

Student Ombudsmen
Faculty of Social Sciences
Charles University

Preamble

The Student Ombudsman is a defender of the rights of the university students of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the Charles University (hereinafter, “FSV UK”). An Ombudsman’s function is to ensure the quick and effective resolution of a broad range of problems experienced by students and contribute to the creation of a collegial atmosphere within the Faculty. A Student Ombudsman takes action in cases of unethical or unprofessional behavior toward students of the faculty by employees of the FSV UK, and of discrimination, abuse, or any other form of inappropriate behavior. As part of a student’s studies and activities within the academic community, the student or employee of the Faculty has the right to appeal to the Ombudsman. An Ombudsman is not an expert in solving disputes and problems by virtue of his or her position, but becomes one in instances where he or she is involved with other faculty bodies in efforts to resolve broadly defined problems. An Ombudsman functions as a mediator, negotiator, advisor, and initiator. The office of the Ombudsman is a supportive position that complements the existing structure of the FSV UK. A Student Ombudsman will be supported by the Academic Senate of the FSV UK (hereinafter, “AS FSV UK”) and if necessary, other bodies of the Faculty, for support.

Article 1

**Basic Principles, Rights, Standing, and Activities of Student
Ombudsmen of the FSV UK**

1. The office of Student Ombudsman is established in each of the five institutes of the FSV UK as a position overseen by the Faculty and as a part of its structure. In each of the individual institutes the Student Ombudsman shall have the same agenda and powers.
2. A Student Ombudsman takes part in the resolution of student’s problems at every level of study. His or her services are at the disposal of students in Bachelor’s, Master’s and doctoral programs of study.
3. Ombudsmen shall be elected by students of the FSV UK who are pursuing studies as of the first day of the election (hereinafter, “voters” or “voter”).
4. The term in office of an Ombudsman is one year, which begins on the day after the termination of the term in office of the previous Ombudsman.
5. The Ombudsmen of all the institutes of the FSV UK are responsible to the Social Committee of the AS FSV UK (if no such committee is established, all the competences given by this document to the Social Committee will exercised by the Study Committee of the AS FSV UK).
6. An Ombudsman shall function as a mediator, negotiator, advisor, and initiator.
7. The advisory body for the Ombudsmen is the AS FSV UK and the members of the various committees of the AS FSV UK.
8. The duties of an Ombudsman include:
 - a) dealing with complaints by students who believe that their rights have been violated by inappropriate behavior of academic workers or other employees of the FSV UK,
 - b) acting as a mediator in conflict situations that cannot be settled using standard channels, whether the situation arises between students and academic workers or other employees of the FSV UK, or between students themselves. An Ombudsman has the duty to inform both parties to a dispute about the progress of the mediation process.

- c) in a situation where a violation of the Code of Ethics of the UK is suspected, with the consent of the injured party and in accordance with the UK Code of Ethics, transferring the matter and all documentation to the Ethics Committee of the UK for its consideration.
 - d) providing all necessary assistance to the relevant bodies of the Faculty and the UK for investigation of the above-mentioned situations.
9. An Ombudsman does not have the power to make binding decisions, but is expected to contribute to the prompt resolution of conflict situations.
 10. An Ombudsman may, on his or her own initiative, notify the FSV UK about any unjust action, violation of a regulation, or other irregularity.
 11. In individual cases of complaints, the Ombudsman is bound by confidentiality with respect to any sensitive facts about which he or she may become aware in the course of performing his or her duties. However, he or she is required to keep the Social Committee of the AS FSV UK informed about his or her activities and findings, without however revealing information that could lead directly or indirectly to the identification of individuals involved in any particular case.
 12. An Ombudsman takes part as an observer in the regular meetings of the Social Committee of the AS FSV UK (or as the case may be, the Study Committee of the AS FSV UK), at which he or she reports on his or her agenda and activities.
 13. At the end of an Ombudsman's one-year term in office he or she is required to provide a summary report to the AS FSV UK (delivered into the hand of the AS FSV UK's chairperson) about his or her activities. He or she must do so before the first meeting of the AS FSV UK after the summer vacation. The Ombudsman's annual report should contain a summary of his or her agenda and the activities that took place during his term in office. In the annual report, he or she must observe the utmost discretion with respect to the participating actors in all cases and must not reveal in it any information that may lead directly or indirectly to their identification

Article 2

Announcement and Organization of Elections

1. Voting in regular elections shall begin no later than seven (7) days before the end of the term in office of the Ombudsman in each institute.
2. Voting in early elections shall take place no later than thirty (30) days after the end of the term in office of the relevant Ombudsman.
3. For a regular election, the election shall be announced by the Social Committee of the AS FSV UK no later than two months before the first day of voting. In case of a special election, the date of the election shall be announced by the Social Committee of the AS FSV UK at its earliest possible meeting. The announcement must contain the date for submission of nominations, the composition of the electoral commissions, the place of voting or the possibility of voting on-line, and the dates for opening and closing of the various phases of the election.
4. An electoral commission shall be chosen for each individual institute by the official student associations of the FSV UK (in particular the E-klub, Miroslava, SIMS, Politology klub FSV UK, and Studenti IKSŽ). The electoral commission shall have an odd number of members (and at least three (3) members). It shall be chosen by the mentioned student associations and after its election shall ensure the organization and conduct of the election. No member of the electoral commission, nor any person who holds an important office in the hierarchy of an association (e.g., chairperson, vice-chairperson, or president), shall be permitted to be a candidate for Ombudsman. The AS FSV UK's Social Committee of shall

- provide one independent observer (a representative of the AS FSV UK) to each electoral commission formed by the student associations.
5. Any student in a Bachelor's, Master's, or doctoral program of study at the FSV UK may nominate a candidate for Ombudsman. He or she must deliver the nomination (to the FSV UK registrar's office or in an e-mail to the Chairperson of the relevant electoral commission with a scanned document of nomination) within the time limit established by the Social Committee of the AS FSV UK. The document must contain:
 - a) a clear identification of the person submitting the nomination (name, surname, student number, area of study, year of study),
 - b) the handwritten signature of the person submitting the nomination,
 - c) a clear identification of the candidate (name, surname, student number, area of study, year of study),
 - d) the consent of the candidate and his or her handwritten signature,
 - e) in a case where the nomination is delivered by e-mail, it is essential that it contain the consent of the candidate along with his or her electronic signature or a signed and scanned statement of consent.
 6. Students may nominate themselves for the office of Ombudsman.
 7. A candidate must be a student of the FSV UK in a Bachelor's, Master's, or doctoral study program, in either an in-person or a distance learning form of study.
 8. If none of the students of a particular institute decide to be a candidate, the Senator in the Students' Chamber of the AS FSV UK (hereinafter the "Students' Chamber") elected by that institute shall automatically be the candidate. If the institute has more than one representative in the Students' Chamber, the ombudsman shall be elected from among them.
 9. A candidate for the office of Student Ombudsman is allowed to resign his candidacy. No less than forty-eight (48) hours before the election begins, the candidate must inform the Chairperson of the electoral commission for the relevant institute of his or her resignation by means of an e-mail or a statement delivered to the FSV UK registrar. The electoral commission shall immediately make this fact known by contacting the Chairperson of the Social Committee of the AS FSV UK with the information, and ensure that the election ballots are amended. A candidate shall not be permitted to withdraw his or her announcement of the resignation of his or her candidacy. In a case where there remain no other candidates in the relevant institute after the resignation of a candidate, the election shall proceed as stated in Article 2, Section 8 above.
 10. The Chairperson of the electoral commission shall collect the nominations, verify that the candidates fulfil the above-mentioned requirements for their candidacies, and prepare the ballots. The electoral commission shall determine the order of the candidates' names on the ballots by lottery.
 11. The Chairperson of the electoral commission shall publicize the list of candidates on the FSV UK's internet web pages no less than seven days before the first day of voting. The electoral commission shall then prepare the ballot for use in the UK voting application in electronic form.
 12. The student associations shall facilitate the electoral campaigns of the candidates. They must provide them with space on their social network accounts and allow publication of campaign materials on the web pages of the Faculty, the individual institutes, and elsewhere. The specific rules for campaigning by candidates shall be established by the associations. They should take care that the campaigns are conducted in accordance with the policies of the UK academic community and with moral principles of honesty, truthfulness, and the like.
 13. Detailed information on the conduct of the campaigns is set forth in the *Manual for Student Associations on Student Ombudsman Elections*. If there is a suspicion that a candidate's

campaign is not being conducted in accord with established principles, the relevant electoral commission shall notify the candidate of that fact. The case shall also be forwarded to the AS FSV UK Social Committee for consideration, after which the resolution of the situation shall be decided upon by mutual agreement. If a violation of the principles of the election is especially grave, the electoral commission, with the permission of the AS FSV UK Social Committee, is allowed to cancel the candidacy of the candidate involved and issue a statement to that effect.

Article 3 Conduct of the Election

1. Voting shall take place on the days established by the AS FSV UK Social Committee. Voting will continue on two consecutive working days. The first day of voting will begin at 8:00 a.m. and the second day of voting will end at 8:00 p.m. Voting shall continue without interruptions throughout the two days.
2. Voters shall choose their candidates by marking their ballot for one candidate only. The system will not permit voting for more than one candidate.
3. If a student is studying in more than one institute, he or she is permitted to vote in each of them.

Article 4 Computing and Announcing the Results of the Election

1. Immediately after the end of voting the results of the elections shall be given to the Chairperson of the electoral commission. The electoral commission will then rank the candidates according to the number of valid votes they received in the individual institutes. In the event of a tie vote, the ranking of the candidates will be established by lottery, which shall be done by the electoral commission.
2. The Ombudsman for each institute is the candidate who has received the greatest number of votes from the voters in the relevant institute. The other candidates will be alternates for the position of Ombudsman in the relevant institute in the order of the number of votes they receive.
3. The electoral commission will prepare a record of the conduct and the results of the election.
4. The record of the election shall contain:
 - a) The total number of voters in the relevant institute,
 - b) The number of voters who voted,
 - c) The number of valid votes received by each candidate,
 - d) The ranking of the candidates according to the number of votes they received,
 - e) In case of a tie vote, a record of the conduct of the lottery,
 - f) Other facts about the conduct of the election that the electoral commission considers appropriate.
5. The chairman of the electoral commission will deliver the record of the election to the AS FSV UK Social Committee no later than forty-eight (48) hours after voting concludes. Immediately after receiving the record from the electoral commission, the AS FSV UK Social Committee will announce the results of the election on the web page of the FSV UK.

Article 5
Termination of the Mandate of an Ombudsman and
Alternate Ombudsmen

1. The term in office of an Ombudsman ends the moment when:
 - a) he or she delivers a written statement of his or her decision to resign the mandate to the Chairperson of the AS FSV UK Social Committee,
 - b) his or her term in office expires,
 - c) he or she ceases to study at the FSV UK.
2. An Ombudsman can be removed from office for reasons of inactivity or incompetent performance of his or her duties. The AS FSV UK Social Committee can decide to remove an Ombudsman from office for serious reasons, which may include repeated unexcused absences from meetings of the AS FSV UK Social Committee or the Ombudsman's prolonged inactivity (long-term failure to participate at Committee meetings, lack of communication with the Committee, failure to react to complaints submitted by students, etc.). In the case of inactivity, the AS FSV UK Social Committee shall notify the Ombudsman with a warning that if his or her lack of activity is not corrected, the committee may decide at its next meeting to remove the Ombudsman. An Ombudsman who has been warned that he may be removed from office must be properly invited to attend any meeting of the Committee where a vote to remove him or her will take place. The Ombudsman may provide an explanation for his failure to take part in previous meetings, which can be in writing. A decision to remove a Student Ombudsman must be approved by two-thirds of all the members of the AS FSV UK Social Committee in order to be approved.
3. In a case where the term of office of an Ombudsman ends before the regularly scheduled end of his or her term in office, the alternate who received the most votes in the relevant election shall fulfill the remainder of his or her term in office.
4. In a case where there is no alternate, a special election shall be called in the relevant institute to fill the remainder of the ombudsman's term in office. One Senator of the Students' Chamber of the AS FSV UK elected from the relevant institute shall be the candidate for Ombudsman. In a case where the institute has more than one representative in the Students' Chamber, the Ombudsman shall be elected from among them.
5. In the event a special election will take place in the period before the announcement of new elections for a student ombudsman, the Ombudsman's functions shall be performed by one of the Student Senators from the relevant institution.

Approved by the AS FSV UK in Prague, May 17, 2022.