



31 January 2026

**PERFORMANCE EVALUATION REPORT ACADEMIC OMBUDSMAN
FOR STUDENTS AND STAFF AFFAIRS**

for the period from 1 January to 31 December of 2025.

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Context

As of 25 September 2025, the position of Academic Ombudsman has been held by Magdalena Miksa, who has been performing the duties of this role since September 2024. During this period, the team was strengthened by three additional members, which significantly increased its operational capacity. This made it possible to respond more efficiently to the growing needs of the academic community in the area of conflict resolution support - over 400 cases were handled by the office in 2025 - as well as to develop new forms of support, including coaching activities focused on the development of leadership and communication competencies, and mediation and facilitation, treated as tools for both conflict resolution and conflict prevention.

This report has been prepared pursuant to § 11 of Ordinance No. 30, which provides that: “By 31 January of each year, the Ombudsman shall submit a written report on their activities to the Rector.”

Responsibilities and organisation of work

The activities of the Academic Ombudsman in 2025 were structured around four main pillars:

Pillar I – Systemic and signalling activities relating to procedures, regulations and policies

1. Contribution to the development of national solutions for higher education, including through:

- involvement in the preparation of recommendations submitted to the Ministry of Science and Higher Education,
- participation in the work of a dedicated team at the Ministry of Science and Higher Education,
- active engagement as a member of the Academic Safety and Equality Network [pl. ASBiR],



- membership of the European Network of Ombuds in Higher Education (ENOHE).

2. Contribution to the development of internal university policies and procedures relating to the prevention of hate speech and hate itself.

For this purpose, in 2025 a Rector's Team was established, tasked with preparing recommendations aimed at prevention of undesirable phenomena such as hate speech and hate itself (including those relating to the moderation of comments in online spaces), developing a rapid response procedure and effective support tools for individuals affected by hate, as well as elaborating communication standards for the University of Warsaw.

Within the Team, three sub-teams operate in the following areas: Sub-team no. 1: preparation of recommendations and definitions, as well as the development of a rapid response pathway (procedure and prevention); Sub-team no. 2: compilation of a catalogue of good practices and international cooperation; Sub-team no. 3: development of an information and education strategy, including training activities.

Pillar II – Direct support activities for the academic community in cases of violations

- handling of reports, conduct of meetings, and analysis of the factual circumstances in the context of the principles and legal regulations in force at the University of Warsaw;
- provision of information to individuals affected by violations regarding their rights and the actions available to them;
- informal remedial interventions within the relevant units.

Pillar III – Conflict prevention and support in conflict resolution (staff and students):



1. Clarificatory and consultative meetings;
2. Education on conflict management and the promotion of alternative methods of dispute resolution (ADR);
3. Coaching, including conflict coaching;
4. Interventions within organisational units.
5. Educational activities in the areas of conflict prevention, prevention of mobbing, building an inclusive environment, and the development of leadership competencies (team management, provision of feedback, communication);
6. Provision of mediation services;
7. Signalling (whistleblowing) activities and proposing systemic development changes and remedial solutions.

Pillar IV – Activities aimed at strengthening equality and diversity:

1. Participation in work on the development of recommendations to improve the situation of gender-diverse individuals in Polish higher education institutions, prepared within the framework of the Academic Safety and Equality Network [pl. ASBiR]. These recommendations were subsequently presented by ASBiR members, including the Academic Ombudsman of the University of Warsaw, at a nationwide conference on inclusivity and human rights in higher education, organised at the Ministry of Science and Higher Education and attended by representatives of the Ministry, the academic community, and civil society organisations.
2. Development of a strategy for the implementation of an “identity add-in”, including the establishment of a dedicated team.
3. Ongoing support for LGBTQ+ individuals in relation to the change of preferred personal data and the prevention of discrimination.
4. Educational activities (webinars, meetings).
5. Cooperation with non-governmental organisations, e.g., Transfuzja and Feminoteka.



Academic Ombudsman Team

In 2025, the Academic Ombudsman was supported in her work by: Elżbieta Felkner, acting as office coordinator, Paulina Górnicka, acting as communication specialist, Wiktoria Obidniak-Marciniak, acting as student affairs specialist, Katarzyna Cena-Pietrak, acting as staff affairs specialist. In December, Monika Flont joined the team, providing support for student- and equality-related matters.

Activity Report

Prevention of conflicts and promotion of ADR

In support of the development of alternative dispute resolution within the university community and the promotion of a safe work and study environment free from violations of the law, discrimination and mobbing, the Academic Ombudsman undertook in 2025 the following initiatives:

- development of an educational and information campaign on conflict management and mediation addressed to Deans, Heads of Teaching Units [pl. KJD], and Heads of Scientific and Teaching Units (approximately 80 participants in total). The campaign will take the form of a series of webinars commencing on 19 February 2026. At a later stage, the campaign will be extended to students and doctoral students, as well as research and teaching staff.
- conflict coaching, introduced in 2025, constitutes a new area of activity of the Ombudsman's team, aimed at supporting the development of interpersonal competencies among students and employees, as well as the managerial competencies of academic leaders. This activity was introduced as a preventive measure against conflict and as part of efforts to strengthen a culture of cooperation and create a healthier, more effective academic environment.



The scope of the support provided includes identifying sources of tension, developing communication skills, and defining constructive solutions. It includes individual sessions, workshops, and tools enabling the conscious management of the emotions and needs of the parties involved. This enables the early identification of warning signs and the prevention of dispute escalation.

- Education on methods of dispute resolution and the promotion of mediation during individual meetings with individuals seeking support, as well as during regular onboarding training sessions for new employees entitled “Welcome to the UW!”.
- Dissemination of information on the activities of the Academic Ombudsman and the forms of support available at the University among students and doctoral students during:
 - adaptation days at Faculties (in 2025, the Academic Ombudsman Team visited three Faculties, training approximately 150 students in total);
 - the “Good Start” integration and training programme for first-year doctoral students. Delivery of training sessions for research and teaching staff, administrative staff, and academic leaders aimed at counteracting mobbing and discrimination, as well as conflict management.
- A practical training session on dispute resolution with elements of mediation, entitled “Conflict Resolution and Mediation”, was delivered on 28 March for members of the Students’ Council of the University of Warsaw.
- Cooperation with the Statutory Committee on the revision of the Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Mobbing Procedure.
- Participation in meetings of the Subcommittee of the Senate Committee for Human Resources Policy responsible for the review of anti-mobbing, anti-discrimination, and disciplinary procedures.



Cooperation within the University

The Academic Ombudsman cooperates with numerous organisational units and collegiate bodies operating at the University. The cooperation includes, among other things, mutual support in handling reported cases and the development of more efficient procedures for referring cases within their respective areas of competence.

In 2025, the Academic Ombudsman provided support and collaborated with numerous units in conflict prevention and resolution, diversity and equality promotion, and education on discrimination and mobbing.

On 7 April, the inaugural meeting of Support Units took place, aimed at establishing closer cooperation among multiple support units and improving joint activities in support of the academic community. Further meetings are planned for 2026 to develop common operational procedures.

The Academic Ombudsman Team cooperated, *inter alia*, with:

- Proxies for Equality at individual faculties, through the organisation of training on providing support and effective communication with transgender and non-binary students;
- the Rector's Proxy for Equal Treatment, dr hab. Anną Zawidzką-Łojek, prof. ucz, in the area of ensuring equal treatment for members of the academic community and preventing undesirable phenomena;
- the Team of Coordinators for the prevention of unequal treatment, discrimination, mobbing and other undesirable behaviour in the area of prevention of undesirable behaviour;
- the Unequal Treatment and Discrimination Commission and the Mobbing and Other Undesirable Behaviour Commission, with regard to reported cases;



- the Centre for Dispute and Conflict Resolution [pl. CRSiK] at the Faculty of Law and Administration, among others, in the area of conducting mediation and promoting alternative dispute resolution (ADR);
- the Psychological and Counselling Services Centre [pl. CPP] and the Office for Persons with Disabilities [pl. BON], in particular, with regard to addressing issues affecting individuals experiencing difficulties related to mental health.
- the authorities of University of Warsaw units (Deans, Heads of Teaching Units as well as Heads of other units), through the provision of coaching, training and intervention-based support in the areas of conflict management and the development of communication and leadership competencies;
- the representatives of the Students' Council and the Student Ombudsman, particularly with regard to the delivery of training for the student self-government body on dispute and conflict resolution.
- student research groups and student organisations.
- Cooperation between the Academic Ombudsman and the Office for Security Affairs focused on the development and implementation of a rapid response pathway for situations requiring immediate intervention, in particular in cases involving threats to the safety of members of the academic community. Thanks to coordinated efforts, it is possible to ensure the efficient exchange of information, a clear division of responsibilities, and the swift implementation of appropriate support and protection procedures.

National and international cooperation

The Academic Ombudsman, through cooperation with NGOs, ministries and other institutions, participates in the development of national solutions for higher education. One of the key activities undertaken in 2025 was cooperation with the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.



The Academic Ombudsman was invited, in the capacity of an expert, to participate in the work of the Team responsible for the identification of good practices and the development of mechanisms for counteracting mobbing, support the well-being of individuals working and studying within the higher education and science system, and promote mental health prevention in the academic environment.

In 2025, the Academic Ombudsman participated in the conduct of:

- an analysis of the legal framework relating to mobbing in the working environment, including a detailed analysis of internal regulations applicable in entities within the higher education and science sector;
- the identification of areas of potential occurrence of vertical, horizontal or diagonal mobbing within these entities, together with an analysis of anonymised examples and manifestations of this phenomenon, as well as an assessment of the risk of the occurrence of other undesirable phenomena associated with mobbing in the academic environment.

In addition, the Academic Ombudsman participated, at the invitation of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Poland, in the event inaugurating the UN Women campaign “16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence” (#OrangeTheWorld). This year’s edition of the campaign was dedicated to counteracting digital violence against women and girls.

Participation in the event was part of the Academic Ombudsman’s cooperation with international institutions, as well as activities aimed at raising awareness of gender-based violence, particularly in the digital environment, and at strengthening protection and prevention standards within academic institutions.



- Academic Safety and Equality Network [pl. ASBiR].

The Academic Ombudsman is an active member of the Academic Safety and Equality Network [pl. ASBiR], contributing to the development of good practices, particularly in the area of anti-discrimination and anti-mobbing.

Magdalena Miksa serves as Chairperson of the Transgender and Gender-Diverse Persons' Rights Section. The objective of the Section is to develop solutions that facilitate the functioning of transgender and non-binary persons within higher education institutions, in particular with regard to enabling the use of preferred data rather than official civil registry data. The activities of the Section focus on diagnosing key challenges, exchanging experiences among individuals supporting transgender persons at universities, and developing best practices and recommendations to counter discrimination, prejudice, and stigmatisation in the academic environment. In addition, the Academic Ombudsman is a member of the Academic Mediation and Anti-Mobbing Sections. As part of these activities, in 2025, the Academic Ombudsman participated in the annual ASBiR meetings, section meetings, as well as numerous webinars and training sessions.

- European Network of Ombuds in Higher Education (ENOHE)

Through participation in the European Network of Ombuds in Higher Education (ENOHE), the Academic Ombudsman develops an international network of contacts aimed at gathering knowledge and good practices that support the implementation of new solutions at the University of Warsaw in the areas of equality, diversity and anti-discrimination.

The Academic Ombudsman also represents the University of Warsaw at events organised by central institutions: conferences, seminars and expert meetings. Among the more important national activities in 2025, the following are notable:

On 27–28 March 2025, the Academic Ombudsman of the University of Warsaw participated in the conference entitled “Mediation in Civil Disputes – Twenty years



after and beyond”, organised by the Faculty of Law and Administration of the University of Warsaw and the Centre for Dispute and Conflict Resolution [pl. CRSiK] at the Faculty of Law and Administration, and held at the University of Warsaw Library [pl. BUW]. The conference brought together experts, academic researchers and practitioners who discussed the functioning of mediation in civil disputes in Poland over the past two decades, as well as in an international context. The participation of the Academic Ombudsman formed part of activities aimed at promoting alternative dispute resolution (ADR) within the academic community.

On 9 June 2025, the Academic Ombudsman of the University of Warsaw participated in a conference organised in cooperation with the Academic Safety and Equality Network [pl. ASBiR]. During the event, ASBiR presented recommendations aimed at improving the situation of gender-diverse individuals at Polish higher education institutions. The conference was held at the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, with both in-person and online participation available.

On 30 June 2025, the Academic Ombudsman participated in the 1st Nationwide Conference entitled “Together Against Mobbing”, organised by the Dobra Fundacja.

On 8 October, the Academic Ombudsman of the University of Warsaw participated in the webinar entitled “Feminoteka x UW – How to prevent sexual harassment at the university and support victims”, organised in cooperation with the Feminoteka Foundation. The training focused on the identification, prevention and response to cases of sexual harassment in the academic environment.

On 27 November 2025, the Academic Ombudsman of the University of Warsaw participated in the Student and Doctoral Student Academic Conference entitled „Język – konflikt – wykluczenie” [working English title: Language – Conflict – Exclusion], held at the Faculty of Modern Languages of the University of Warsaw. The event brought together over 60 students and doctoral students from Polish and



international academic institutions. The conference was devoted to the relationships between language and the phenomena of conflict, exclusion, and social inequality, as well as to strategies for counteracting them. The participation of the Academic Ombudsman formed part of activities aimed at promoting equality, counteracting discrimination, and building a safe and inclusive academic environment.

On 3 December 2025, the Academic Ombudsman participated in the inauguration of the project “Nauka Sprawdza” [working English title: Science Verifies] during the 4th edition of the “#UWagaNauka” conference, organised by the Centre for Cooperation and Dialogue of the University of Warsaw. The project, implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, aims to counteract scientific disinformation through educational activities, information verification tools, and initiatives promoting science.

On 12 December 2025, the Academic Ombudsman participated in the conference entitled “The University in the Face of Violence”, organised by the Student Society for Social Studies “Forum Politicum” in cooperation with the Department of Political Theory and Political Thought at the Faculty of Political Science and International Studies of the University of Warsaw.

Implemented information and promotion activities

In 2025, the Academic Ombudsman team consistently expanded its information activities to promote a culture of respect and a conciliatory approach within the academic community. In response to the growing number of reported cases and the current challenges facing the University of Warsaw, the Academic Ombudsman, as a unit engaged in fostering a fair and inclusive working and learning environment, undertook numerous multi-faceted activities aimed at promoting an ethical organisational culture and effective methods of conflict and dispute resolution.



A new communication channel – expansion of informational outreach

In addition to the existing communication channels, namely the website www.ombudsman.uw.edu.pl and the profile on the Facebook social networking site, communication activities were expanded through the launch, in November 2025, of a profile on the LinkedIn platform. This expansion enhances the visibility of the Academic Ombudsman's role as a professional expert in conflict resolution, mediation, and the promotion of high ethical standards at the University of Warsaw. The published content presented the Academic Ombudsman's methods of operation and also promoted valuable initiatives aimed at ensuring equal treatment and fostering a safe, open, and diversity-respecting academic environment. Communication activities were addressed to all groups within the academic community, both with regard to the support offered by the Ombudsman's team (students, doctoral students, research and administrative staff of the University of Warsaw) and to the systemic solutions implemented at the University of Warsaw (including the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, ombudsmen from other higher education institutions, representatives of non-governmental organisations, and external partners).

“Hate hurts. Mind your words” Campaign

As the coordinator of the University-wide academic information and education campaign counteracting hate speech and hate itself, “Hate hurts. Mind your words”, the Academic Ombudsman team undertook active measures in this area, working in close cooperation with the University's Press Office and the Promotion Office to develop a coherent, University-wide communication strategy. Within the framework of the campaign, the Academic Ombudsman Team maintained ongoing cooperation with Faculties, Doctoral Schools and other University units, as well as with the Students' Council of the University of Warsaw and the Student Ombudsman, through



regular meetings. The team's members also promoted the campaign outside the University, including in nationwide media. At the invitation of media editorial teams, they participated in radio broadcasts to address initiatives and activities focused on countering cyber violence, hate speech and hate itself.

In February 2025, the Academic Ombudsman Team, in cooperation with the Centre for Cooperation and Dialogue of the University of Warsaw, organised a workshop meeting for staff responsible for communication and promotion in University units. The event served as a forum for sharing experiences and challenges related to hate within the University environment and for gathering input on the development of internal guidelines and standards for safe communication.

Appointment of the Rector's Team for Counteracting Hate Speech and Hate

A further step undertaken by the Academic Ombudsman Team was the preparation of a formal notification addressed to the University and Chancellor authorities, including a recommendation to establish a team of experts tasked with developing recommendations and designing a rapid response pathway. As a result of these actions, Ordinance No. 142 of the Rector of the University of Warsaw of 1 September 2025 was issued, appointing the Rector's Team for Counteracting Hate Speech and Hate at the University of Warsaw. The Ordinance entered into force on 1 October 2025, and the inaugural meeting of the Team was held on 7 October 2025. Patronage over the Team's activities was assumed, on behalf of the HM Rector, by the Chancellor, Robert Grey, while coordination was entrusted to the Academic Ombudsman.

The "Hate hurts. Mind your words" campaign undoubtedly contributed significantly to raising awareness of hate speech and hate itself, and also initiated the need to develop internal solutions aimed at counteracting these phenomena at the University. In the following year, the continuation of information and education activities, as well as systemic measures, is planned, along with further networking of stakeholders working towards safe communication and the counteracting of hate speech and hate itself.



Implementation of a Volunteer Programme and Internship Scheme

In 2025, the Academic Ombudsman's Office launched a volunteer programme and a pilot student internship scheme for the first time, enabling students to participate in ombudsman-related activities. Both programmes strengthen engagement within the University of Warsaw community and develop participants' competencies in fostering a fair academic environment grounded in ethical values.

Direct assistance activities

The Academic Ombudsman performs the duties resulting from the provisions of Ordinance No. 30, according to which her tasks include assisting individuals and organisational units of the University in resolving disputes and conflicts and in dealing with violations of the rules governing academic life. Below are statistics on the number, type, and thematic cross-section of cases submitted to the Academic Ombudsman in 2025. The statistics also show the number and type of actions taken.

Number of submitted cases

In 2025, 433 cases were submitted to the Academic Ombudsman. 11 cases were continued from the previous year. Detailed data on case reporting and the dynamics of change are presented in Table no. 1 and Chart no. 1 below.

Table No. 1. Impact of cases between 2020 and 2025.

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of submitted cases	265	315	332	335	411	444
-- current year cases	254	308	312	312	388	433
-- cases continued from the previous year	11	7	20	23	23	11



Chart No. 1. Impact of cases between 2020 and 2025.



Applicants

Pursuant to § 4 of Ordinance No. 30 of the Rector of the University of Warsaw, the Ombudsman shall take action:

- once the matter has been brought to the attention of the member of the academic community concerned,
- at the request of the student or doctoral student self-government bodies,
- at the request of the Rector,
- on the Ombudsman's own initiative.

Cases brought to the Academic Ombudsman are most frequently the ones submitted by individuals concerned, who present their problems individually or in groups. Problems are also occasionally submitted by direct superiors or by representatives of the unit's authorities, requesting support in analysing and diagnosing the problem or in intervening directly in the case. There have been cases submitted by relatives of or individuals closely connected to those affected.

Among those reporting a problem, more than half (61%) are students of the first- and second-cycle studies; and 27% are employees: including research, administrative, as



well as research and technical staff. Only 2% of reports came from doctoral students (see Table No. 2 for a detailed distribution of reports).

Table No. 2 Academic status of the reporting person

reporting entity	Number of submitted cases	%
Student	271	61%
Employee (in person or through their superior)	123	28%
Doctoral student	11	2%
Faculty Proxies for Equality/Student Ombudsman	10	2%
Other	29	7%

The distribution of reporting cases by academic status is not significantly different from that in previous years. 2025 is another year in which cases from all faculties and units of the University of Warsaw were submitted to the Academic Ombudsman. This can be read as a signal that information about the Academic Ombudsman's existence and operation is available in all academic units of the University. A summary of reports by the university unit is shown in Table No. 3.

Table No. 3 Summary of reports by university unit

Faculties and units	number of submitted cases
Faculty of „Artes Liberales”	9
Faculty of Archaeology	12
Faculty of Biology	17
Faculty of Chemistry	2
Faculty of Journalism, Information and Book Studies	13
Faculty of Philosophy	16
Faculty of Physics	10
Faculty of Geography and Regional Studies	4



Faculty of History	8
Faculty of Asian and African Cultures	7
Faculty of Applied Linguistics	33
Faculty of Mathematics, Informatics and Mechanics	5
Faculty of Economic Sciences	11
Faculty of Culture and Arts	8
Faculty of Political Science and International Studies	26
Faculty of Modern Languages	42
Faculty of Oriental Studies	21
Faculty of Education	4
Faculty of Polish Studies	16
Faculty of Law and Administration	15
Faculty of Psychology	25
Faculty of Sociology	11
Faculty of Applied Social Sciences and Resocialisation	9
Faculty of Management	23
Interdisciplinary Doctoral School	2
Doctoral School of Humanities	3
Doctoral School of Social Sciences	5
Doctoral School of Exact and Natural Sciences	2
Scientific and teaching unit	29
Central administration offices	9
Student Hall of Residence	14
Other unit	6
Other	27

Topics of the cases

Among the wide variety of cases reported to the Academic Ombudsman, it is possible to distinguish thematic groups into which the primary issues fall. A summary of problem areas by reporting entity is catalogued in Table No. 4.



Table No. 4 Summary of thematic areas of submitted cases by reporting entity

Topic of the submitted case	Reporting entity						final total
	student	doctoral student	employee	faculty proxy	authority	other	
conflicts and communication difficulties	17	1	39	2	8		67
unethical behaviour	7	1	6	3	9	2	26
organisation and course of studies	65	4				5	74
LGBTQ+ persons' matters	142		2	2			146
complaint against a lecturer/supervisor	11	1					12
difficulties of living in a student hall of residence	8					1	9
work conditions and personnel policies			27		5	1	33
mistreatment (mobbing or discrimination)	3		6				9
other	18	4	19	3	2	22	68
Final total	266	9	93	8	22	29	444

Cases submitted by students

Summary of 2025

1. Overview of Reported Cases in 2025

The year 2025 was a period of intensive work for the Academic Ombudsman's team, both in providing individual support to the University of Warsaw community and in undertaking new systemic initiatives. In the reporting year, the Office received a total of 433 reports, of which 271 (61%) originated from students. The steady increase in the number of reports indicates growing trust in our team's work, but also underscores



the need to further strengthen support and response mechanisms to address issues before they escalate into conflicts that are difficult to resolve.

The most frequently reported categories of complaints concerned issues related to the organisation and administration of course of studies, conflicts and communication difficulties, matters relating to the teaching process and failure to meet academic requirements, difficulties related to living in student hall of residence, as well as cases involving breaches of ethics by both students and teaching staff. Collectively, these categories accounted for almost half of all student cases received during the reporting period.

Among the next most frequently reported categories were financial matters and reports concerning hate speech and hate itself. Although the number of cases concerning hate speech and hate itself was relatively low, their nature indicates significant systemic challenges. Such cases frequently involve a high level of complexity. Although a formal report may be submitted by a single individual, the phenomenon's impact can be significant, particularly on social media platforms. The group responsible for acts of hate may be significantly broader, encompassing several or even more than a dozen individuals. In the case of social media platforms, the number of hateful comments may at times reach several hundred. As a consequence, this results in a high workload for numerous individuals across different units and may affect broader groups within the academic community.

The team recorded cases of discrimination, inappropriate treatment and insufficient support in relation to reasonable accommodations recommended by the Office for Persons with Disabilities [pl. BON], the implementation of which encountered difficulties in practice.

2. Identification of Issues and Key Observations

In 2025, 271 students reported concerns related to, among other things, unclear communication from the University, inadequate support, and systems they perceived



as unjust. The most common opinion expressed was a feeling that the university had not listened to them.

Complaints relating to administrative support, though frequently appearing minor, had a substantial impact on students' experience and day-to-day functioning at the University. For example, incorrect information or ambiguous and insufficiently clear communication regarding programme requirements led to delays in completing studies and entering employment, and also generated additional costs for students. More attentive consideration of students' needs, thorough analysis of their individual circumstances, and the presentation of available courses of action, particularly those that allow students to avoid the loss of a semester or an academic year, may in the future significantly reduce the escalation of conflicts between students and University units.

A frequently reported issue was the difficulty obtaining course credits, arising from discrepancies between the content outlined in the syllabus and the material delivered in class and assessed at the point of completion. In some cases, information about the required material or the method for obtaining course credits was communicated to students at the last minute, exclusively orally, without providing written information accessible to all participants in the course.

Students also reported instances in which assessment deadlines were suddenly changed, thereby shortening the time available for preparation. Further concerns include unclear rules governing attendance records, instances in which absences were classified as unexcused despite medical documentation, and ambiguities in assessment criteria and grading practices.

Another significant area of reports concerned the non-observance of student rights, a lack of respect for the dignity of students, and the occurrence of discriminatory statements, particularly towards women, transgender and non-binary individuals. These phenomena stem partly from the absence of systemic solutions, such as an



“identity add-in”, as well as from the lack of coherent internal formal and legal regulations addressing the issues of misgendering and deadnaming.

Another recurrent issue related to the accessibility of teaching and assessment arrangements for persons with disabilities, especially neurodivergent students and individuals experiencing challenges in the area of mental health. Students pointed to a lack of understanding of their individual needs and insufficient flexibility on the part of teaching staff, particularly regarding the use of alternative assessment formats. Both students and teaching staff could benefit significantly from the introduction of systemic support in the form of tutors or mentors specialised in assisting with the learning process and in supporting students with various types of disabilities in fulfilling their academic obligations. A key challenge lies in accurately assessing the scale of these needs, specifying the competencies required of assisting staff, and obtaining the financial resources necessary to implement such support. The Academic Ombudsman Team identifies the continued development of training for academic staff on accessibility and the effective implementation of reasonable accommodations as a priority.

Although the psychological support available at the University is extensive and diverse, it continues to be perceived as insufficient in relation to the scale of needs.

In light of the nature of the reported difficulties, the Academic Ombudsman Team will continue and further strengthen its cooperation with the Office for Persons with Disabilities [pl. BON] and the Psychological and Counselling Services Centre [pl. CPP], as well as with other units providing support to students.

The year 2025 was marked by a tragic event - the murder of a University employee, our colleague, committed by a student of the University of Warsaw. The first three weeks following the incident were a period of particularly intensive work for the Academic Ombudsman’s team, marked by numerous phone calls, emails and consultations from both students and members of staff. The predominant theme of



these reports concerned concerns about safety on University campuses, including the need to strengthen procedures, ensure clear crisis communication, and provide training to prepare the academic community to respond effectively in emergency situations. Safety, understood in both its physical and psychological dimensions, continues to represent a central challenge for the University and will remain a significant focus of interdisciplinary efforts in the coming years.

3. New Initiatives Implemented in 2025

In the summer of 2025, the Academic Ombudsman Team, in close cooperation with multiple units of the University of Warsaw, undertook extensive preparatory work aimed at implementing the so-called “identity add-in” within the University’s administrative systems.

As part of the project work:

- a preliminary concept for a new procedure for applying for preferred data was developed;
- the mapping of IT systems used at the University (including the USOS system, library systems and systems operated by teaching units) was initiated, identifying areas requiring further work and adjustment;
- cooperation was established with key administrative and technical units, including the Centre for Foreign Language Teaching, the Team for IT Systems, the Digital Competence Centre and other ones;
- preparation of an information package concerning the “identity add-in” was commenced;
- cooperation was initiated with representatives of the student community, including the Students’ and Doctoral Students’ Council and student organisations supporting LGBTQ+ individuals;



- discussions were initiated with external organisations (including Transfuzja), resulting in the organisation of a training session and the identification of shared areas for future cooperation.

As a result of the analyses conducted, meetings held and consultations undertaken, more than a dozen areas requiring further improvement were identified - across procedural, technical and communication dimensions. In response to the scale and complexity of these challenges, the Vice-Rector for Student Affairs and Quality of Teaching, dr hab. Maciej Raś, prof. ucz., accepted the recommendation of the Academic Ombudsman's Team to establish a Team for the "identity add-in", tasked with developing coherent, secure and sustainable systemic solutions.

These actions form part of the University of Warsaw's long-term strategy, aimed at strengthening equal treatment, accessibility, and safety for all members of the academic community, with particular regard to the needs of LGBTQ+ individuals.

In 2025, the Academic Ombudsman Team strengthened its cooperation with the Office for Persons with Disabilities [pl. BON] and the Psychological and Counselling Services Centre [pl. CPP]. As a result of this cooperation, individuals experiencing crises were able to obtain appropriate support more quickly, and the team received feedback identifying areas requiring additional action.

Cooperation with the Office for Persons with Disabilities enabled the team to:

- verify student needs in a timely manner;
- recommend reasonable accommodations within individual units in relation to specific students;
- jointly address complex cases encompassing both health-related and educational issues.



The objective of both forms of cooperation is to reduce situations in which students remain without appropriate support despite having reported difficulties.

Another important area of the team's activities was the pilot testing of a new tool in the form of the agreement titled "Dobrostan i zdolność do nauki" [working English title: Well-being and Capacity to Study] This tool may in the future be incorporated into University procedures and serve as support in assessing the possibility of continuing studies in cases involving serious personal, health-related or other circumstances significantly affecting a student's functioning.

Plans for 2026

In 2026, the Academic Ombudsman Team will continue its efforts to build a safer, more inclusive and equitable environment for students at the University. In response to the issues identified, the Team intends to focus its activities on the following areas:

- Further development of standards for academic communication and a culture of constructive feedback;
- Implementation of systemic solutions supporting transgender and non-binary individuals;
- Development of mechanisms for responding to hate speech and hate itself;
- Design of solutions aimed at increasing accessibility and inclusiveness within the University;
- Strengthening systemic support for international students, who in the past year reported, inter alia, adaptation difficulties, experiences of exclusion or cultural misunderstanding, procedural ambiguities, challenges in interactions with teaching and administrative staff, and a perceived lack of institutional support;
- Development of procedures and tools supporting the assessment of a student's capacity to continue studies (Fitness to Study).



Student reports clearly indicate that the University of Warsaw, like other contemporary Polish and international higher education institutions, operates in the context of increasingly complex social, cultural and psychosocial challenges. The activities of the Academic Ombudsman's Team now extend beyond responding to individual cases; they also encompass diagnosing systemic issues, initiating organisational changes, and supporting solutions that promote safety, equality, and the well-being of the entire academic community.

Cases submitted by staff

Summary of 2025

1. Overview of Reported Cases in 2025

In 2025, the Academic Ombudsman's Team received cases of a clearly multi-layered nature, involving conflicts occurring at different levels of the organisation. These problems concerned both team dynamics and systemic factors – including the quality of communication, management styles, the clarity of competences, and the precise definition of areas of responsibility. Many disputes originated in substantive differences, divergent values, working styles, and variations in the organisational cultures of individual units.

The vast majority of staff-related cases concerned conflicts that initially stemmed from personality differences and communication issues. The absence of appropriate mechanisms for managing such tensions at an early stage contributed to their escalation, with cases consequently being referred to the Academic Ombudsman's Team at a highly advanced stage. At this level of escalation, conflicts proved more difficult to resolve, required multidimensional analysis, and often involved a greater



number of individuals and organisational units. As a result, their resolution also demanded a greater investment of time.

2. Identification of Issues and Key Observations

An analysis of cases reported by staff in 2025 revealed several significant trends and challenges:

- Concerns about submitting cases formally – following an initial informational meeting, many staff members chose not to authorise the Academic Ombudsman to undertake further action. This stemmed from concerns about potential consequences, a lack of trust in existing procedures, or a perception of their limited effectiveness.

- Insufficient managerial competencies at the unit level – observations indicate that heads of units and deans require additional support in the development of managerial competencies, particularly in the areas of:
 - managing multi-generational and neurodiverse teams;
 - conducting disciplinary meetings;
 - delivering difficult feedback;
 - managing conflicts;
 - building effective communication within teams.

- Escalation of conflicts from the operational to the systemic level – numerous cases demonstrated that individual disputes quickly evolved into group or structural conflicts, linked to unclear procedures, insufficient internal communication, or imprecisely defined responsibilities.



3. New Initiatives Implemented in 2025

In response to the identified needs and challenges, the Academic Ombudsman Team introduced in 2025 a new preventive and supportive measure aimed at preventing conflicts and limiting their escalation at an early stage, namely individual coaching and conflict coaching. It includes individual sessions, workshops, and tools enabling the conscious management of the emotions and needs of the parties involved. This enables the early identification of warning signs and the prevention of dispute escalation.

Plans for 2026

In 2026, in the area of staff-related matters, the Academic Ombudsman Team will focus its activities on three key areas: conflict prevention, more effective management of existing conflicts, and systemic measures. The objective is to strengthen a culture of dialogue, enhance managerial and communication competencies within units, and develop sustainable systemic solutions that support a safe and effective academic environment.

1. Educational and Information Campaign

The educational and information campaign concerning conflict dynamics and methods of resolving conflicts at various stages will be continued and expanded. It will be addressed to heads of units, Heads of Teaching Units [pl.KJD], deans as well as to students, doctoral students and administrative staff. The campaign will run throughout the year and include webinars and educational materials to increase awareness of early responses to emerging tensions.

2. Conflict Coaching

Activities in the area of conflict coaching will be expanded to support the development of employees' interpersonal and managerial competencies. The



programme will focus on early identification of conflict signals, improving communication quality, and consciously building a culture of cooperation within units. The objective is to limit the escalation of disputes and strengthen the organisational resilience of academic teams.

3. Team Facilitations

In 2026, the Academic Ombudsman's Team plans to increase the number of team facilitation sessions, enabling safe, structured discussions about tensions, expectations, and needs within groups experiencing difficulties with cooperation.

4. Increasing the Number of Mediations

An increase in the number of mediations is also planned, allowing for a more rapid response to both group and individual conflicts and enhancing the effectiveness of dispute resolution processes.

5. Development of a Coherent Support System for Academic Leaders

In 2026, a pilot programme for academic leaders will be developed to strengthen managerial, communication, and mediation competencies. The programme will support heads of units, deans and Heads of Teaching Units [pl.KJD] in building a healthy organisational culture and responding effectively to early signs of tension. It is intended to become a permanent element of the University's support system, strengthening leadership capacity and enhancing organisational resilience to conflict.

Mediation

In 2025, the Academic Ombudsman of the University of Warsaw conducted a tripartite mediation process between a group of striking students occupying the territory of Mały Dziedziniec, the University authorities, and the Students' Council.



The process included a preparatory stage (individual meetings with representatives of the respective parties), followed by a series of joint mediation sessions. Participants included representatives of the Students' Council, the striking students, and the University of Warsaw authorities. A significant feature of the process was its interdisciplinary character - the mediation was conducted jointly by the Academic Ombudsman and a mediator from the Psychological and Counselling Services Centre [pl. CPP], enabling consideration of both the institutional and organisational dimensions of the dispute, as well as its psychological and relational consequences. During the mediation, despite the conflict's protracted and escalating nature, the parties reached an agreement, bringing the dispute to an end. The process demonstrated the effective use of mediation as an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) tool within the academic environment and as an alternative to further escalation and confrontational actions.

Summary and development prospects of the office

An analysis of the cases reported to the Academic Ombudsman's Team in 2025 clearly demonstrates the increasing complexity of issues arising within the University community. The predominant cases were multi-layered in nature, in which interpersonal conflicts intersected with systemic, organisational and cultural factors. Their sources most frequently included personality and communication differences, divergent working and learning styles, substantive disagreements, and the absence of coherent and transparent frameworks for cooperation. It is also important to note the marked increase in the number of cases submitted to the Academic Ombudsman's Team. For comparison, a total of 388 cases were recorded in 2024, whereas in 2025 the number rose to 433, representing a year-on-year increase of 12%.



The reported conflicts and tensions rarely have a one-dimensional character. They typically arise from misunderstandings in academic communication, differing management and teaching styles, ambiguities in competences, a lack of clearly defined scopes of responsibility, and variations in the organisational cultures of individual units. The combination of these factors, along with insufficient mechanisms for early conflict intervention, contributes to the escalation of disputes, which are referred to the Academic Ombudsman's Team at an advanced stage and require in-depth, multidimensional intervention.

At the same time, 2025 highlighted key systemic challenges, including the need for effective support for transgender individuals (in particular through coherent solutions concerning preferred data), counteracting hate and improving the quality of academic communication, responding to the growing number of individuals experiencing mental health crises or complex life situations, ensuring swift and coordinated interdisciplinary cooperation between units, and maintaining transparency in study regulations and teaching-related relationships.

Each report frequently initiates a complex process that involves assessing and analysing the situation, requiring legal and psychological measures, mediation support, coordination between units, and numerous meetings. In practice, this necessitates integrating expertise in law, psychology, conflict resolution, and communication, and securing the support of leaders in developing appropriate managerial and teaching tools.

In light of the growing number of reports and their increasing complexity and multidimensional nature, the Academic Ombudsman Team requires continuous development of specialised qualifications and ongoing access to professional supervision.



These observations clearly indicate the need for further strengthening of the Academic Ombudsman's Team - both through the development of interdisciplinary competencies and through the provision of organisational conditions enabling support to be delivered at the highest professional standard. Investment in early intervention, the development of communication competencies, and the establishment of coherent systemic solutions remains crucial for limiting the escalation of conflicts and reinforcing a culture of dialogue across the academic community.

The report was prepared by: the Academic Ombudsman and her Team