

SCB Ombuds Terms of reference

May 2019

The SCB Ombuds serves as an independent, neutral, and confidential resource for members of the SCB community who are concerned about behavior of staff, governors, members, or other functionaries of SCB. The purpose of the ombuds is to help persons express concerns, resolve disputes, and identify systematic issues that could lead to breaches of people's rights. The ombuds has no power to make decisions but rather will focus on trying to resolve conflict and make recommendations. The ombuds does not serve as anyone's lawyer, advocate, or representative.

The ombuds provides a confidential channel to discuss a concern, dispute or disruption without fear of retribution. The ombuds will strive to maintain confidentiality regarding individual names and issues, unless there is imminent risk of serious harm or a need to report suspected criminal activity. However, in some cases, the parties to a dispute will need to waive anonymity to advance the goal of informal conflict resolution. The ombuds shall not keep permanent records, and shall not initiate any unrequested investigation. The ombuds may engage in informal fact-seeking related to a particular case, maintaining confidentiality as much as possible.

The ombuds may decline to accept any particular case. No person can be compelled to use the ombuds office. Bringing something to the attention of the ombuds does not constitute formal notification (e.g., formal notification for legal proceedings).

The SCB Ombuds should have a good knowledge of SCB and its activities. The ombuds may not concurrently serve as a functionary of SCB (e.g., Governor, committee chair, member of the Board of an SCB Section, editor of an SCB journal, or SCB contractor).

SCB shall discuss the expectations of the position, review and sign the SCB Code of Conduct, and preferred ways of communication as part of the onboarding process. SCB may also require trainings on best practices for ombuds to fill knowledge gaps, and discuss options for bias/cultural sensitivity, harassment or other training to fill knowledge gaps (costs will be covered by SCB and not involve more than 12 hours to complete). The SCB Ombuds receives no salary, but may request reimbursement for expenses prior to incurring any expenses. Ombuds will be expected to meet and review work load, best practices, and any needs for adaptive management of the position with one or more of the SCB Executive Council once a year.

Individuals being considered for the ombuds positions should be proposed by and discussed with the full SCB Board of Governors, unanimously approved by the SCB Executive Council, and the appointment can be rescinded by unanimous approval from the SCB Executive Council at any time with input from the BoG. The term of office will be negotiated, but an individual appointment shall be no longer than 5 years. An ombuds may be re-appointed by the SCB President such that the sum of multiple terms may be longer than 5 years. SCB should appoint a minimum of three ombuds to allow for geographic and other diverse representation among the pool of ombuds.

The name and contact information for the SCB Ombuds shall be posted on the SCB website.