



Office of the
Ombudsperson
at Toronto Metropolitan University



ANNUAL REPORT

21/23

Confidential • Impartial • Independent

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“I would like to express my gratitude by thanking you for your assistance and support.”

MESSAGE FROM THE OMBUDSPERSON

It is hard to believe that I have been the ombudsperson at Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU) for over a year. Like many students who joined TMU during the last couple of years, I started at TMU when remote work was the norm as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Since then, the university has once again opened its door and the facilities for in-person learning and activities. I commend the students, faculty and staff for their flexibility and adaptability over the last few years in regard to the delivery of, and ability to learn in, very different environments.

Since joining TMU, I have met with many students, faculty and university leaders and have come to better understand the complex culture of the university and the role the Office of the Ombudsperson plays within the organization. Our office really is in a unique position, because we work directly not only with students on individual matters but also with other TMU offices that the students are engaged with. We work alongside many offices to support students with their concerns including the Academic Integrity Office, Human Rights Services, the Registrar's Office, Student Care, Academic Accommodation Support and many others. In all our work with students and the university, our goal is always to ensure that fairness is provided in every circumstance. We have found that a sense of community within the university aids all of us in working toward this shared goal.

This Annual Report covers a two-year period so that relevant topics facing students at the time the report is presented are considered. With the emergence of Covid-19 and all the consequential issues that resulted, it became very clear to our office that being able to speak about issues in a timely manner is imperative.

Due to the pandemic, many of the complaints and inquiries brought to our office in 2021/22 related to the emergency measures that the university put in place to address public health matters. For example, these concerns included how information was conveyed to students; the consistency of messaging to students; the implementation of the TMU Covid-19 Vaccination Policy and its impact on students; and assisting students in determining options available to them if their vaccination exemption requests were denied. For this reason, we introduced a new category of concern – specifically related to students' Covid-19 concerns – that we tracked in our statistics this year.

In addition, during this period of online learning, there was a significant increase in alleged academic misconduct matters. While the number of Covid-19–related concerns has sharply decreased this past year, it is not yet clear whether the number of alleged academic misconduct cases will revert back to pre-pandemic levels. One of the main reasons supporting this point of view is the advance in artificial intelligence (AI) and the number of platforms for its use. Our office understands that the use of these platforms poses a real threat to academic integrity for all higher education institutions. In this regard, we recognize the steps taken by the Academic Integrity Office (AIO) to provide valuable resources for students and faculty regarding artificial intelligence. Through enabling a better understanding of the platforms, how they work, what they can provide, and what is or is not permissible, the AIO offers a tremendous resource for the entire university community as we move through these developments. It would be a difficult environment for students and faculty alike if a culture of suspicion takes hold in academic integrity matters.

Another new category of concern was added to our statistics for the 2022/23 reporting period, one that relates to Toronto Metropolitan Student Union (TMSU) Fairness Reviews. For the first time, TMSU invited our office to provide an added level of oversight in their election process. This was accomplished by using our expertise to conduct, when requested, fairness reviews of any decisions regarding election violations as issued by either the chief returning officer or the election referendum committee.

In this Annual Report, in addition to highlighting the work of our office, we also set out recommendations for change that we believe will move the university toward operating at the highest level of fairness – be it procedural, substantive, relational or equitable in either individual or systemic cases. Focusing on issues of fairness, our observations and recommendations are set out for the university's consideration.



Maureen Helt
Ombudsperson

WHO WE ARE

Since 1997 the Office of the Ombudsperson at TMU has been an independent, impartial investigator of complaints and an advisor to the university community on issues of fairness. We are primarily concerned with ensuring that everyone involved in a dispute is treated fairly and that decisions affecting students are made promptly and fairly. Our office has two staff: Ombudsperson Maureen Helt and Assistant Ombudsperson Gemma Kerr.



“I want to thank you for all the support and help you provided to solve this issue. We very much, appreciate it.”

Maureen Helt

Maureen has over 25 years of legal experience, working as counsel, prosecutor and adjudicator, and has developed numerous dispute-resolution and investigative skills throughout her years of practice. She has strong interpersonal skills and a reputation for integrity, accessibility and fairness. Throughout her career Maureen has strived to ensure that matters related to procedural fairness receive the highest priority, given the impact on the parties involved. She understands that impartiality, independence and confidentiality are inherent in the role of an effective ombudsperson. She is a member of the Alternate Dispute Resolution Institute of Canada and has an LLM, specializing in Health Law.



Gemma Kerr

Gemma joined the Office of the Ombudsperson at Toronto Metropolitan University in 2015 and has extensive experience in working with students and interpreting the university's policies and procedures. She is committed to fairness and will do what she can to assist students with their concerns. Before joining this office, Gemma worked in a variety of educational settings, including alternative education, education programs in post-conflict zones, and post-secondary education. Through these roles, Gemma gained experience and conflict-resolution skills while working with a wide variety of students and stakeholders.

Three Pillars Of Our Office

INDEPENDENCE

We operate independently of the university, including all administrative and academic structures and the student government.

CONFIDENTIALITY

We keep all information confidential, unless we have explicit permission for names or identifying details to be released and we consider it appropriate to do so.

IMPARTIALITY

We consider all the information we receive with the highest degree of objectivity. We strive to ensure that all persons involved believe they have been treated fairly.

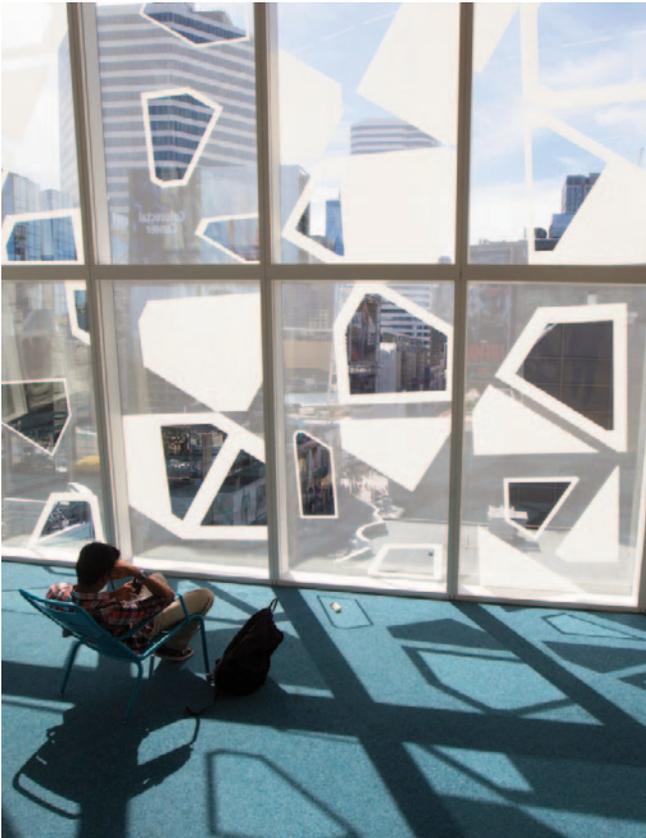
HOW WE WORK TO PREVENT UNFAIRNESS

The Office of the Ombudsperson is an independent and effective voice for fairness at TMU. The following highlights the many ways we assist students:

- listening to student concerns about TMU services, policies, processes and administration
- looking at any issue a student experiences at the university, including academic and non-academic issues
- providing detailed information on how students might resolve their concerns, including by providing clarifying information or referrals to other university resources, and by intervening on their behalf when they provide consent and we deem it appropriate
- investigating by asking questions, gathering information and analyzing evidence
- exploring ways to resolve individual cases without taking sides
- shining a light on problems and recommending improvements
- advising on university processes and procedures and conflict resolution, and by providing referrals to other student services
- analyzing complaints on an annual and multiyear basis to determine trends and identify potentially systemic problems
- investigating and making recommendations in the interests of fairness
- referring people to the appropriate on-campus offices for legal advice or counselling services, since we do not provide these services
- consulting and acting as a resource for the university on developing new policies and procedures
- leading training sessions developed by our office for faculty and students



For more detail, go to www.torontomu.ca/ombudsperson



COMMENTARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PERIOD 2021/23

On an organizational level, our office has worked with many TMU leaders, both academic and administrative, in resolving the concerns students have raised with our office.

Our Collaborative Approach with TMU Leaders

The following examples illustrate our collaborative approach to resolving student concerns.

Fresh Start Appeals

A student enrolled in the Fresh Start Program sought our assistance because under Policy 170(a) they were not able to appeal an academic course grade while they were enrolled in Fresh Start. The language of section 11.18 of Policy 170(a) was as follows: “Students who fail to successfully complete the requirements of either the EAP1 or EAP2 contract may not appeal their grades or academic standing.”

Our office raised this issue with Senate and subsequently steps were taken to revise Policy 170(a). Effective Winter 2023, Policy 170(a) Procedures is revised to include Procedures in Section 11.18, as follows:

Students who fail to successfully complete the requirements of either the EAP1 or EAP2 contract may not appeal their grades in a Fresh Start Strategies course or their academic standing.

As a result of this amendment, students will now be able to appeal an academic course while enrolled in the Fresh Start Program.

Policy 168 Procedures

Our office brought forward several proposed recommendations for amendments to Policy 168 Procedures to provide greater clarity and, in some instances, higher levels of procedural fairness for students. One such amendment was already a practice of Senate, but not set out in the Procedures: specifically, that all PPW/Withdrawn appeals will proceed to a hearing, unless it is a fourth request, or third request in the case of a standing variation, for an appeal.

Equalization Tuition Policy (Policy 159, Appendix A)

We helped a graduate student prepare a “policy brief” that set out her concerns and the obstacles she has encountered as a part-time graduate student with a disability. The document was shared with the OVPS, who then worked with the Office of the Registrar to address some of her concerns: specifically, regarding the Equalization Tuition Policy (ETP).

The student noted that the ETP provides for an equalization calculation based on course load, citing the following: “considering the student’s timeline within four years.” This policy is based on expectations of course-load calculations for undergraduate students; it does not capture the complexity of learning and the academic requirements at the graduate level. As a result, the OVPS and the Registrar’s Office have committed to ensuring the ETP more explicitly relates to graduate students, and there is agreement to revise the policy to more explicitly express this inclusion.

Our Work with Individual Students

In addition to the preceding examples of our collaborative work with the TMU leadership, we continue to work with individual students. In the following sections we set out some of our main observations and recommendations.

Our purpose in presenting the student concerns we’ve identified in regard to certain policies and procedures is to encourage further discussion and consideration.



Timeliness of Academic Appeals with Related Human Rights Appeals

Over the past 18 months, our office has seen an increase in the number of student complaints concerning delays in their grade and/or standing appeal processes where they have raised a human rights concern that has to be considered under the Discrimination and Harassment Prevention (DHP) Policy as part of the appeal process.

If a student selects the grounds of prejudice for their grade or standing appeal, Policy 168 Procedures applies: “2.4.2.4. If Human Rights Services determines that it will proceed with a complaint resolution process, then the student’s appeal will be put on hold until this process is completed. This will result in an extension of time required to complete the appeal while Human Rights reviews the situation.”

While it is understandable to hold off on considering a grade or standing appeal that has also been filed on other grounds—specifically, when the ground of prejudice under the DHP Policy is being considered—the delays in decision making that result from this practice have raised several concerns. Human Rights Services (HRS) has advised the Office of the Ombudsperson that, where there is an HRS component related to a grade and/or standing appeal, the HRS process should be prioritized through the preliminary assessment and processing. However, we have seen instances in which the process under DHP Procedure takes over a year to complete.

This is problematic not only for the student and any faculty involved but also for the university as a whole. As noted by Justice Laskin of the Ontario Court of Appeal, “University committees or appeal tribunals must act fairly when they review student grades and if they do not observe procedural fairness or the rules of natural justice, judicial review lies. The content of procedural fairness depends on the context. A university student threatened with the loss of an academic year by a failing grade is entitled to a high standard of justice.”¹

A delayed DHP decision of over a year, in our view, compromises the high degree of procedural fairness owed to a student who may stand to lose an academic year. As well, the impact of a delayed decision may have other far-reaching consequences for the student.

When a DHP decision does not find in the student’s favour, the grade and/or standing appeal decision-making process based on other grounds—such as course management, procedural error and/or extraordinary circumstances—could be delayed for more than a year after the appeal was submitted.

The potential for negative impacts for a student is significant, especially for a student who is appealing their standing. They may lose an academic year, their funding may be jeopardized, the student visa for international students may be impacted, they may be unable to register in a specific course if the course they are appealing is a prerequisite course, and the overall process can exert a mental and emotional toll.

We recognize that Human Rights Services (HRS) has experienced a sharp increase in the number of cases filed in its office year over year. Due to Covid-19 and particularly the Covid-19 Vaccination Policy, there was a further increase in caseload, which created further delay for the often very complex cases. Other factors contributing to an increase in caseload may include a greater awareness of the services offered by HRS, an increasing number of students at the university, and, as has been seen by our office over the last two years, an increase in the number of students from equity-deserving groups seeking assistance. Having additional resources to handle this increased caseload at HRS would definitely be helpful. However, consideration for the creation of a more streamlined and expedited approach is warranted.

Although additional resources may help in achieving a more timely process and managing the increased caseload, it is also important to consider how the process may be changed to improve its overall efficiency.

“I just wanted to thank you once again for all your help and guidance throughout this process.”

¹ Khan v University of Ottawa (1997), 34 OR (3d) 535

RECOMMENDATION 1

An increase in resources to match the increase in caseload and complexity would help reduce some of the current timelines; however, we recommend that consideration be given to reviewing the current processes to determine if greater efficiencies can be achieved without diminishing the level of procedural fairness required. Having matters that take several months to reach a decision not only creates undue stress for the complainant and respondent but also takes up resources available to HRS.

A further recommendation concerning cases that require a formal investigation is to establish a timeline for the completion of an investigation. For example, the DHP Procedures, which now requires the HRS to complete its review in a timely manner could include the further qualification that completion be “no later than six months after receiving the complaint, unless extenuating circumstances justify a delay.” When an extension of time is required, the parties will be advised of any such extension and the reasons for the extension.

We understand that in some cases the delay may occasionally result from the actions or inactions of the parties to the dispute. However, in our view, including a timeframe should be a paramount consideration in managing each parties’ expectations and obligations regarding timelines.

Review of the Discrimination and Harassment Prevention (DHP) Policy and the DHP Procedures

The current DHP Policy was last reviewed over a decade ago. Although the DHP Procedures have been more recently updated, there remain certain areas that could provide greater procedural fairness to the parties involved. There are also challenges with respect to the length of time it takes for matters to work their way through the process, which in itself causes concern; specifically, given the sensitivity of the many issues being investigated, the associated stress and burden on those parties involved in the process can be significant.

Section 3 of DHP Procedures states the following:

Confirming the parties’ evidence

Before providing the investigation report to the decision-maker, HRS will share with the complainant and respondent the excerpts of the report that include information and evidence that they shared with the investigator during the investigation process. The complainant and respondent will each have seven business days to review the excerpt(s) and advise HRS of any errors or omissions. HRS and the investigator will receive and review any errors or omissions identified and make amendments to the investigation report as appropriate. HRS will then forward the final investigation report to the decision-maker.

The decision maker renders the decision and remedy/penalties.

The decision maker will review the investigation report. Within ten working days of receiving the investigation report, the decision maker will render a decision and where applicable, will determine an appropriate remedy/penalty. In reaching a decision the decision maker considers the evidence and issues presented in the investigation report and any advice sought from the staff of Human Rights Services.

From the perspective of the Office of the Ombudsperson, there are two issues of concern. The first is that the DHP Procedures do not clearly state that during the investigative process each party will be made aware of the other party’s evidence in order to fully respond to such evidence. We have been advised by HRS that this is in fact the practice, but it is not clearly set out in the Procedures. The second concern is that the decision-maker can rely on any advice sought from the staff of the HRS. It does not appear that such advice is made available to the parties, nor is it clear whether or not the decision-maker has been provided legal advice in the form of submissions and, if so, whether the parties have had a chance to respond to any such legal advice.



“Thank you so much for your help and I’m very glad that you helped me get this situation resolved in a fast manner.”

RECOMMENDATION 2

We recommend that the DHP and the associated DHP Procedures be reviewed to allow for greater transparency in both the investigative and decision-making process. At the minimum, we recommend the DHP Procedures include a step that ensures each party has been made fully aware of the evidence the other party relies upon and is given an opportunity to respond. In addition, parties should be made aware of any and all evidence and submissions relied upon by the decision-maker and have an opportunity to respond.

Delay of Academic Integrity Appeals

Much like the increase in concerns about the timeliness of grade and standing appeals where a ground of prejudice has been selected, we have seen a rise in the number of complaints related to the delay in the hearing and decision making in academic integrity appeals. Students have raised concerns that their Academic Integrity Council (AIC) appeal has remained outstanding for over a year, resulting in prejudice to the student.

Our office understands that the Academic Integrity Office (AIO) experienced a significant increase in academic integrity allegations with the shift to online learning, and the current issue with timeliness is related to this increase. With the return to in-person learning and the slight year-over-year decline in new academic misconduct suspicions over the past year, it's possible that the time required to have matters heard and decisions issued will be reduced. The Office of the Ombudsperson, however, is not confident that the numbers will decrease back to the levels pre-pandemic. We make this comment considering the rapid rise of generative artificial intelligence, which has the potential to be used by students as they face many challenges in higher education. Similar to the previous commentary regarding the importance of additional resources to help reduce the timelines, it is essential to look at ways to work collaboratively to streamline AIC processes or create efficiencies in the process.

A further reason for the increased timelines may be related to the increased number of appeals and the related difficulties in scheduling AIC panel members to hear these appeals.

RECOMMENDATION 3

Policy 60 and its related procedures provide that the AIC panel shall be composed of two faculty members and one student member. When Policy 60 is under review we recommend that consideration be given to rethinking the composition of the panel and also to having a one-person panel, someone who is specifically trained (and perhaps hired) for the purpose of hearing appeals to the AIC. As both the AIC and SAC members adjudicate on these appeals, but at different levels of appeal, we recommend consideration be given to the creation of a single roster of members who can sit on either the AIC or SAC. This can be put in place permanently, or be used as a measure to deal with periods of increased AIC cases or to help reduce the delay in having cases heard and decided.

Graduate Student Supervision

Graduate students face the same challenges as other students, but with the added complexity of the student-supervisor relationship, research concerns, and the pressure of publication, to name a few.

Conflict between students and supervisors can arise for many different reasons, including unclear expectations; lack of adequate direction from the supervisor; research demands; pressure to publish; progress delays; tensions over grade or standing appeals that have been submitted; communication and interpersonal challenges, which coupled with the pressure of doing a graduate degree can negatively impact or lead to a breakdown in the supervisor-student relationship.

Many students who come to our office with concerns relating to their relationship with their supervisor state that they feel the power differential in the relationship and fear reprisal if they complain. Yet they also fear the situation could get worse, so they choose to remain silent even when they feel they are being treated unfairly. Useful processes have been set out in the Graduate Supervision Guidelines for Conflict Resolution, but the reality remains that if a student experiences a breakdown in the supervisor-student relationship, it is often very difficult to repair or to find an alternative supervisor.

The TMU Graduate Supervision Guidelines (last updated in August 2018) includes the following information.

Conflict-resolution guidelines:

In resolving a conflict that involves a graduate student, parties must in all cases be mindful of the power differential in the student/supervisor relationship. Furthermore, it must be acknowledged that research by nature requires that ideas, assumptions and interpretations are challenged – this can inadvertently create an environment that is perceived as threatening or adverse. Sensitivity to the power differential, recognition of differences in cultural experiences, and clear understanding of expectations can help maintain a healthy and productive relationship that fosters intellectual growth.

Conflict-resolution process:

Resolution of an issue should initially be sought first through informal program channels. Discussion of the problem should occur first between the student and supervisor or supervisory committee. If the issue cannot be resolved here, one or both parties should consult the GPD to seek possible resolution. If this does not result in a resolution, one or both parties are invited to seek the support of the Associate Dean with graduate responsibilities within their Faculty. If the supervisor is the program director, then both parties should consult with the Associate Dean with graduate responsibilities within their Faculty. If a satisfactory resolution is not reached, assistance can be requested from YSGS. In consultation with the person(s) seeking advice, YSGS may elect to appoint an advisory committee to help resolve the issue....

A change in supervisor should be made only for strong and compelling reasons such as a mutually agreed major shift in academic direction of the research, major academic disagreements and/or irreconcilable interpersonal conflicts.

“I really want to say thanks to you for all your support in this matter.”

The Guidelines provide a robust conflict-resolution process. They set out steps to be taken that involve the supervisor, the supervisory committee, the graduate program director and the associate dean, as well as the possible appointment of an advisory committee to help resolve the process. Despite this process, there are gaps when there is a breakdown in the supervisor-student relationship and no other supervisor can be found, the Guidelines offer no alternative for the student. This sometimes occurs due to the niche area of study, or when there might be intellectual property issues, or when a colleague is unwilling to take on a student who has not had a good working relationship with other colleagues. While these issues are reasonable, the resulting prejudice to a student can be devastating. For example, a student may have to withdraw from their program, or they may lose funding from a scholarship, or an international student may be unable to renew their student visa. There is also the significant emotional toll that this can have on the student.

RECOMMENDATION 4

The University clearly recognizes that “parties must in all cases be mindful of the power differential in the student/supervisor relationship” and has taken steps to help facilitate healthy relationships between a student and supervisor. This includes programs offered by the Graduate Learning Institute, as well as guidance set out in the Graduate Student Supervisor Guidelines and the Student Supervisor Discussion Checklist (Checklist). These are very positive proactive tools and we recommend the University consider further expanding on what is currently in place to foster as much transparency in the relationship as possible. This could include providing additional detail to the current Checklist to set out in more detail and in writing what was agreed to in the discussions about regular consultation, feedback, program expectations, etc., and also to make this checklist a requirement rather than a guideline.

In addition to the above, we recommend that the University consider creating some sort of process to ensure that a student, who experiences a breakdown in the relationship with a supervisor, is afforded an opportunity to continue with their graduate program. Training could be provided in conflict resolution to maintain healthy relationships. This could help avoid a situation where there is a complete breakdown in the relationship.

In addition, the university could conduct an environmental scan to see what is the best practice in managing and supporting graduate student-supervisor relationships.

Policy 60 Issues

We are aware that the review of Policy 60 is ongoing, and the Office of the Ombudsperson has provided several of the comments noted below to the AIO and Policy 60 Review Committee. We believe it beneficial to highlight in this report the main observations and recommendations.

All our recommendations emanate from the intention of Policy 60 itself, specifically as set out in section 4.4. Fair Process:

The University recognizes that it is a serious matter for students to be involved in an academic misconduct investigation and is therefore committed to handling these matters in a respectful, timely, and thoughtful manner. The University will apply the policy in a non-adversarial, investigative manner that is consistent with the principles of natural justice, including the right to know the case against you; to be heard and the right to a timely and fair decision based on the merits of each individual case.

(i) Decision-Maker at the Facilitated Discussion

Although the same issue was raised in our 2020/21 Annual Report, it is important enough to reiterate, especially in light of the Policy 60 review that is underway: specifically, many students express concern that the professor who brought forward a suspicion of academic misconduct to the AIC is the decision-maker at their facilitated or non-facilitated discussion.

The current process under Policy 60 can result in a student feeling intimidated to challenge their professor. They may perceive a conflict and, in many cases, believe the professor has already made up their mind. Some professors may choose to step aside and instead have a designated decision-maker (DDM), but the student is not afforded this same right. Although a student can request a DDM, this is not automatic. A facilitated or non-facilitated discussion results in a decision that a student has the right to appeal; however, the question for the university is whether or not this first-level process meets the standards of procedural fairness that the university strives for in all its affairs.

“Thank you so much for your help and I’m very glad that you helped me get this situation resolved in a fast manner.”



RECOMMENDATION 5(I)

When Policy 60 is under review, we recommend that consideration be given to having someone other than the professor who alleged the academic misconduct be the decision-maker at the facilitated discussion.

(ii) Lack of Transparency in Decision Making

Currently, the Academic Integrity Office does not release or make public any of its decisions. Although this is a long-established practice not only by TMU but also at other offices of higher education, we believe it still warrants consideration of whether this practice should be continued. A notable exception is the University of Toronto, where summaries of academic misconduct decisions are public.

The value in having decisions public cannot be underestimated. Not only does it help educate faculty and students, it also helps advance consistency in decision making, is transparent and provides a mechanism of accountability.

Moving to the practice of anonymizing decisions so they can be made public with least “harm” to the parties, is admittedly a significant shift from past practice, but it also reflects and aligns with the importance of transparency in decision making.



“Thank you for checking in with me and also for the helpful information you were able to provide. I really appreciate the time you took to speak with me and while I hope that I don't require your services again, it would be a pleasure to connect with you.”

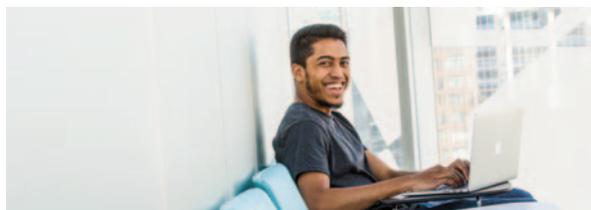
RECOMMENDATION 5(II)

While recognizing it is a complex issue, we recommend that academic integrity decisions be made public with anonymization: that is, referring to the “student” and the “respondent” or the “university” throughout the decision. All published decisions should include a detailed description of the facts of the case, the decision-makers’ written rationale and the assigned penalty.

(iii) Disciplinary Withdrawal and Permanent Removal from the Program

Our office receives complaints and queries from current students, alumni and also former students who were withdrawn from, or never completed, their program. Former students who contact us often describe very challenging personal circumstances that negatively impacted them while enrolled at TMU and that made it very difficult for them to be able to complete their program. For students who had years ago received a serious penalty from the university, such as a Disciplinary Withdrawal (DW) due to an Academic Misconduct finding, there can be a lasting impact for them in pursuing other academic studies and on their career progression.

“I want to thank you for your time and strategic thinking regarding this long and tough situation!”



Policy 60, 3.12. Disciplinary Withdrawal (DW), refers to “an academic standing where a student is permanently withdrawn from a specific program and fully withdrawn from the University as a whole for a period of at least two (2) years. After serving the specified period, a student assigned a DW may apply to other programs/certificates at the University. A DW will be placed on both the student’s academic record and transcript and cannot be removed.”

In regard to students who received a DW several years previously and who have explained that this was at a time when they were experiencing significant personal issues or stress which compromised their decision making, we believe they should be allowed an opportunity to have the permanency of this finding be reconsidered. Although the issue does not arise frequently, the practice of permanent Disciplinary Withdrawal is one that should be revisited. For example, even lawyers who are disbarred from the legal profession for dishonesty have an opportunity to seek reinstatement if they can prove they have been rehabilitated and there is no longer a threat to the public interest to allow them to engage in the practice of law. Sometimes the reinstatement is subject to certain terms and conditions. Allowing a student to seek reinstatement does not, in our view, pose any real threat to the university or the academic integrity of the program from which they were withdrawn. But it could significantly benefit a student whose academic and career prospects have been curtailed as a result of this decision.

RECOMMENDATION 5(III)

We recommend that TMU reconsider its position regarding the permanency of a Disciplinary Withdrawal. Specifically, we recommend that students who receive a DW be given the option to request a hearing after a period of three to five years. In their request the student would explain why they believe it is appropriate for the university to reinstate them. The reasons could include the context surrounding their Disciplinary Withdrawal, what has changed since that time, any continuing barriers the DW poses for them, and other factors that may be deemed relevant by TMU.

RESPONSE TO TORONTO METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY'S 2021-23 OMBUDSPERSON REPORT

Dear Ms. Helt,

Please find below an overview of the university's responses, as well as commitments, to the recommendations provided in the 2021-23 Ombudsperson Annual Report. We are grateful for your observations and thank you for your work to strengthen the integrity of Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU) policies and processes.

Timeliness of Academic Appeals with Related Human Rights Appeals

Toronto Metropolitan University provided the following suggestion regarding academic appeals:

- 1) An increase in resources to match the increase in caseload and complexity would help reduce some of the current timelines; however, we recommend that consideration be given to reviewing the current processes to determine if greater efficiencies can be achieved without diminishing the level of procedural fairness required. Having matters that take several months to reach a decision not only creates undue stress for the complainant and respondent but also takes up resources available to Human Rights Services (HRS).

A further recommendation concerning cases that require a formal investigation is to establish a timeline for the completion of an investigation. For example, the Discrimination and Harassment Prevention (DHP) Procedures, which now requires the HRS to complete its review in a timely manner could include the further qualification that completion be "no later than six months after receiving the complaint, unless extenuating circumstances justify a delay." When an extension of time is required, the parties will be advised of any such extension and the reasons for the extension.

We understand that in some cases the delay may occasionally result from the actions or inactions of the parties to the dispute. However, in our view, including a timeframe should be a paramount consideration in managing each parties' expectations and obligations regarding timelines.

Human Rights Services believes it is important for human-rights related matters to proceed in a timely and efficient manner while maintaining procedural fairness for those involved. As such, HRS has taken steps to enhance efficiency and transparency, and to reduce the timelines associated with academic appeals that involve the grounds of prejudice. This includes regular communication and coordination with the senate office and others involved in the academic appeals process.

Further, HRS recently streamlined its approach to preliminary assessments of prejudice appeals to determine whether the required threshold has been met and, if it has not, whether the academic appeal on other applicable grounds should proceed. Increased efforts are also underway to efficiently address academic appeals based on prejudice through early or alternative resolutions.

Relative to previous years, HRS has and continues to receive a higher volume of complaints and appreciates that resources play an important role in its ability to process and manage this surge in cases. We agree that an increase in resources to match the increase in caseload and complexity would help reduce some of the current timelines. As such, HRS is pleased to report that one new Human Rights Resolution Officer was recently hired and one additional staff member was transitioned to the role of Human Rights Resolution Officer. Both staff will focus on case management and complaint processing under university policies that engage discrimination, harassment and sexual violence.

Investigation timelines may generate challenges in certain cases and in addition to the measures highlighted above, the HRS office remains committed to continuing to review its processes and practices to facilitate greater efficiencies. We work with internal and external partners, including Student Care, Human Resources, the Office of the Vice-Provost, Faculty Affairs, our unions, and the Office of the Ombudsperson to continuously improve efficiency.

Establishing a prescribed six-month timeline for an investigation to be completed introduces distinct challenges. While aspirational, it may not always be achievable. Based on experiences to date and discussions with our counterparts at other universities, it remains the norm for investigation timelines to exceed six months.

Factors for exceeding this timeline include the nature and complexity of discrimination, harassment, and sexual violence matters that proceed to formal investigation. Other aspects that contribute to timelines include the number of parties involved, and the steps that must be taken to uphold procedural fairness and address other issues that may arise from the parties involved in the process, and which must be dealt with sensitively and appropriately. With that said, HRS will continue to communicate with parties and provide updates, including those related to delays and expectations around how their matter is proceeding.

Review of the Discrimination and Harassment Prevention (DHP) Policy and the Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Policy (DHPP) procedures

Toronto Metropolitan University provided the following suggestion regarding the DHPP and related procedures:

- 1) We recommend that the DHP policy and associated DHPP procedures be reviewed to allow for greater transparency in both the investigative and decision-making process. At the minimum, we recommend the DHPP procedures include a step that ensures each party has been made fully aware of the evidence the other party relies upon and is given an opportunity to respond. In addition, parties should be made aware of any and all evidence and submissions relied upon by the decision-maker and have an opportunity to respond.

Transparency and clarity are important goals of the process HRS administers under the DHPP, including all steps of an investigation process. While the current procedures relevant to the investigation process align with the requirements of procedural fairness, HRS remains committed to considering additional ways to keep parties informed about the complaint process in a transparent and clear way.

It is standard practice for all investigations conducted under the policies HRS administers to ensure all parties are fully informed of the material evidence provided by the other party and any witnesses, and are given an opportunity to respond to all such evidence.

This practice is also reflected in the section of the DHPP procedures dealing with the role of an investigator:

Section 3(a)(v) - Investigators conduct interviews with the complainant and the respondent separately and may need to meet with each party several times during the course of the investigation. Any documents, names of witnesses, and other facts/issues or submissions which the complainant or respondent believe are relevant to the complaint should be provided to the investigator during the investigation. After having met with the respondent and having heard their reply to the allegations, the investigator will communicate the respondent's reply to the complainant.

HRS also ensures that information about the investigation process is shared with the parties early on by issuing a Notice of Complaint. This notice confirms both parties' right to receive information that will enable them to respond to all material aspects of the allegation(s).

Delay of Academic Integrity Appeals

Toronto Metropolitan University provided the following suggestion regarding the delay of academic integrity appeals:

- 1) Policy 60 and its related procedures provide that the Academic Integrity Council (AIC) panel shall be composed of two faculty members and one student member. When Policy 60 is under review we recommend that consideration be given to rethinking the composition of the panel and also to having a one-person panel, someone who is specifically trained (and perhaps hired) for the purpose of hearing appeals to the AIC. As both the AIC and Senate Appeals Committee (SAC) members adjudicate on these appeals, but at different levels of appeal, we recommend consideration be given to the creation of a single roster of members who can sit on either the AIC or SAC. This can be put in place permanently, or be used as a measure to deal with periods of increased AIC cases or to help reduce the delay in having cases heard and decided.

We agree that having members of both the AIC and SAC hear appeals and penalty hearings under Policy 60, at the level of the AIC, makes sense during busy periods. In fact, this exact strategy was implemented over spring/summer 2023 to help clear a backlog of hearings. With respect to the recommendation of a one-person panel, the Office of the Ombudsperson and the Student Advocate have had the opportunity to present this recommendation to the Policy 60 Review Committee. It is now under consideration as part of a broader review of the policy.

We will continue to consult with the Office of the Ombudsperson and the Student Advocate on this matter and in the event that the review committee makes recommendations for revisions to the language of Policy 60.

Graduate Student Supervision

Toronto Metropolitan University provided the following suggestion regarding graduate student supervision:

- 1) The university clearly recognizes that "parties must in all cases be mindful of the power differential in the student/supervisor relationship" and has taken steps to help facilitate healthy relationships between a student and supervisor. This includes programs offered by the Graduate Learning Institute, as well as guidance set out in the Graduate Student Supervisor Guidelines and the Student Supervisor Discussion Checklist (Checklist). These are very positive proactive tools and we recommend the university consider further expanding on what is currently in place to foster as much transparency in the relationship as possible. This could include providing additional detail to the current Checklist to set out in more detail and in writing what was agreed to in the discussions about regular consultation, feedback, program expectations, etc., and also to make this checklist a requirement rather than a guideline.

In addition to the above, we recommend that the university consider creating some sort of process to ensure that a student, who experiences a breakdown in the relationship with a supervisor, is afforded an opportunity to continue with their graduate program. Training could be provided in conflict resolution to maintain healthy relationships. This could help prevent a situation where there is a complete breakdown in the relationship.

In addition, the university could conduct an environmental scan to see what is the best practice in managing and supporting graduate student-supervisor relationships.

We agree that the Graduate Student Supervisor Guidelines (Guidelines) and the Student Supervisor Discussion Checklist (Checklist) are both supportive and proactive tools that can help provide structure to the student-supervisor relationship.

Over the 2022-23 academic year, both the Guidelines and the Checklist were revised to include more explicit information on support for graduate students who may require accommodations, or consideration in all aspects of their studies, including non-course degree requirements. Explicit information was also added about TMU units that provide tailored support for graduate students, so students and supervisors, along with Graduate Program Directors (GPDs) and Graduate Program Administrators (GPAs) have detailed information about the supports these units provide. These revisions made clear the shared roles and responsibilities involved in creating inclusive and supportive environments where graduate students can thrive.

The need and mechanisms for ongoing consultation and timely feedback are outlined in Policy 170(b). One of the means for timely and ongoing feedback includes reviewing the plan of study at least once a semester as well as the annual progress review.

These mechanisms are widely used by programs and supervisors, but there are some inconsistencies and a lack of understanding about how they should be used to effectively ensure graduate students receive ongoing and timely feedback.

In terms of responding to the inevitability of challenges and breakdown in some student-supervisor relationships, we recognize these instances can lead to distressing outcomes for both students and faculty members. The school of graduate studies works closely with Faculty Associate Deans and GPDs to address these situations on a case-by-case basis. We consider the context of each different situation and engage both supervisors and graduate students in trying to resolve the challenge at hand.

The general principle has been that if there is an irreparable breakdown in the student-supervisor relationship due to non-performance related matters, the school will work to ensure the student continues in the program with a new supervisor. For performance related matters the non-course performance designation of unsatisfactory progress and the resulting provisional plan should be used. The GPD often fills in as the supervisor for cases where there is no suitable replacement supervisor.

We agree that ongoing engagement with the literature and with external institutions on best practices in supervision is a priority. This year, the School of Graduate Studies was part of a working group of the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies to produce the now publicly-available report, *Principles for Graduate Supervision and Ontario's University (June 2023)*. This report outlines best practices/guiding principles in terms of outlining roles and responsibilities for graduate student support among supervisors, programs, graduate studies and universities.

We will continue to revise the Graduate Student Supervisor Guidelines during the 2023-24 academic year. The aim of this revision is to ensure the document is as user-friendly as possible for all stakeholders. This will be achieved through thematic reorganization, simplification, removal of redundancies, and clearer connections to policy. While the Student Supervisor Discussion Checklist is not currently mandatory, it is widely used, and we continue to strongly recommend it as an important tool to ensure there is discussion between the graduate student and the supervisor about mutually agreed-upon expectations.

Policy 170(b) is currently under revision to clarify the use of the plan of study and the progress review. Community consultations on the proposed revisions will begin in fall 2023. As part of ongoing engagement in ensuring currency in terms of knowledge of best practices in supervision, we agree that producing an updated environmental scan would be a valuable addition to ongoing work in this area, and commit to undertaking that in the 2023-24 academic year.

Policy 60 Issues

Toronto Metropolitan University provided the following suggestion regarding the delay of academic integrity appeals:

- 1) When Policy 60 is under review, we recommend that consideration be given to having someone other than the professor who alleged the academic misconduct be the decision-maker at the facilitated discussion.

The Office of the Ombudsperson and the Student Advocate have had the opportunity to present this recommendation to the Policy 60 Review Committee. It is now under consideration as part of a broader review of the policy. Furthermore, the committee has undertaken an environmental scan of decision-making models as they relate to academic integrity at other universities, to help inform any recommendations that are made to the Senate.

We will continue to consult with the Office of the Ombudsperson and the Student Advocate on this matter and in the event that the review committee makes recommendations for revisions to the language of Policy 60.

- 2) While recognizing it is a complex issue, we recommend that academic integrity decisions be made public with anonymization: that is, referring to the "student" and the "respondent" or the "university" throughout the decision. All published decisions should include a detailed description of the facts of the case, the decision-makers' written rationale and the assigned penalty.

We agree that publishing anonymized decisions may be beneficial, both in terms of transparency and in terms of educating our community members. The Office of the Ombudsperson and the Student Advocate have had the opportunity to present this recommendation to the Policy 60 Review Committee. It is now under consideration as part of a broader review of the policy. In addition, this recommendation will be discussed with the Office of General Counsel.

We will continue to consult with the Office of the Ombudsperson and the Student Advocate on this matter and in the event that the review committee makes recommendations for revisions to the language of Policy 60.

- 3) We recommend that TMU reconsider its position regarding the permanency of a Disciplinary Withdrawal (DW). Specifically, we recommend that students who receive a DW be given the option to request a hearing after a period of three to five years. In their request the student would explain why they believe it is appropriate for the university to reinstate them. The reasons could include the context surrounding their DW, what has changed since that time, any continuing barriers the DW poses for them, and other factors that may be deemed relevant by TMU.

The Office of the Ombudsperson and the Student Advocate have had the opportunity to present this recommendation to the Policy 60 Review Committee. It is now under consideration as part of a broader review of the policy. The committee will review this recommendation, seeking information by conducting an environmental scan of practices at other universities. In addition, this recommendation will be discussed with the Office of General Counsel.

We will continue to consult with the Office of the Ombudsperson and the Student Advocate on this matter and in the event that the review committee makes recommendations for revisions to the language of Policy 60.

Sincerely,

Dr. Roberta Iannacito-Provenzano
Provost and Vice-President, Academic
and

Dr. Saeed Zolfaghari
Vice President, Administration and Operations

PROGRESS ON TORONTO METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY'S 2020-21 OMBUDSPERSON REPORT

Dear Ms. Helt,

Please find below an overview of the University's responses, commitments and progress updates to the recommendations provided in the 2020-21 Ombudsperson report.

The updates related to progress on each of these recommendations, as outlined in this year's report, demonstrate the university's commitment to promoting accountability and strengthening our systems and processes.

Thank you for the essential role that you play in maintaining a respectful dialogue between students, administrators and faculty. We appreciate your leadership and your commitment to impartiality and fairness.

Mental Health Challenges

Toronto Metropolitan University provided the following suggestion to address the recommendation regarding mental health challenges, which has been progressing as follows:

- 1) While it is important to ensure the university has adequate resources in place to address students' mental health and mental wellbeing, I think the university should consider a two-pronged approach. First, ensure there are sufficient resources and second, consider how the university can increase the mental well-being of students so that they are less likely to need access to Student Wellness Services. I also recommend that when policies at the university are developed or reviewed, they reflect, in their application and procedures, mental well-being principles. In other words, do the policies adequately reflect the mental well-being of students in their application? Are they structured and applied in such a way to ensure they create the least prejudicial impact on mental well being while ensuring the objective of the policy being met?

In response, the university confirmed a number of relevant initiatives were underway, led by Student Integrated Health & Wellbeing. These included building pathways of support for Black- and Indigenous-identified students as well as students with eating disorders. Planned hiring for counsellors was identified along with additions to the care team, and Student Integrated Health Wellbeing, Health Promotion Programs began transforming its peer support program to a wellbeing learning hub. The university also planned to create a new "Community Wellbeing" department within Student Wellbeing.

Student Integrated Health & Wellbeing (SHaW) has since had the opportunity to augment their care team to include new roles that work alongside and in partnership with existing staff. By diversifying the team and further strengthening an integrated approach to care, focus over the past year has been on better supporting students in a comprehensive manner, particularly those encountering complex life situations who would benefit from a holistic support structure. The ongoing hope with the new roles now in place is to provide a more seamless care experience that will ultimately result in improved student outcomes and satisfaction. These new roles include:

Peer Support Specialist

As part of the relaunch of peer support (see below), SHaW re-imagined an existing Health Promotions team role to specifically work with and drive this initiative. The Peer Support Specialist was hired in October 2022 and brings to the team certified training and lived experience. They have been instrumental to leading the student co-design focus groups that took place throughout fall 2022 and to launching both group-based and individual peer-support programming.

Care Lead

In October 2022, the Care Lead role was successfully filled. Over the fall 2022 and winter 2023 terms, this role focused on supporting at-risk students struggling with mental health, often individuals with diverse intersectionality needs, through intervention, referrals and connections with follow-up services. This role also collaborates with the various health care professionals within the SHaW team, while liaising with other student and academic services and building relationships to facilitate transitions with external community partners.

Clinical Nurse Lead

In January 2023, a Clinical Nurse Lead was hired who now plays a key lead role in the day-to-day oversight of the clinical care area. Since the incumbent joined the team, there is expanded access and an added interdisciplinary approach to health and wellbeing support for students. This is due to the nurse's strong focus and expertise in mental health and primary care, which supports growing needs in these areas.

Registered Dietician (RD)

SHaW, in partnership with the School of Nutrition and Athletics & Recreation, also hired an inaugural RD in June 2023. This RD will focus on student-centered services such as individual counselling, group education and health promotion programming for general nutrition. The role also provides day-to-day coordination, work direction and teaching and coaching support to School of Nutrition graduate practicum students, in turn further augmenting the support services available to students.

Alongside these recruitments, other ongoing SHaW initiatives support the mental health and wellbeing of students, including:

Health Promotion Programs (HPP), which transformed its peer support program in fall 2022. The "Wellbeing Learning Hub" (co-named by TMU students) was launched in partnership with Ontario Shores. Co-designed by students, the Wellbeing Learning Hub offered its first two iterations of peer support groups in winter 2023. Support for these groups was delivered in partnership with people with lived experiences navigating wellbeing through the post-secondary experience. The hub and peer support more broadly is rooted in principles of connection, self-identity, hope, meaning, and empowerment, while being strengths-based and student-centered.



To support the ongoing development and growth of the program, as of summer 2023 the team is focused on developing a peer support facilitator training module. The module will ensure students who want to be peer support facilitators are equipped with the skills and knowledge required to do this important work.

With the support of WaterStone Foundation, the Eating Disorder Pathways to Care was launched in the 2022-23 academic year. The pathway allows students struggling with eating concerns to receive timely and expert care directly on campus, with a counsellor who has experience in disordered eating. The RD incumbent will further augment the care available to these students in the coming 2023-24 academic year.

Community Wellbeing Update

The Community Wellbeing (CW) department began taking shape in January 2023. Hiring has included a Director, Community Wellbeing and a Campus Wellbeing Strategist. Thrive TMU and the Campus Mental Health Lead have been absorbed into the new CW department, allowing work to shift towards an upstream and coordinated approach.

A CW Steering Committee has also been formed to provide oversight on the development of the CW Strategic Framework and an engagement plan has been developed. The plan will roll out from September 23 to January 24 and targets approval of the Strategic Framework by April 24. Along with direct engagement with student, staff, and faculty groups, the team will take over the leadership and meaningful activation of two campus-wide surveys, the Canadian Campus Wellbeing Survey and the National College Health Association Survey, over an 18 month period.

Work has also begun on several initiatives aimed at concerns identified via existing student data. This includes the initial stages of planning and securing funding for an innovative platform to support students in service navigation both on and off campus, supporting Academic Accommodation Support in the operationalization of Policy 159, Wellbeing Week planning, as well as the development of CW working groups. The groups include Mental Health, Safety and Security, and Active Wellbeing.

The CW team has also initiated efforts to convene a Student Wellbeing Advisory Group, with member recruitment and initial group meetings scheduled for fall 2023. The group will create a forum for meaningful engagement between students and the services offered to support their wellbeing.

Best Practices for Online Exams

Toronto Metropolitan University provided the following suggestion regarding online exams: which has been progressing as follows:

- 1) We recommend that the university reconsider the practice of allowing the exam method that prevents backtracking, which makes it impossible for students to review their answers to questions during online exams.

Following this recommendation, new language was added to the Learning Management System (LMS) support page for faculty members. In the section concerning "preventing going back to the previous page" on an assignment or exam, the text now includes this caution: "If you select any of the paging options, it's possible to prevent students from moving backward to previous pages. However, we do not recommend using this setting, as it is an equity and accessibility concern."

Academic Misconduct in a Prerequisite Course

Toronto Metropolitan University provided the following suggestion regarding academic misconduct in a prerequisite course, which has been progressing as follows:

- 1) When Policy 60 is under review, we recommend that consideration be given to allow a student to appeal a prerequisite course where the academic misconduct penalty does not result in a failed grade.

The Office of the Ombudsperson and the Student Advocate have had the opportunity to present this recommendation to the Policy 60 Review Committee. It is now under consideration as part of a broader review of the policy.

Academic Misconduct and Timeliness of Facilitated Discussion

Toronto Metropolitan University provided the following suggestion regarding the timing of facilitated discussions, which has been progressing as follows:

- 1) When Policy 60 is under review, we recommend that greater clarity be provided regarding what is considered "timely," including what information is taken into consideration when determining if something is timely.

The Office of the Ombudsperson and the Student Advocate have had the opportunity to present this recommendation to the Policy 60 Review Committee. It is now under consideration as part of a broader review of the policy.

Decision Maker at the Facilitated Discussion

Toronto Metropolitan University provided the following suggestion regarding decision makers at facilitated discussions:

- 1) When Policy 60 is under review, we recommend that consideration be given to having someone other than the professor who alleged the academic misconduct be the decision maker at the facilitated discussion.

The Office of the Ombudsperson and the Student Advocate have had the opportunity to present this recommendation to the Policy 60 Review Committee. It is now under consideration as part of a broader review of the policy.

Sincerely,

Dr. Roberta Iannacito-Provenzano
Provost and Vice-President, Academic

and

Dr. Saeed Zolfaghari
Vice President, Administration and Operations

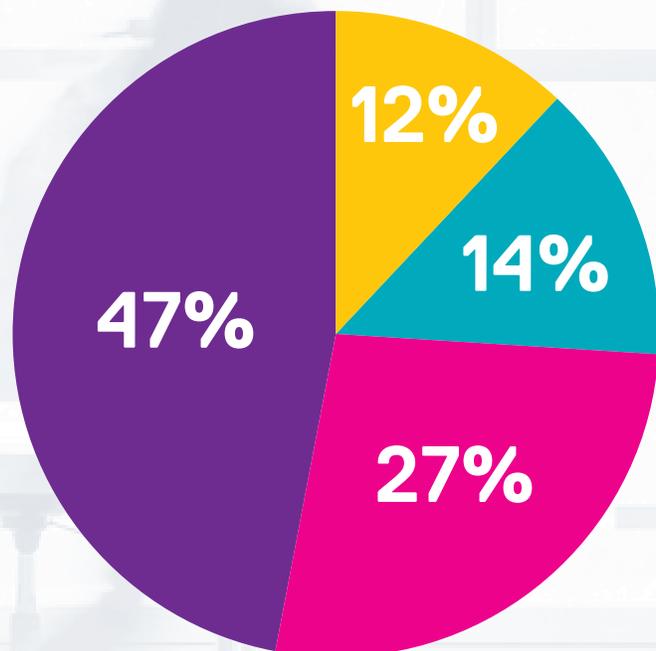
2021/23 AT A GLANCE

INVESTIGATIONS COMPLETED

 20

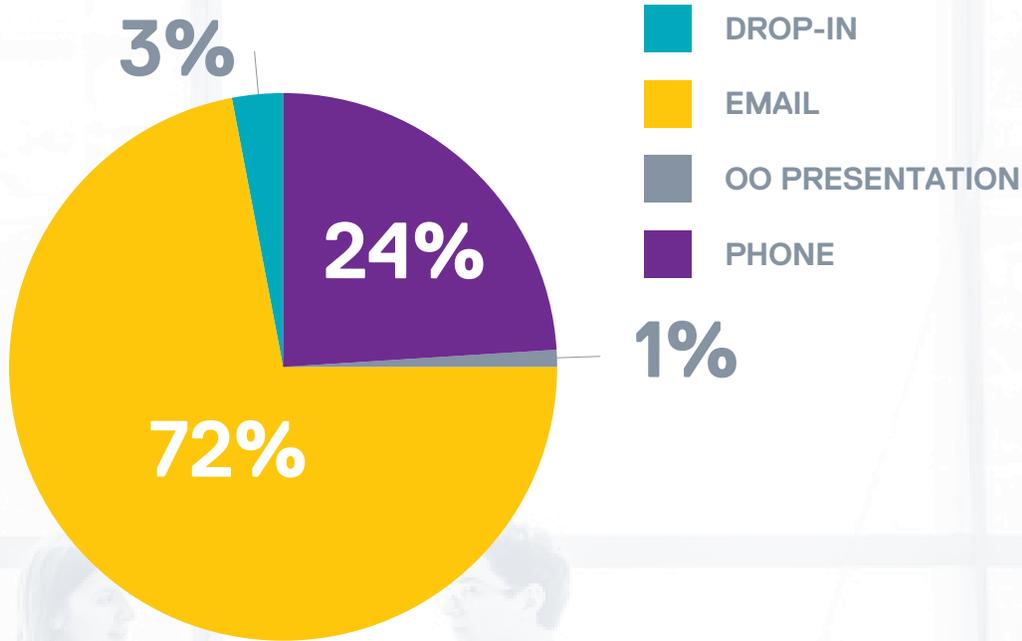
TOP 4 TYPES OF CONCERNS

-  ACADEMIC ADVICE
-  CONDUCT - INSTRUCTOR
-  ENROLLMENT SERVICES
-  COVID RELATED ISSUES

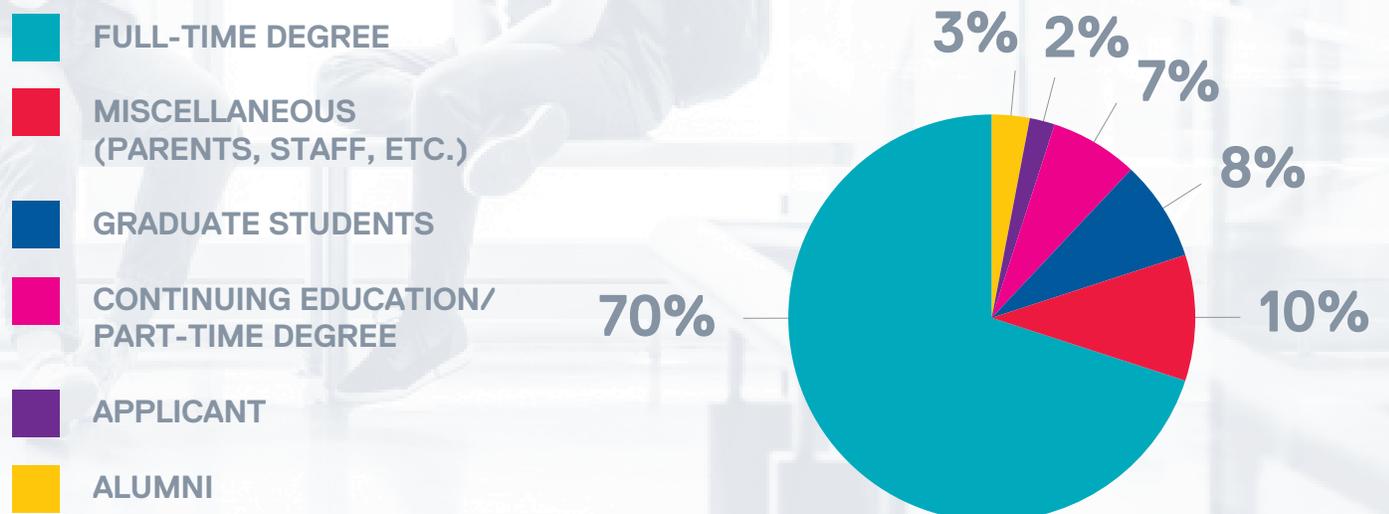




HOW PEOPLE CONTACTED US



WHO BROUGHT FORWARD CONCERNS



TYPES OF CONCERN RAISED

Comparison of Types of Concerns Over the Last Decade

YEAR	22/23	21/22	20/21	19/20	18/19	17/18	16/17	15/16	14/15	13/14
Total	419	508	497	457	502	533	541	521	520	483
Academic Advice ¹	133	106	162	114	180	156	197	181	151	133
Academic Appeals ²	43	40	62	82	61	71	62	85	83	95
Academic Misconduct	21	50	64	42	25	44	40	36	55	41
Accessibility	18	10	16	21	19	26	21	23	21	18
Advancement & Development	1	0	1	0	1	1	3	1	0	0
Admissions (Undergraduate)	6	13	12	12	11	18	20	11	15	20
Admissions (Graduate)	1	3	2	2	5	4	2	4	1	3
Ancillary Services	3	3	1	2	0	2	0	2	0	1
Campus Planning & Facilities	4	2	2	2	2	5	2	3	0	2
Conduct – Instructor/Faculty/Supervisor	63	78	50	38	55	63	59	54	61	51
Conduct – Staff	16	15	7	6	16	27	21	12	8	8
Conduct – Student	11	6	4	9	5	11	9	6	3	4
Covid-19 Concerns	7	57								
Curriculum Advising ³	2	14	11	10	7	0	8	9	7	4
Enrollment Services	23	47	19	22	11	29	19	19	23	17
Fees	21	26	26	35	34	19	19	21	8	27
Financial Assistance	22	10	12	6	18	20	23	21	24	16
Information Requests – No Complaint	0	1	6	15	2	5	2	0	0	3
Library	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Outside Jurisdiction	1	13	15	10	16	13	15	16	14	9
Practicum/Placement (Administration & Availability)	2	5	7	6	12	4	7	4	22	5
Residence	3	0	3	7	4	0	0	3	1	0
Safety & Security	3	0	1	3	4	1	4	2	2	3
Sports & Recreation	0	2	0	0	1	1	1	2	0	0
Student Services ⁴	0	0	3	6	5	4	1	2	6	6
Student Unions/Associations	4	6	9	5	8	5	3	3	8	7
TMSU - Election	10	0								

¹ This category includes concerns regarding not being able to easily access academic advice from a knowledgeable person.

² This includes Grades and Academic Standing.

³ This includes transfer credits and challenge credits.

⁴ This includes application of Student Code of Non-Academic Misconduct.

Please note that over the past 10 years some categories of concern have been removed because the very low numbers of complaints received did not justify their continued inclusion.

GROUPS WHO BROUGHT FORWARD CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

The following table describes the various stakeholder groups that sought our assistance.

Groups Who Brought Forward Concerns and Complaints: Comparison Over the Last Decade

YEAR	22/23	21/22	20/21	19/20	18/19	17/18	16/17	15/16	14/15	13/14
Alumnae	15	10	16	8	9	9	19	15	7	6
Applicant	8	15	14	8	16	14	13	13	10	23
Continuing Education/ Part-Time Degree	37	28	31	32	45	61	55	45	62	79
Full-Time Degree	292	354	338	304	306	325	308	348	322	283
Graduate Students	38	36	30	39	67	54	75	32	58	58
Miscellaneous (parents, staff, etc.)	29	65	68	66	59	70	71	68	61	34
Total	419	508	497	457	502	533	541	521	520	483

ACTION TAKEN

The following table represents steps taken by the Office of the Ombudsperson to assist students with their complaints and allows for comparison of action taken in the past 10 years. The majority of students were given advice and referred to other avenues within the university to pursue a resolution to their issue. Our office does not normally intervene in complaints, unless all other internal avenues have been explored, and the student specifically requests our involvement and we deem it appropriate to intervene and have the student's consent to do so.

Comparison of Action Taken Over the Last Decade

YEAR	22/23	21/22	20/21	19/20	18/19	17/18	16/17	15/16	14/15	13/14
Advice & Referral	340	444	432	382	429	461	469	424	397	382
Information	3	2	11	10	2	0	0	2	5	10
Intervention – Clarifying	31	32	34	37	27	33	28	38	37	33
Intervention – Mediation	2	2	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	1
Intervention – Shuttle Diplomacy	32	19	15	7	35	29	36	37	63	44
Investigation	11	9	5	19	8	10	8	19	18	13
Total	419	508	497	457	502	533	541	521	520	483

“I am incredibly grateful for all that you have done for me”





Office of the
Ombudsperson
at Toronto Metropolitan University



**Office of the Ombudsperson at
Toronto Metropolitan University**
(416) 979-5000, ext. 1-557450
ombuds@torontomu.ca
www.torontomu.ca/ombudsperson