperson makes appropriate referrals within the House of Social Safety, such as to a confidential adviser, student counsellor or student psychologist, examinations board or arbitration committee, complaints committee, the Committee for Reporting Suspected Abuses and to external parties where necessary.
5. If required, the ombudsperson facilitates discussions between parties with the aim of contributing to an informal resolution of the situation.
6. The ombudsperson provides solicited and unsolicited advice verbally or in writing to the Executive Board and supervisors who are in a position to act on a report.
7. The ombudsperson may, of his or her own accord, conduct formal investigations or arrange to have them conducted in response to a report and make recommendations on that basis;
8. If necessary, the ombudsperson may proceed to report to the Executive Board and/or deans, Secretary General of the UvA and service unit directors on identified problem areas.
9. The ombudsperson provides reporting parties within the meaning of the Dutch Universities Whistleblower Policy with information, advice and support regarding suspected abuses at the reporting party's request.
10. The ombudsperson prepares a report at least once a year further to the anonymised and non-anonymised reports handled and developments, trends and patterns identified. The ombudsperson always shares the report with the Executive Board, the deans, the Secretary General of the UvA, the service unit directors, the Central Works Council, the Central Student Council and the Supervisory Board. The UvA, in cooperation with the ombudsperson, ensures that a public and public-friendly version is published on the website.
11. The ombudsperson manages the staff working for the ombudsperson ('Office of the Ombudsperson') and they support the ombudsperson in all of his or her activities.

12. The Office of the Ombudsperson acts as the central reporting centre of the University of Amsterdam as referred to in the Collective Labour Agreement of Dutch Universities. This central reporting centre, in addition to the existing structure and facilities, provides information and makes referrals in the event of warning signs, complaints or reports relating to social safety, suspected integrity violations and abuses under the Dutch Universities' Whistleblower Policy 2025.

Article 4 Notification

1. Every current or former employee or current or former student has the right to make a report to the ombudsperson.
2. The report can be made either verbally or in writing, in Dutch or English.
3. In the report, the reporting party should provide as clear a description and substantiation as possible of the behaviour and circumstances to which the report relates, as well as who behaved in such a way and who the behaviour was directed towards.
4. When handling the report, the identity of the reporting party will not be further disclosed unless the reporting party gives permission. The interests of the reporting party and the accused party or parties are taken into account.
5. In the event that a dispute, complaint, objection or appeal procedure or other procedure is available, and if the reporting party is making or has made use of this procedure, the reporting party is obliged to inform the ombudsperson of this immediately.
6. The ombudsperson confirms receipt of a report in writing within seven days.
7. All those involved in the handling of the report, including the reporting party and accused, undertake to maintain the confidentiality of all information related to the report.

Article 5 Admissibility of the report

1. In principle, the ombudsperson is not obliged to handle a report if:
   a. More than three years have elapsed since the incident in question at the time a report of undesirable behaviour is made, unless there are reasons to handle the report, all at the discretion of the ombudsperson.
   b. More than one year has elapsed since the incident in question at the time any other kind of report is made, unless there are reasons to handle the report, all at the discretion of the ombudsperson.
   c. A dispute, complaint, objection or appeal procedure or other procedure is available with regard to the report, and the reporting party is able to make use of, or has made use of, this procedure.
   d. In the opinion of the ombudsperson, the interest of the reporting party or the importance of the incident or seriousness of the conduct mentioned in the report is manifestly insufficient.
   e. In the opinion of the ombudsperson, the report is insufficiently justified.
   f. The ombudsman has already handled or dealt with the report.
   g. The incident mentioned in the report is covered by the general policy of the University of Amsterdam, is an individual legal status issue or is covered by the individual application of the Collective Labour Agreement of Dutch Universities or other regulations.
   h. The report does not comply with the requirements of Article 4, paragraph 3.
   i. The report was made anonymously and/or in the opinion of the ombudsperson there are insufficient leads and follow-up options available.
   j. In other situations where the ombudsperson considers it to be inappropriate and/or impossible to follow up on the report.

Article 6 Follow-up to a report in the form of advice

1. In the first instance, the ombudsperson discusses the report with the reporting party and provides advice regarding the possible steps that they themselves can take and/or suggests possible interventions.
2. To the extent that the ombudsperson identifies a potential pattern based on a substantial number of reports and/or based on the severity of a limited number of reports, the ombudsperson may provide solicited or unsolicited written advice to the direct or indirect supervisor of the accused party or parties and who is in a position to act. The Executive Board and/or the dean, Secretary General of the UvA or service unit director receives a copy of that advice. If the advice relates to the Executive Board or its members, the Supervisory Board receives a copy.
3. The director receiving the advice of the ombudsperson informs the ombudsperson within four weeks of receiving it whether and, if so how, the advice has been or will be acted upon. If the advice is not followed, reasons will be given.

Article 7 Follow-up to a report in the form of discussion facilitation

1. To the extent possible and desirable, the ombudsperson, as an impartial third party, can mediate between the parties and facilitate discussions in a short-term and accessible manner.
2. This intervention focuses on what is needed for a solution and, if mediation/ facilitation does not lead to a solution, what possible follow-up steps can be taken.
3. The parties are not obliged to cooperate in any mediation attempt and may withdraw at any time.

Article 8 Follow-up to a report in the form of a formal investigation

1. The ombudsperson may, if the ombudsperson considers it necessary, conduct or commission a formal investigation in response to one or more reports, which may indicate a longer-term socially unsafe environment (for example an investigation in response to warning signs, a personal investigation into the facts or investigation into trends and/or systematic shortcomings in culture, implementation of policies and regulations or organisational structures). If a formal investigation is launched, the accused named in the report and/or a representative of the organisational unit concerned and the reporting party are in principle given the opportunity to state or explain their position in writing or verbally and whether or not in each other's presence.
2. The ombudsperson may, if the ombudsperson deems it necessary, inform other reporting parties or witnesses about the investigation, with a request to make written or oral statements. The parties involved are obliged to comply with such a request within the time frame set by the ombudsperson. The ombudsperson may also choose to question or commission the questioning of several people, whether or not by issuing a survey.
3. Formal investigations conclude with a report drawn up by the ombudsperson, which states the findings, an opinion and any recommendations, including those relating to aftercare, unless no patterns have been identified by the ombudsperson and the situation has since been resolved to the satisfaction of the parties. The recommendations may relate to specific behaviours and patterns giving rise to the report(s) or to more general aspects that emerged during the investigation.
4. The ombudsperson always shares the summarised findings and recommendations with the reporting party, the accused and the responsible director who is in a position to act, and provides an anonymised copy to the Executive Board. When the investigation concerns the Executive Board or its members, the ombudsperson reports to the Supervisory Board.
5. The director at whom the advice is aimed informs the ombudsperson within four weeks of receiving it whether and, if so how, the advice has been or will be acted upon. If the advice is not followed, reasons will be given. The ombudsperson notifies the reporting party or parties and the accused party or parties accordingly.

Article 9 Confidentiality

1. Without prejudice to the provisions in these Regulations, the ombudsperson has a duty of confidentiality in respect of any information that comes to his or her knowledge during the performance of his or her duties, insofar as relevant to the nature of the case. This duty also applies to all persons working for the ombudsperson. Anyone who is involved in any way in a report or the handling of a report has a duty of confidentiality in respect of any information that comes to their knowledge as a result of their involvement. The duty of confidentiality does not apply if statutory provisions prescribe an obligation to report or the publication of the case for any other reason.
2. Reporting parties who have contacted the ombudsperson or filed a report in good faith and in compliance with the provisions of the Regulations concerning the Ombudsperson, will not be disadvantaged in any way in their position solely as a result of contacting or filing a report with the ombudsperson. Staff and students who cooperate in investigating reports or following them up are also protected and must not experience any adverse effects as a result of their cooperation.

Article 10 Objection or appeal

No objections or appeals may be lodged against a decision of the ombudsperson.

Article 11 Unforeseen circumstances

The Executive Board will decide on any cases not provided for in these Regulations.

Article 12 Amendments and effective date

1. These Regulations may be amended or withdrawn by the Executive Board in consultation with the ombudsperson and with the consent of the Central Works Council and the Central Student Council.
2. These Regulations take effect from 1 December 2025 and replace the Regulations concerning the UvA's Ombudsperson 2021 as of the same date. These Regulations are published on the UvA website.

EXPLANATORY NOTES ON THE REGULATIONS CONCERNING THE UVA'S OMBUDSPERSON 2025

General

These Regulations describe the position, duties and powers of the ombudsperson. They also state who can contact the ombudsperson, the type of situations for which the ombudsperson is mainly intended and how a report will be followed up.

Role and scope of the ombudsperson

The Regulations are based on the *Management and Administration Regulations*. These also stipulate that the ombudsperson occupies an independent position with respect to the Executive Board and that reports can be made to the ombudsperson in the event an independent, neutral and confidential investigation and recommendation is required in order to promote social safety in the working and/or study environment.[1]

The role and scope of the ombudsperson is also described in the *National Framework for Implementation of the University Ombuds Function* (October 2020), which was drawn up in the context of the VSNU (association of universities in the Netherlands) (now the UNL). According to this framework, the ombudsperson has an independent and authoritative position and is authorised to identify undesirable patterns (for example a pattern of undesirable behaviour or social safety concerns), issue solicited and unsolicited advice, liaise with all staff and students of the university relevant to a report, conduct investigations independently and on his or her own initiative in response to a report, and play an intermediary role (but not as a mediator) if required. The ombudsperson identifies and advises on larger social safety trends while keeping an eye on individual cases. However, the ombudsperson does not, in principle, handle individual issues relating to legal status and cases explicitly assigned to a specific committee. The position is complementary to the support structure and should not duplicate the roles of the confidential advisers or committees. The ombudsperson is impartial, is able to investigate and can play an intermediary role between a reporting party and the organisation. The confidential adviser focuses on the individual reporting party, while the ombudsperson takes a broader view and advises on underlying improvements beyond the individual report.

Finally, the *Dutch Universities' Sectoral Regulations on Reporting Suspected Malpractice (Dutch Universities Whistleblower Policy 2025)* assign a task to the ombudsperson: a reporting party within the meaning of these regulations can contact the ombudsperson for information, advice and support regarding suspected malpractice.

Social safety in the working and/or study environment

The UvA aims to provide an environment where social safety is a given and therefore continues to invest in the 'House of Social Safety'[2]: the UvA offers all students, PhD candidates and staff who encounter unsafe social situations various support options in finding a solution. The ombudsperson is part of the 'House of Social Safety'. Any (former) employee or (former) student of the UvA can make a report to the ombudsperson with regard to social safety in the work and/or study environment that may not involve a single individual case but instead several cases or broader trends/patterns.

[1] Article 43(5) of the Management and Administration Regulations (2023).

[2] The House of Social Safety includes the following facilities: Confidential Advisers, Staff Disputes Committee, Complaints Committee, Academic Integrity Committee, Arbitration Committee for Student Objections and Examination Appeals Board.

Social safety means that current and former staff and current and former students *feel* protected and *are* actually protected against danger and the threat of danger from someone else's actions. That danger can vary considerably. It may involve undesirable or transgressive behaviour, but also acts such as a violation or suspected violation of integrity.

Undesirable behaviour is any behaviour that is reasonably perceived as unpleasant or undesirable by another person. Undesirable behaviour can also sometimes be transgressive. Transgressive behaviour is all behaviour that affects the dignity of another person and that the person behaving in this way should know is unacceptable, regardless of how it is perceived. The boundaries of what is and is not permissible are determined by norms such as laws and regulations, UvA policies (such as codes of conduct and guidelines) and societal standards and values. Examples of transgressive behaviour include bullying, intimidation, sexual harassment and discrimination.

A socially safe environment is one where people treat each other with respect and where transgressive behaviour and undesirable behaviour are challenged. Unethical behaviour affects social safety and trust in an organisation. An integrity violation involves an act or omission that violates UvA regulations or other ethical standards, rules or principles relating to honesty, trustworthiness and fairness, often with negative consequences for others or for the organisation of which a person forms part (such as the department, the programme or the UvA as a whole). Examples include conflicts of interest, abuse of power, improper use of company resources or leaking confidential information. However, the improper application of internal regulations, policies or procedures can also constitute an integrity violation.
One form of integrity violation is expressly excluded from the ombudsperson's sphere of activity, namely violation of academic integrity. The Confidential Adviser for Academic Integrity or the Academic Integrity Committee are the points of contact for violations of academic integrity at the UvA. The ombudsperson also does not handle reports of suspected abuses within the meaning of the *Dutch Universities' Whistleblower Policy 2025*. However, the ombudsperson can offer information, advice and support and/or refer a reporting party as referred to in those regulations.

Central contact point

Given the independent and central position of the ombudsperson within the domain of social safety, the Office of the Ombudsperson has been designated within the UvA as the central reporting centre as referred to in the Collective Labour Agreement of Dutch Universities. This reporting centre applies to *all* warning signs, reports and complaints regarding social safety, and it provides information and makes referrals.[3] It therefore acts as a one-stop-shop that can refer individuals to the right support or procedure.

Free access to information

For the ombudsperson to handle reports confidentially, diligently, independently and impartially, it is essential that the ombudsperson has access to all relevant facts and circumstances of the case and is not reliant on third parties for such access. The ombudsperson therefore has direct access to relevant ICT systems, information and files, buildings, staff and students that are relevant and necessary for handling reports. Access to UvAdata (details) and SAP (display function PA20) is always assumed to be relevant and necessary.
The ombudsperson must of course observe the principles of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) during the performance of his or her duties. This means, among other things, that the ombudsperson must act in accordance with the GDPR and is responsible for the confidentiality and protection of personal data and special personal data submitted by the reporting party or data subjects

[3] Preamble to the CAO NU 2024-2025.

in the context of the investigation or of which the ombudsperson otherwise becomes aware during the investigation. The ombudsperson takes into account the principles of proportionality and subsidiarity. The foregoing also applies to all other information and files.

Explanatory notes on individual sections

Article 1

The definition of undesirable behaviour is aligned with the University of Amsterdam's Code of Conduct. Undesirable behaviour can also take place in the context of career development and relate to 'career obstruction'.

Article 2

The ombudsperson has an independent position within the UvA. Independence is essential for the performance of his or her duties. The person holding the position therefore cannot perform any other additional duties and there is no hierarchical relationship between the ombudsperson and any authority or individual (in other words, the ombudsperson is from a formal perspective ultimately only accountable to the
Executive Board). The Executive Board must ensure that the ombudsperson is not disadvantaged as a result of the performance of his or her duties. This provides an additional guarantee that the ombudsperson can operate freely and independently within the organisation. The ombudsperson's performance is closely related to the trust placed in this officer. The ombudsperson may be expected to do nothing and refrain from doing anything that would cause serious damage to this trust. If the Executive Board is of the opinion that this trust is/was seriously damaged, it may discharge the ombudsperson from the position.
Sufficient resources are made available to the ombudsperson to perform his or her duties properly. In any event, these include financial resources, equipment and a workspace.

Article 3

The ombudsperson may advise, mediate, investigate and make decisions. The ombudsperson makes a referral to another body if this is more logical. The ombudsperson has an important role in identifying problems in the area of social safety, particularly with regard to structural patterns. Each year, the ombudsperson prepares a report further to the anonymised and non-anonymised reports handled and developments, trends and patterns identified. The report is always sent to the Executive Board, the deans, the Secretary General of the UvA, the service unit directors, the Cental Works Council, the Central Student Council and the Supervisory Board. A public and public-friendly version of the report is published on the UvA website.

Article 4

Every current or former employee or current or former student has a right to make a report to the ombudsperson. This can be done either verbally or in writing, in Dutch or English. When handling the report, the ombudsman may only decide to disclose the name of the informant further, for example to the accused, with the permission of the reporting party. The interests of the reporting party and the accused party or parties are also taken into consideration.

Article 5

In a number of cases, the ombudsperson is in principle not obliged to handle a report. Pursuant to the General Administrative Law Act, a limit has in principle been set for the period during which past behaviour can be reported to the ombudsperson. In accordance with the General Administrative Law

Act, a period of one year applies. In cases involving undesirable behaviour, this period is set in principle at three years. The ombudsperson may also decide to handle reports of behaviour in a more distant past. Particularly in the cases of harassment (sexual or otherwise), it is reasonable to apply a longer period.

Articles 6 to 8

These articles describe the ways in which the ombudsperson can follow up on a report: in the form of advice, discussion facilitation or formal investigation.

Article 9

This article regulates the duty of confidentiality of the ombudsperson and everyone who works for the ombudsperson. The article also provides protection against harm to reporting parties and staff and students who cooperate in investigating reports or following them up.

Article 10

Given the nature of the role and position of the ombudsman and in view of the General Administrative Law Act, no objection or appeal may be lodged against the ombudsman's decisions. A reporting party can contact the National Ombudsman if he or she so wishes.