

Augusta University  
House Staff Policies and Procedures

Policy  
HS 12.0 Confidentiality For House Officer Ombudsperson

Source  
Graduate Medical Education Office

1.0 Purpose

To describe the resources that the office of the Ombudsperson provides to the House Officer to convey concerns, in a protected environment and without fear of reprisal. Ombudsperson functions as an independent, impartial party, and offers a safe space to raise concerns about training-related issues. Discussions with staff members are confidential, unless the concerned party grants permission to discuss issues with other involved parties. Staff members will listen, educate, and, whenever possible, help to locate resources to assist in the resolution of training-related concerns.

2.0 Procedures

2.1 Services and procedures provided by the Ombudsperson:

- a. Provides a safe space to confidentially raise concerns to an independent, impartial party.
- b. Before taking any action, listens, educates about options, available resources, and mechanisms to assist in the resolution of training-related concerns (including the use of the ACGME's formal complaint process).
- c. May requests internal inquiries to further explore and resolve issues raised when appropriate.
- d. Opens the lines of communication between residents/fellows and involved parties.
- e. Advocates for fair process.
- f. The Ombudsperson will not be a member of any Graduate Medical Education Residency Program and will have the responsibility to investigate and monitor claims.

2.2 A House Officer who wishes to address concerns in a confidential manner may meet, e-mail or telephone the Ombudsperson.

2.3 Another option is to use an anonymous message board available at: <http://hi.gru.edu/resident/speak/>

Edward Agabin, MD

Personal: 904-735-2093

EAGABIN@AUGUSTA.EDU


Office: 706-721-6751

3.0 Confidentiality:


3.1 The Ombudsperson holds all communications with those seeking assistance in strict confidence, and does not disclose confidential communications unless given permission to do so

3.2 Exceptions to confidentiality

The only exception to this privilege of confidentiality is where there appears to be imminent risk of serious harm, or there is evidence of criminal behavior is uncovered.

  
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David Hess, M.D.  
Dean, Medical College of Georgia

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Date

  
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Walter J. Moore, M.D.  
Senior Associate Dean, Graduate Medical Education and  
VA Affairs

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Date

*The term House Officer is used as a generic term to include interns, residents and fellows in an approved ACGME Residency Training Program at*

*Augusta University*

Effective Date:  
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