University of Michigan-Dearborn
Ombuds Services
2025-2026 Annual Report

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This report has been modified from its original version to meet accessibility requirements.

Ombuds Services Annual Report

Ombuds Services operates independently as an informal, impartial, and confidential* resource providing students guidance on University policies, assistance in resolving concerns and critical situations, help in securing appropriate information and timely responses, and opportunities to discuss or question University actions. Ombuds duties encompass researching visitor questions and concerns, communicating with students, faculty, and staff involved to provide a quick resolution, if possible, and assisting with appeals and petitions.

Mission: To provide a safe space for students to express concerns and receive assistance navigating University policies and procedures. To propose University policy recommendations based on issues presented by students. To support UM-Dearborn's commitment to ensure that students are treated with fundamental fairness and personal dignity.

Vision: Through resolution of specific concerns and imparting of self-advocacy skills, contribute to increased student persistence and sense of belonging.

Values/Principles: Informal, Independent, Impartial, Confidential

Confidentiality cannot be promised if there is serious risk of imminent harm or if required by law.

What Students Can Expect at an Ombuds Appointment

Introductions - At the start, the Ombuds will explain how their office operates, covering key principles like independence, informality, impartiality, and confidentiality. It's an opportunity to ask any questions and provide some background on why Ombuds Services was contacted.

Getting the Story - This is the time for students to share their concerns. The Ombuds will ask open-ended, non-judgmental questions to understand the situation fully and help analyze it from different perspectives.

Exploring Options - Together with the Ombuds, students will brainstorm possible solutions to address their issues. Pros and cons of each idea will be weighed, which might include gathering more information, initiating conversations with involved parties, getting referrals to other offices, working on petitions or ap-peals, or deciding to take no immediate action.

Next Steps - The decision about what happens next is up to the student. Taking time to consider options before making a choice is always an option—unless there's an imminent risk of harm.

Follow-Up - Ombuds Services remains accessible for follow-up discussions. It often takes more than one conversation to fully resolve a concern, so additional meetings can be scheduled as needed.

What Students Can Expect at an Ombuds Appointment

Ombuds Services Will:

- Listen respectfully, non-judgmentally, and confidentially to students having disputes with any part of the University
- Maintain a neutral and objective viewpoint
- Identify relevant University policies and procedures and help students understand their rights
- Make referrals to knowledgeable people
- Assist students in evaluating and assessing a variety of options to address their concerns
- Provide an opportunity for students to discuss or question University actions

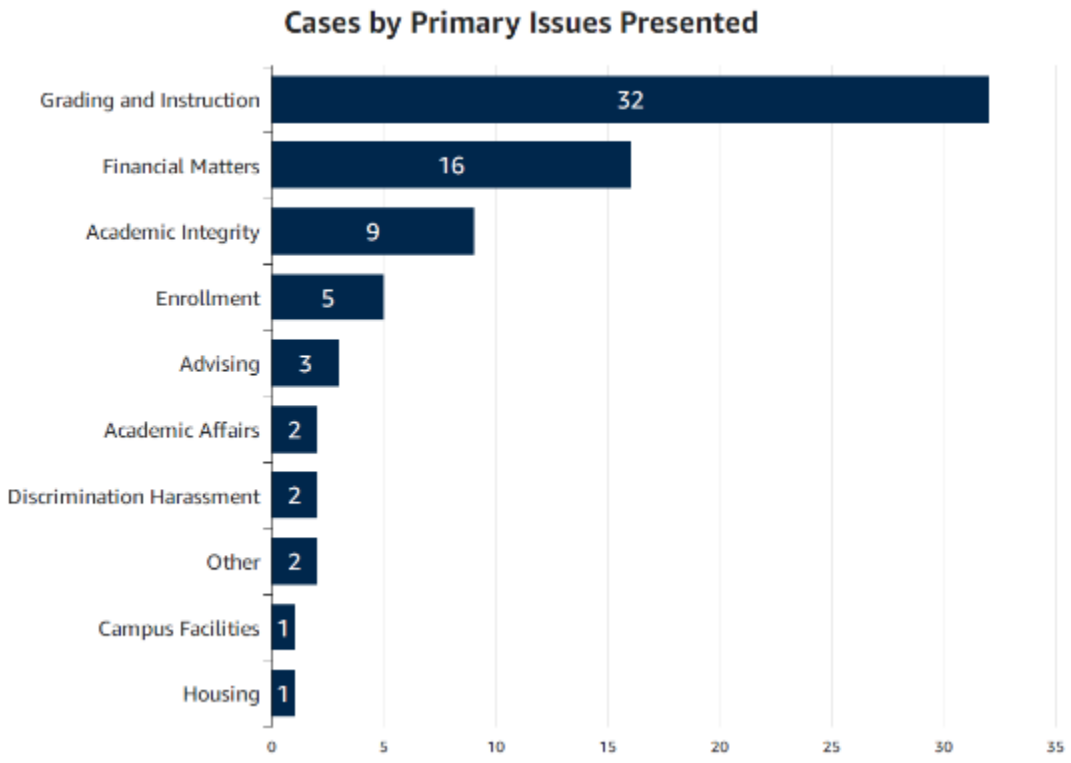
Ombuds Services Does Not:

- Make decisions for any other part of the University
- Advocate for any individual
- Take sides
- Serve as an office of notice for the University
- Offer legal advice or provide counseling services

Case Summary

From July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2026, the office recorded 73 unique cases, representing an increase of 8 cases compared to the previous year.

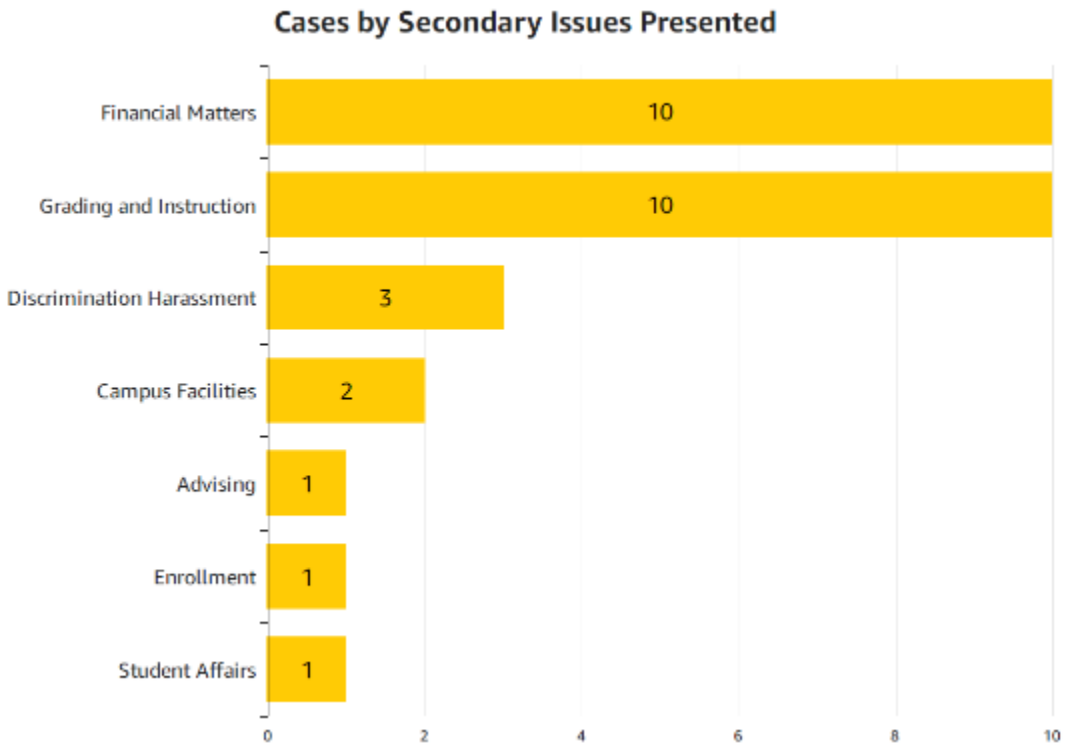
In reviewing cases by the primary issue presented by the student, cases involving Grading and Instruction (32 [+3]) were the most frequent followed by Financial Matters (16 [+10]), Academic Integrity (9 [-2]) Enrollment (5), Advising (3), Academic Affairs (2), Other (2), Campus Facilities (1), Discrimination Harassment (1), and Housing (1). Charts and analysis follow.



Secondary Issues

Out of 73 visitors, 28 had more than one concern.

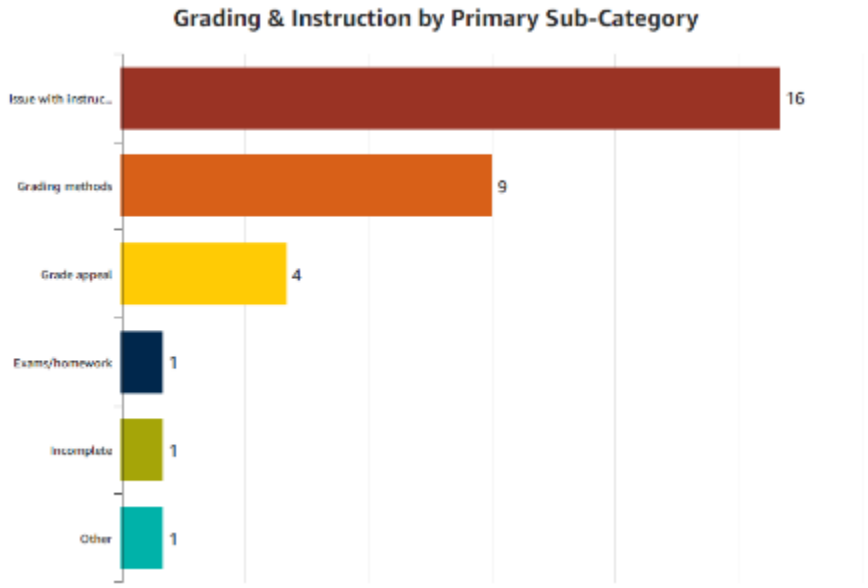
Sometimes led with one concern (the primary issue), but with discussion it may have been important to address additional areas (the secondary issue). At times the primary and secondary issues fall under the same category. For example, a student could have an issue with grading methods and applying for an incomplete. Other times they will fall under different categories such as when a student is contemplating a grade appeal and the poor grade is impacting their aid due to unsatisfactory academic progress.

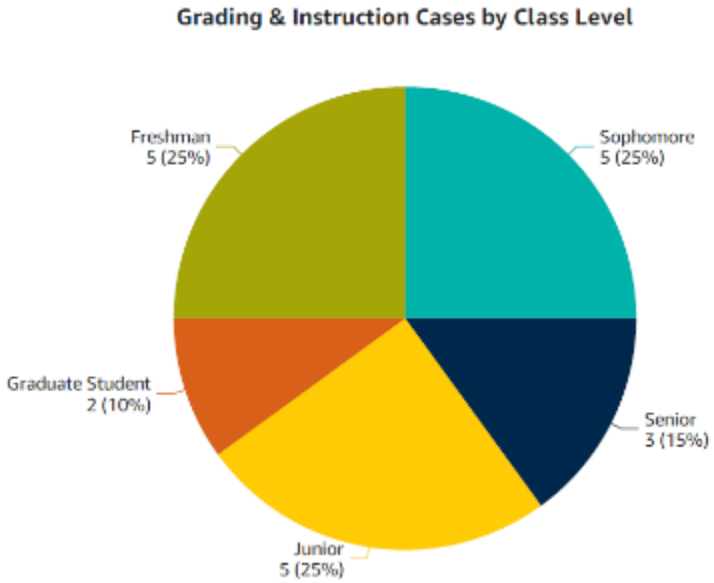


Grading & Instruction

The Grading & Instruction category accounted for the highest number of primary issues, totaling 32.

Primary sub-categories for Grading and Instruction show “issue with instructor” as 50% of reported issues followed by “grading methods” at 28%. Grade appeals, concerns regarding exams, and incompletes were lesser reported.





Grading & Instruction

For grading and instruction concerns, CASL students visited Ombuds Services followed by CECS, CEHHS and COB respectively.

Grading and instructions cases were driven primarily by 18-21 year old students.

