



OMBUDS OFFICE

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

INDEPENDENT INFORMAL IMPARTIAL CONFIDENTIAL

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



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WHO WE ARE

The Ombuds Office offers a safe and confidential space for visitors to discuss concerns they may be facing in relation to UCT. We receive complaints, concerns or questions about alleged acts, omissions, improprieties, and/or broader systemic problems. The response of the Ombuds Office is tailored to the dynamics of the situation and the visitor's concerns.

As an independent, confidential, neutral and informal resource, The Ombuds Office hears the unfiltered voices of the university community. We are able to spot trends, listen to the narratives of our concerns and recognize patterns of concern.

We actively listen, make referrals, and mediate disputes as an independent, informal, neutral and impartial third party. We are also entrusted to assist visitors evaluate their options, provide upward feedback, engage in informal fact finding and facilitate conversations between visitors. When a matter has not been dealt with internally, we are obliged to refer it back to the relevant department or faculty.

Frequently, the visitor is displeased about this. Nevertheless, we cannot be the entry point as it dilutes the efficacy of our service. Our office therefore supplements but does not replace internal resources available to the university community and does not accept notice served to the institution.

OUR SERVICES



THE HISTORY OF THE OMBUDS IN UNIVERSITIES

Since their inception in the early 1960s, beginning in Sweden and spreading across Europe, Australia, North and South America, and eventually South Africa, ombudsman offices in universities have rapidly expanded. Emerging initially from protest movements advocating for human rights and against state brutality and later addressing concerns like anti-war efforts, these offices have played a crucial role in safeguarding students and staff against unfairness, discrimination, and poor service delivery.

Operating with impartiality, independence, confidentiality, and informality, ombudspersons navigate the complex dynamics of university settings, mediating between stakeholders with competing interests. However, tensions often arise between ombudspersons and university managements over independence, impartiality, and adequate resourcing. Key factors influencing these tensions include the nature of their mandates, appointment methods, potential role conflicts, operating arrangements, resources, and leadership capacity. Ombudspersons undertake various activities, with a focus on advising, facilitating change, and disseminating information. However, the question of how to resolve complaints remains a perennial issue, with a preference for softer approaches over adversarial adjudication. Overall, ombudspersons bear significant responsibilities in fostering a caring, respectful,

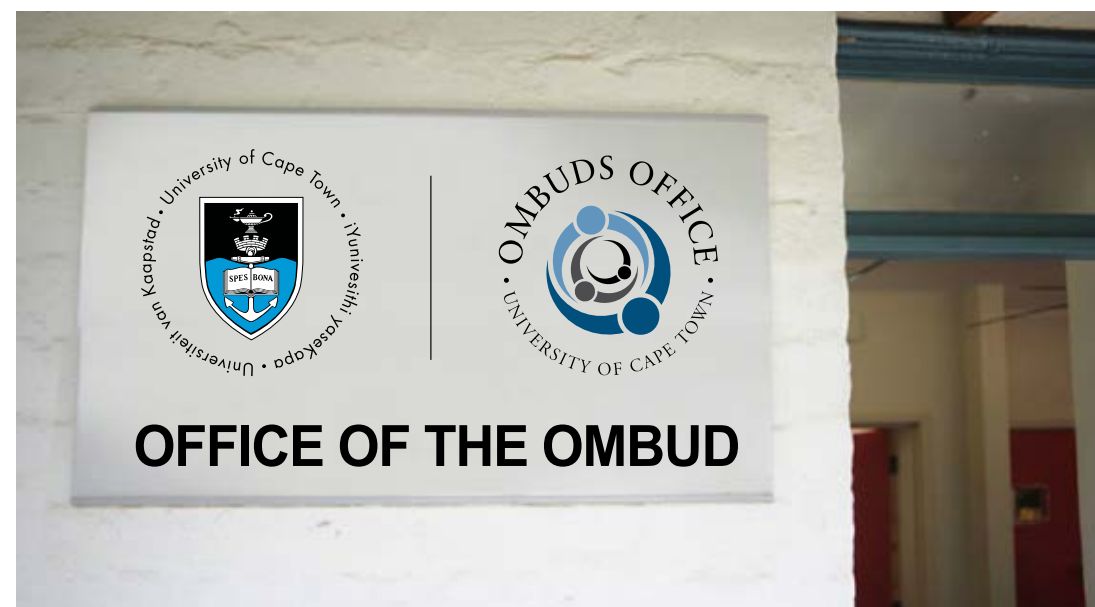
and non-conflictual university environment, working alongside various institutional bodies to achieve this goal. Ombudsman offices in South African universities have emerged as essential institutions for ensuring fairness, equity, and accountability within the higher education sector. Drawing from the global tradition of ombudspersons, these offices have become integral in addressing a wide array of concerns ranging from academic disputes and discrimination to administrative grievances. The UCT Ombuds Office stands as a cornerstone in the institution dedicated to fostering fairness, transparency, and accountability within the university community. Established in 2011 to address a diverse range of concerns from students, staff, faculty, and the broader community, the UCT Ombuds Office serves as a trusted resource for conflict resolution and more so conflict transformation.

Through proactive engagement, guidance, and advocacy, the UCT Ombuds Office contributes significantly to cultivating an inclusive and supportive academic environment that upholds the values of equity,

UCT's ombud, Nashira Abrahams, explained the role of an ombud:

Ombuds services humanise institutions for many constituents. The existence of an ombud's office sends the message that the institution cares about its people and recognises the value of providing informal dispute resolution for members of the campus community.

UCT's ombud, Nashira Abrahams, explained the role of an ombud: 23 OCTOBER 2023 | STORY KAMVA SOMDYALA. PHOTO JE'NINE MAY



THE OMBUDS OFFICE CAN

- 01 help **ENSURE PROCEDURAL FAIRNESS** in decision-making
- 02 provide **GENERAL ADVICE** to UCT community members about their rights and responsibilities
- 03 provide **GUIDANCE** on internal procedures to follow
- 04 **REFER ENQUIRERS** and concerns to relevant university offices
- 05 **PROVIDE TRAINING** and educational tools
- 06 **RECOMMEND CHANGES** to university policies and procedures
- 07 **IDENTIFY** and address systemic issues

WHAT OMBUDS DON'T DO:

- ✗ Receive notice of claims against an organization.
- ✗ Conduct Investigations.
- ✗ Make management decisions or policy.
- ✗ Advocate or take sides.
- ✗ Substitute for formal channels.
- ✗ Testify or produce documents in legal or other proceedings.

WHAT IS AN ORGANISATIONAL OMBUD?

In the face of national crises and swift social, political, and technological shifts, institutions globally, ranging from Fortune 500 companies to professional associations, are grappling with disruption. This has led to an increasing reliance on ombuds for their valuable perspective and counsel. In this era of constant change, organizational ombuds play a crucial role in mitigating risks and aiding individuals across all echelons of an organization in navigating intricate relationships, policies, and work atmospheres. They strive to foster respect, civility, and equity within the communities they serve.

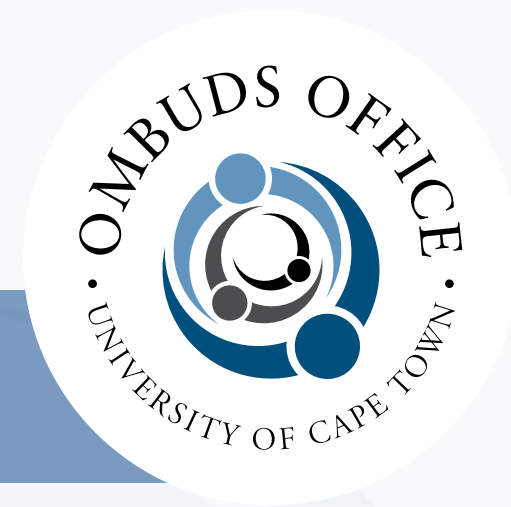
Organizational ombuds serve as a vital resource within organizations, fulfilling several crucial functions: They provide a confidential space for individuals and groups to discuss their issues or concerns openly. This confidentiality ensures that individuals feel comfortable expressing themselves without fear of reprisal. In helping to resolve conflicts, ombuds explore various options and facilitate dialogue between parties involved. Their impartial stance allows them to offer unbiased guidance and support throughout the resolution process. Additionally,

Ombuds play a pivotal role in addressing systemic concerns within the organization. By bringing these issues to the attention of relevant stakeholders, they contribute to organizational improvement and development. Operating independently of formal organizational structures, ombuds maintain neutrality and impartiality. Their informal position within the organizational hierarchy enables them to bridge gaps and facilitate communication effectively.



MESSAGE FROM THE OMBUD

I am honoured to present the Annual Report for the Office of the Ombud for the year 2023 and to launch our new brand identity.



statistics about users, matters that we responded to, and a review of some of the important work that we did in the past year, including our relationship building with stakeholders across campuses, getting our physical Office up and running again post the Covid-19 pandemic, our continued commitment to conflict transformation practices, and a look ahead to 2024. Ultimately, it encapsulates the transformative journey and the unwavering commitment of the Ombuds Office to uphold fairness, and accountability within the University of Cape Town.

I have included a comprehensive summary for the Annual Reports pertaining to the years 2021 and 2022, which remain unpublished to date. Despite diligent investigation, the rationale behind their non-publication eludes me. Nevertheless, I perceive it as imperative to establish coherence by elucidating the continuity and evolution evident within the reports' contents.

Witnessing the surge in visitors to our office following the release of the Mpati Report evoked a profound sense of

concern and empathy within me. Hearing the stories of individuals grappling with the emotional toll of workplace bullying, navigating relationships post-complaint or grievance resolution, and facing challenges in their professional development journey left a lasting impact on me. The emotions expressed by those involved – feelings of awkwardness, discomfort, fear, and uncertainty – resonated deeply with me as a person. It reminded me of the human aspect underlying these systemic issues and reinforced the importance of prioritizing the well-being of everyone within our community. Moreover, witnessing the barriers and challenges individuals encounter in accessing support and resources further underscored the urgency of our collective efforts to address these concerns.

As the Ombud, it is my responsibility to provide a safe space for individuals to voice their concerns and seek assistance. A broader project was called for towards the end of this period, with many concerns being brought to the fore on institutional racism. The types of concerns received asks for a deeper look into entrenched power dynamics which are perceived to contribute to an environment where racial discrimination, albeit often subtle, permeates various facets of university life, from admissions and curriculum to staff recruitment and retention, to concerns related to promotions and how disciplinary matters are handled. Addressing these concerns requires not only the recognition and

acknowledgment of systemic biases but also proactive measures to ensure fair and equitable practices that prioritize meritocracy and diversity, thereby fostering a more inclusive and supportive university culture.

While it's not within my role to highlight the university's successes (and there are many), but rather to identify areas for improvement, I'm sincerely grateful for the chance this position offers to enhance individual experiences within our university community. I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to Professor Ihron Rensburg and Ms. Zetu Makamandela-Mguqulwa for their exemplary leadership and dedication during their tenures as the Interim Ombud and UCT's first Ombud, respectively. I extend my sincere gratitude to the Associate Ombud, Ms. Rashieda Khan, and the Office Manager, Dr. Birgit Taylor, whose invaluable support was instrumental in achieving the successes outlined in this report. Without them, this endeavour would have been insurmountable.

Respectfully submitted,

Nashira Abrahams
Ombud, University of Cape Town

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

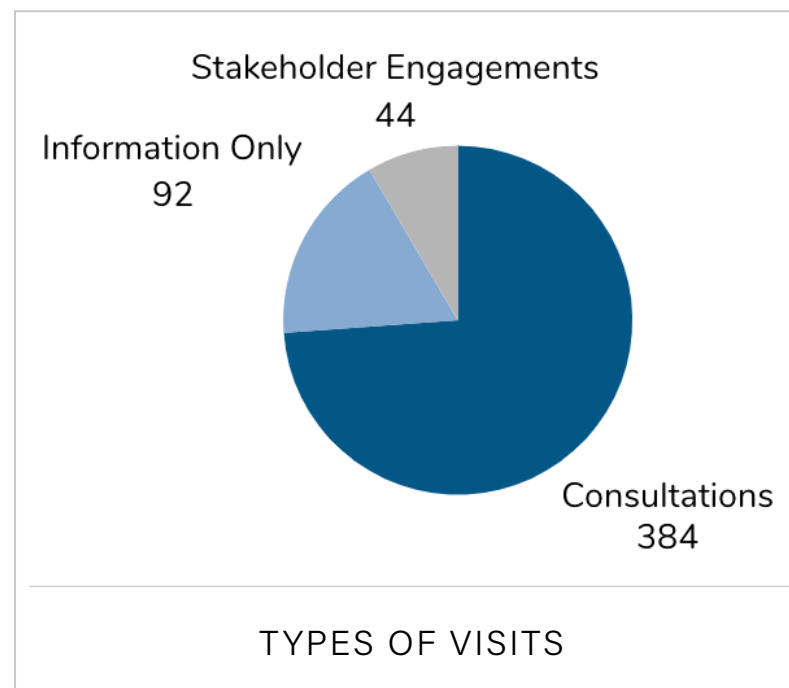
Throughout the first quarter of 2023, under the guidance of the Interim Ombud, the office continued to address visitors' concerns within the framework of the Revised Terms of Reference, focusing particularly on the evolving landscape of sex and gender classification, and sexual orientation within the institution's policies and culture.

The second quarter marked my initiation into the role, characterized by a flurry of activity as I familiarized myself with the university environment, engaged with stakeholders, and addressed emerging concerns. The report details the Office's effective response to visitor concerns in various quarters, including addressing systemic issues related to sex, gender classification, and sexual orientation in the first quarter of 2023. Subsequent quarters saw a continued focus on key issues such as unfair discrimination, workplace bullying, post complaint relationships, challenges with UCT's recruitment practices, the Retention Strategy and Policy, and other concerns related to the Human Resources Department. As the year ended, the release of the Mpati Report further underscored the importance of the Ombuds Office in providing support and resolution to individuals navigating workplace challenges.

The Ombuds Office Annual Report for 2023 highlights our proactive approach in addressing visitors' concerns throughout the year,

with a particular focus on systemic issues within UCT's administration, policies, and culture. Quarterly reports to Council provided unidentifiable case studies, insights into visitor numbers, concerns, and case statuses, reaffirming the office's commitment to confidentiality, independence, impartiality, and neutrality. Highlights of these are captured within these pages. The release of the Mpati Report in Quarter 4 triggered a significant increase in visitor traffic, a total of 224 visitors within 2 weeks, particularly regarding concerns of on-going workplace bullying and a continued sense of fear of coming forward. Institutional racism concerns sparked the need for a crucial conversation, prompting an in-depth exploration of entrenched power dynamics. This report will also include a summary of the 2021 and 2022 Ombuds Office Annual Reports, which were unpublished in their respective years. It is crucial to include these summaries at this point to facilitate follow-up recommendations.

The statistical analysis of visitor data throughout 2023 offers valuable insights into operational



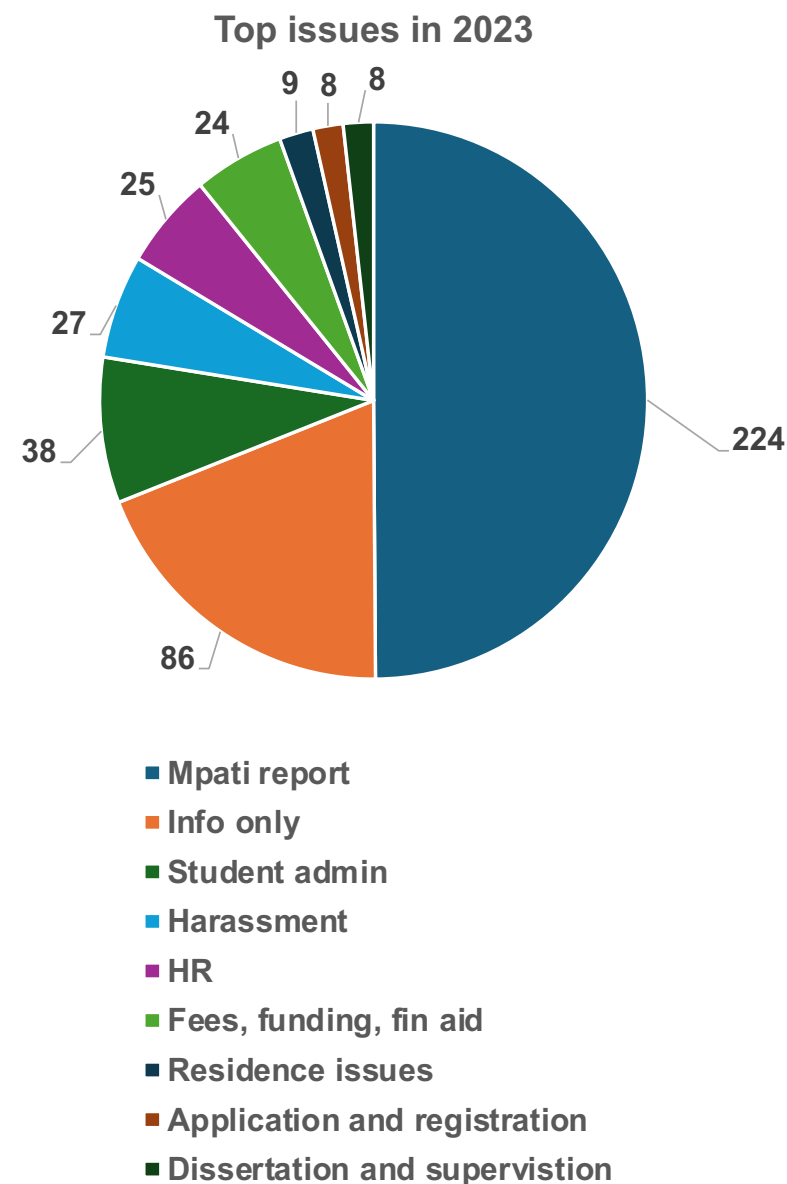
dynamics and trends within the UCT community. Despite fluctuations in visitor numbers, the Ombuds Office remained committed to providing timely and effective assistance, reflecting its dedication to fostering a fair and inclusive environment. Comparative analyses across multiple years highlighted evolving visitor demographics and concerns, emphasizing the office's role in addressing issues comprehensively.

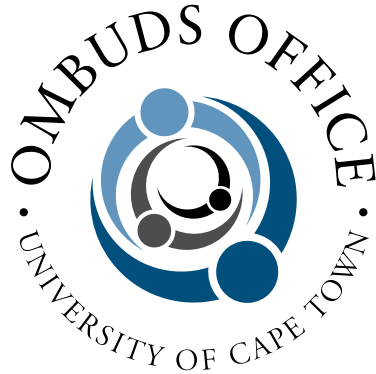
Continued ... EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Financial data underscored the support provided by the Office of the Vice Chancellor, with the approved operating budget for 2023 covering expenses and shortfalls.

Looking ahead to 2024, the Ombuds Office reiterates its commitment to fostering a fair and inclusive environment at UCT. Through ongoing efforts to address concerns and uphold ethical standards, the office aims to create a supportive work environment for all members of the university community.

The graphs and tables below record and describe the visits to our office during the calendrical year of 2023. The office was contacted by 476 visitors, where these consisted of 92 visitors seeking information and 384 having received extended assistance labelled below as those seeking consultation. Our new Ombud, Ms Nashira Abrahams, joined our office on the 2nd May 2023 and conducted 44 visits during which she met different executive staff. In November, the Ombud was consulted by 224 visitors in the wake of the Mpati report to discuss issues sparked by the report. Reflecting on the experiences of 2023, one of the most rewarding aspects of our work has been witnessing positive outcomes through open communication and collaborative problem-solving. The examples provided highlight instances where conflicts were de-escalated, misunderstandings were clarified, and relationships were restored. These successes underscore the vital role of the Ombuds Office in fostering a healthy and supportive academic environment.





OMBUDS OFFICE

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

INDEPENDENT INFORMAL IMPARTIAL CONFIDENTIAL



OMBUDS BLUE : **PANTONE 301** / R 0 G 73 B 135
C 100 M 77 Y 12 K 10



LIGHT BLUE : **PANTONE 652** / R 124 G 154 B 192
C 54 M 32 Y 10 K 0



GREY : 85% OF BLACK / R 77 G 77 B 79
85% OF BLACK (CMYK)



BLACK: PROCESS BLACK / R 35 G 31 B 32
100% OF BLACK (CMYK)

NEW BRAND IDENTITY

With great anticipation, we proudly unveil our new brand identity, a symbol of our unwavering dedication to serving the diverse needs of the UCT family. It's more than just a logo; it's a reflection of our values, our ethos, and our vision for the future.

As we embark on this journey, we are guided by a simple yet powerful mission: to provide confidential, impartial, independent, and neutral support and guidance to every member of our community.

Our new brand identity captures the essence of who we are and what we stand for. With its modern design and colours, it embodies the spirit of professionalism,

approachability, the multi-faceted layers we work within, the diversity of our community and the inclusivity that defines our office.

It's a beacon of hope, a symbol of trust, and a reminder that no matter the challenge, you are not alone. With this we also reaffirm our commitment to upholding the highest standards of integrity, and respect. We believe in the power of dialogue, the importance of empathy, and the transformative potential of every interaction.

MEET THE OMBUDS OFFICE TEAM

With great anticipation, we proudly unveil our new brand identity, a symbol of our unwavering dedication to serving the diverse needs of the UCT family. It's more than just a logo; it's a reflection of our values, our ethos, and our vision for the future.



NASHIRA ABRAHAMS

University Ombud |
University of Cape Town

My expertise extends beyond academia; I am accredited as a Post-Graduate Qualification expert Labour Law Practitioner through my tenure and training with the Commission for Conciliation Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA). Additionally, I am an experienced Alternative Dispute Resolution Accredited Mediator, Lead Negotiator, and Arbitrator. I worked as a Commissioner at the CCMA for 10 years, and continued in similar roles for the past 8 years. I am an accredited Mediator and Social Justice Practitioner, and a Neuro Life and Executive Coach.

Throughout my professional journey, I've cultivated a robust leadership style deeply rooted in collaboration and strategic alignment. My tenure has been marked by close collaboration with stakeholders at every echelon of the business spectrum, where I've honed my abilities to craft, execute, and oversee solutions that resonate with our overarching strategic goals. Embracing a proactive stance,

I prioritize addressing the multifaceted needs of individuals within the organization, nurturing a vibrant and inclusive culture that fuels performance excellence. At the core of my leadership philosophy lies a commitment to adaptability and lifelong learning, essential traits for navigating the complexities of the 21st-century landscape. Recognizing the dynamic nature of our environment, I continually evolve my approach, tailoring it to suit the diverse perspectives and requirements of our stakeholders. This flexibility not only ensures our strategies remain relevant but also fosters a culture of innovation and resilience. In essence, my leadership style embodies a blend of strategic foresight, people-centricity, and adaptability, underpinned by a commitment to fostering a culture of continuous improvement and collaboration.

Currently serving as the UCT Ombud and pursuing a PhD in Public Law, I excel in de-escalating conflicts through active listening, mediation, and various conflict resolution techniques. I have mastered the art of maintaining impartiality and sensitivity, earning the trust of individuals at all levels of an organization without compromising their accountability.

MEET THE OMBUDS OFFICE TEAM

I obtained a LL.B (UWC) in 2006 , and pursuit further studies in 2007 completing law school (School for Legal Practice, UCT and Introduction to Trial Advocacy from the National Institute for Trial Advocacy. Successfully completed the Attorneys Admissions exams during 2008 and 2009.

Additionally, participated in the HERS-SA Academy Women in Leadership in 2013 and attended a course in Challenging Gender Inequality in collaboration with University of Pretoria (Centre for Human Rights) and Sonke Gender Justice in 2015.

I have always had a keen interest in conflict resolution and management and have completed Alternative to Violence training through the Alternatives to Violence Project in 2002/3, Workplace Mediation Skills Training in 2010 through the African Centre for Dispute Settlement, and the Mediation and Restorative Justice in the Workplace Training hosted by Office for Inclusivity and Change (OIC), UCT and Social Justice Network in 2023.



RASHIEDA KHAN
Associate Ombud |
University of Cape Town

MEET THE OMBUDS OFFICE TEAM

After graduating with a BCom in General Management and Industrial Psychology through UNISA, the desire to continue into postgraduate studies in Biblical Studies manifested itself. This resulted in an Honours degree, a Masters degree, as well as a PhD at UCT in Religious Studies. The Masters dissertation was entitled "Outrageous Women: A Comparison of Five Passages within the Canonical Gospel Passion and Empty Tomb Narratives Emphasizing the Role of Women". The title of the PhD dissertation is "It is Time: Theology of Time in the Book of Revelation as Reflected in the Interpretation of Scripture and the Temple Cult".

Apart from experiences in tutoring (in Religious Studies at UCT) and university administration, including supporting the university Ombud (at UCT), several short courses including work-place mediation were completed. In 2024, I became a Certified Mediator and a Foundational Restorative Justice Practitioner at UCT. For the last few years I have practised Ombudsing as well as completed the administrative tasks in the UCT Ombud's Office.



BIRGIT TAYLOR, PHD
Ombud's Office Manager |
University of Cape Town



THE IOA

The Association supports organizational Ombuds worldwide working in corporations, educational institutions, non-profit organizations, government entities, and non-governmental organizations. IOA works to promote the continuous development of the organizational Ombuds profession through its Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics. These foundational guidelines ensure integrity, professionalism, and ethical conduct among practitioners.

In addition to upholding these standards, IOA facilitates communication and networking among Ombuds, fosters strategic partnerships with professionals sharing similar functions, and engages with government agencies and other organizations. Furthermore, IOA provides comprehensive support for professional growth, including professional development opportunities, networking initiatives, mentoring programs, and access to a peer-reviewed journal, a news blog, and a variety of online resources.

The association also hosts a robust and engaging annual conference, serving as a platform for collaboration, learning, and innovation within the field.

1. Compensation, Benefits, Honours and Recognition - Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about the equity, appropriateness and competitiveness of employee compensation, benefits and other benefit programs.
2. Evaluative Relationships – Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries arising between people in relationships (i.e. super-employee, faculty-student, colleague-colleague, student-student)
3. Peer and Colleague Relationships – Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries arising between people in relationships (e.g. manager-employee, supervisor-student, faculty-student, faculty-PASS, faculty/PASS-outsourced, colleague-colleague, student-student)
4. Career Progression and Development – Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about administrative processes and decisions regarding entering and leaving a job, what it entails, (i.e. recruitment, nature and place of assignment, job security and separation).
5. Legal, Regulatory, Financial and Compliance – Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries that may create a legal risk (financial, sanction, etc) for the organization or its members if not addressed, including issues related to waste, fraud or abuse.
6. Safety, Health and Physical Environment – Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about safety, health and infrastructure –related issues.
7. Services/Administrative Issues – Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about services or administrative offices including from external parties.
8. Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related – Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries that relate to the whole or some part of an organization.
9. Values, Ethics, and Standards – Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about the fairness or organizational values, ethics, and/or standards, the application of related policies and/or procedures, or the need for creating or revision of policies, and/or standards.

OUR VISITORS

We refer to people that contacted our office as visitors, even though they had not “visited” our office physically but contacted us either telephonically or via email. In this regard, we were available for 24 hours a day and for seven days of each week of 2021.

The data we record in order to supply aggregate information for our report is presented in a manner which does not identify any particular visitor so that we are able to maintain their confidentiality. Without an individual visitor’s permission, we do not share any identifiable information towards assisting in a specific issue. This also means that we do not keep any official records.

When a visitor includes us in their correspondence to one or more internal university offices, we respond by explaining that we operate as office-of-last-resort, and only become involved in a concern once the relevant internal university structures and processes have been exhausted in the quest to resolve a particular concern. As mentioned above, occasionally, visitors find this process troubling. Furthermore, our approach is that we communicate with one particular person at a time being the person who has brought a matter to our office. Unfortunately, one of our visitors was particularly upset when we requested for one primary contact to be identified in order for us to attend to the matter that was brought to our office.

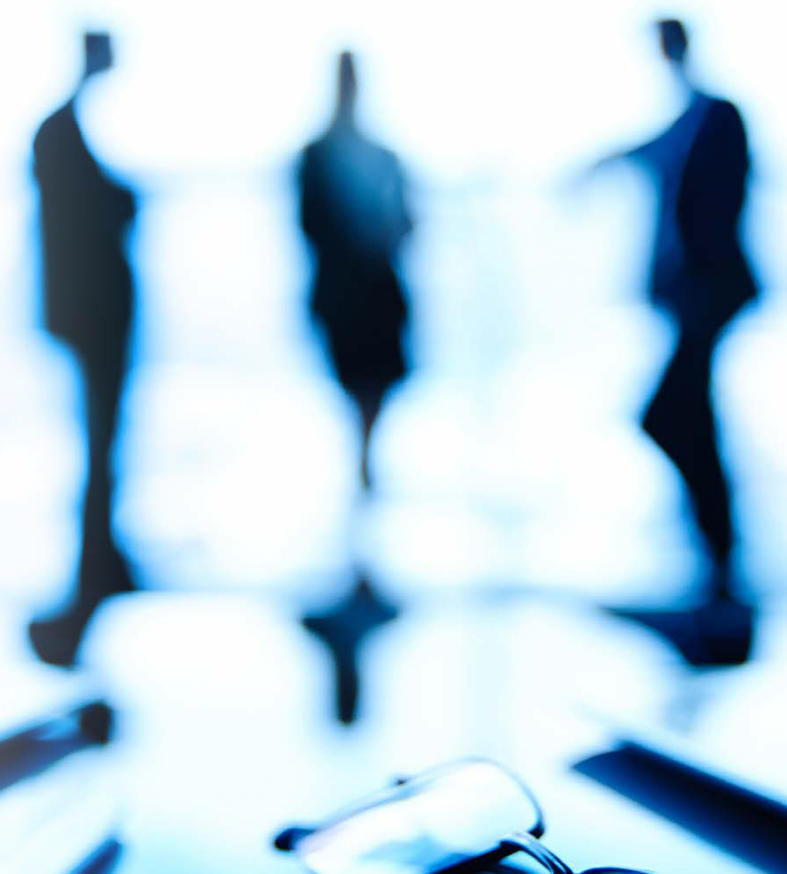
The numerical data presented does not fully capture the breadth of issues at UCT that may require attention, but it is my hope that interactions with the Ombud contribute to enhancing the university experience. It’s important to recognize that not everyone facing a problem will seek assistance from the Ombud; there are various other avenues available for support, and where these avenues are effective, they should be acknowledged and commended.

In my office, I often inquire about the steps visitors have taken to address their concerns before approaching us. This helps us understand the context and whether our intervention is necessary. For instance, if the issue has already been discussed with other parties but remains unresolved, we categorize it as a “C” for consultation.

Visitors to our office seek different forms of assistance. Some bring forward matters that require informal investigation to fully comprehend, potentially involving multiple parties. These cases may lead to resolution or remain unresolved. When visitors seek clarification or information regarding the fairness of a decision or policy application, we categorize it as an “I” since we provide information without engaging in further action.

Additionally, we hold routine meetings with staff members who seek objective viewpoints on

issues or provide feedback on matters in which their offices were involved. These interactions, where staff members are not responding to personal implications, are also categorized as “I” meetings.



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From the outset of this re-examination, it became evident that the primary source for conflict resided in the nature of the relationship between Council and the Ombud. The original Terms of Reference provided little guidance on this important matter which required attention.

”

The last published Ombud Office's Annual Report was the 2019 report, published in 2020. It reported on 37 claims of bullying against the ex-Vice Chancellor, and subsequent statements by the founding and former Ombud (whose second term ended on 31 December 2020) resulting in the University's choice to litigate her 2019 report rather than to engage in dialogue and to support her work, received wide and controversial reportage, believed to have damaged the reputation of the University and the Office of the Ombud. Other concerns raised by the former Ombud covered matters such as the accountability of Council and the University senior leadership for their actions, their respective roles in the success of the Ombud Office, as well as her concern for the maintenance of the key tenets of the Ombud Office, viz., confidentiality and independence.

As a result of this, the Council at the time took the decision to appoint Professor Ihron Rensburg as Interim Ombud, to help refocus the Ombud Office, while simultaneously, supported by Professor Pierre de Vos as Council advisor on this matter, to undertake a root and branch review of the causes of the conflict, and to accordingly revise the Terms of Reference of the Ombuds Office. Professor Rensburg, stated in the 2021 Ombuds Office Annual Report (unpublished), that;

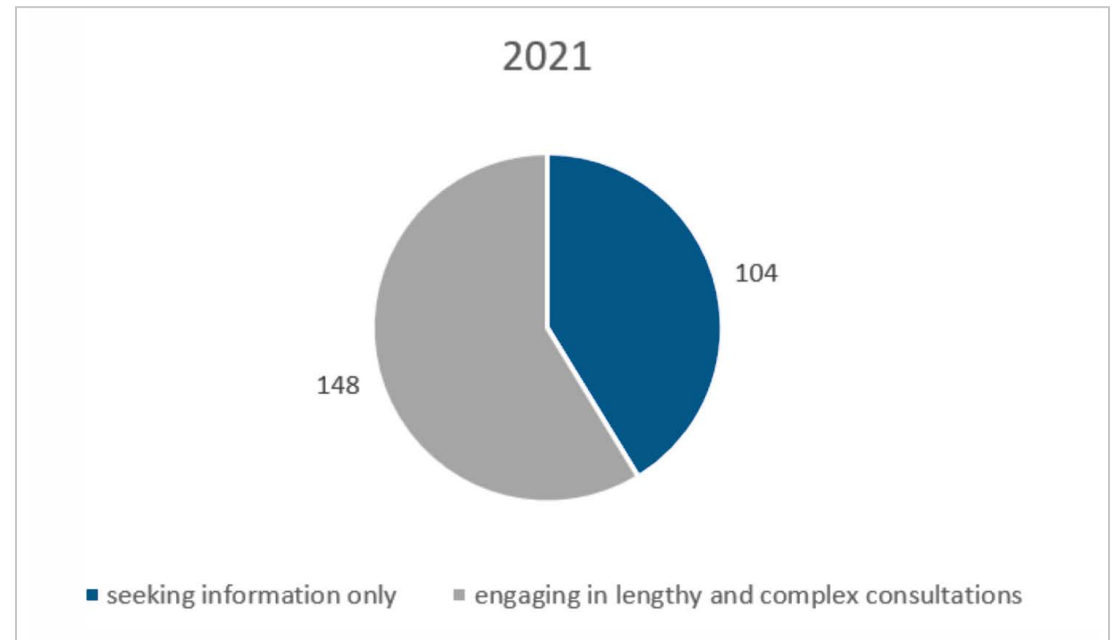
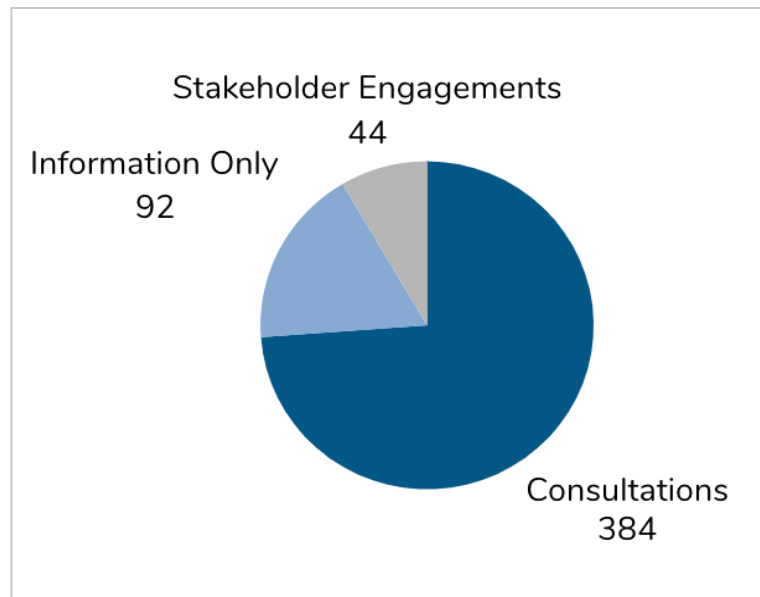
→ In summary, the reviewed Terms of Reference clarified several key points: firstly, that the Ombud, while independent and accountable to Council,

operates under the university's professional and support staff personnel policies (section 3.4); secondly, that the Ombud reports to the Chairperson of Council, who handles complaints against the Ombud from university community members (section 3.4); thirdly, that the Office of the Ombud can obtain legal or other professional advice from the University to fulfil its functions, preventing conflicts (section 8.1.5); and fourthly, if the Ombud requires individual legal or professional advice, the university's staff policies will apply (section 8.1). Subsequently, Council approved the updated Terms of Reference at its October meeting, effective from 1 November 2021. Source: <https://ombud.uct.ac.za/about-terms-reference/updated-terms-reference>

The revised Terms of Reference for the Ombuds office introduce clarifications that raise concerns about the independence of the office. The terms specify that the Ombuds employment is governed by the university's personnel policies and that the Ombud reports to the Chairperson of Council, who handles complaints against the Ombud. Furthermore, the requirement for the Office of the Ombud to exclusively seek legal or professional advice from the University could potentially limit its independence in addressing contentious issues. These aspects of the revised terms may give rise to perceptions that the Ombuds independence is compromised, particularly in navigating conflicts within the university community.

During 2021, the Ombuds Office received and assisted visitors who brought 252 matters,

The top two groups of concerns brought to our office in terms of the International Ombud Association (IOA) classification were



While the total number of visitors for 2021 was 252, the total for 2020 was 245, whereas the total for 2019 was 415.

Both 2020 and 2021 reflect post-pandemic contexts, and additionally, the 2019 figure includes 15 counts of presentations or workshops. Hence, in comparing the total number of visitors for either consultations or for information only, in 2021 the total is 252, for 2020 it was 245, and for 2019 the comparative total was 400. Even so, the pre-pandemic office contact was higher.

UCT OMBUDS OFFICE ANNUAL REPORT 2022

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In line with our new Terms of Reference (www.ombud.uct.ac.za/omb/tor) approved by the University Council at its October 2021 meeting and which became effective on 1 November 2021, the following four activities are in place –

1. Quarterly reports were provided to the Chairperson of Council, and in turn to the full Council for consideration and dialogue. In this regard, our quarterly reports for the year 2022 drew specific attention to the following risks and concerns –

- The offer of a phantom scholarship for an honours' degree programme;
- Concerns with marking fairness and marking integrity;
- A staff member's request for a pension-backed housing loan;
- The eligibility of students to continue with their academic programmes due to accumulated fee debt, perceived precipitously revised entry requirements into post-graduate studies, and lack of access to student housing;
- An unauthorised staff salary deduction;
- The expulsion of a student for alleged unprofessional conduct, and
- The alleged leaking of a confidential report of the University Council to the media.

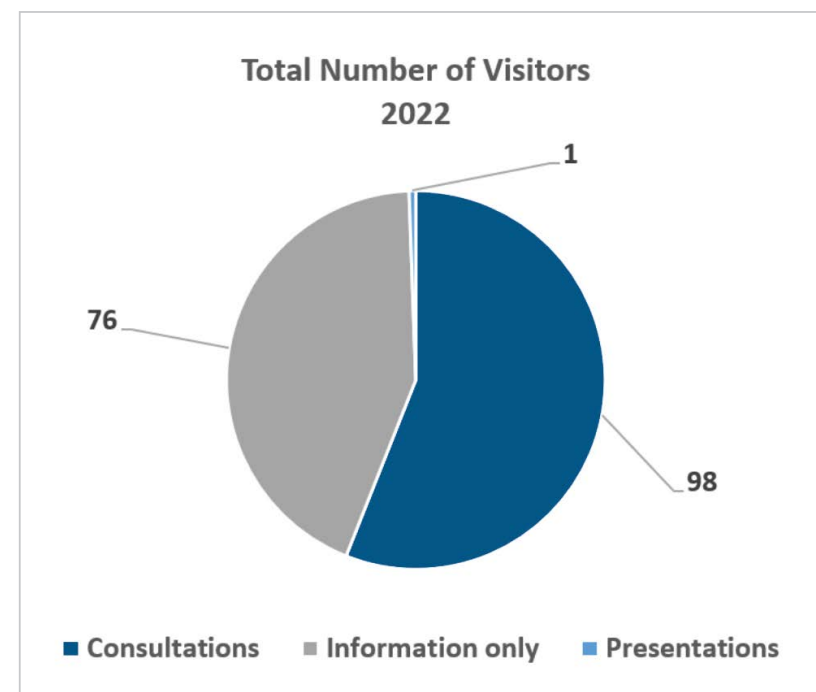
2. Council's Audit and Risk Committee reviews the quarterly reports in order to identify specific matters for discussion with and action by the University executive.

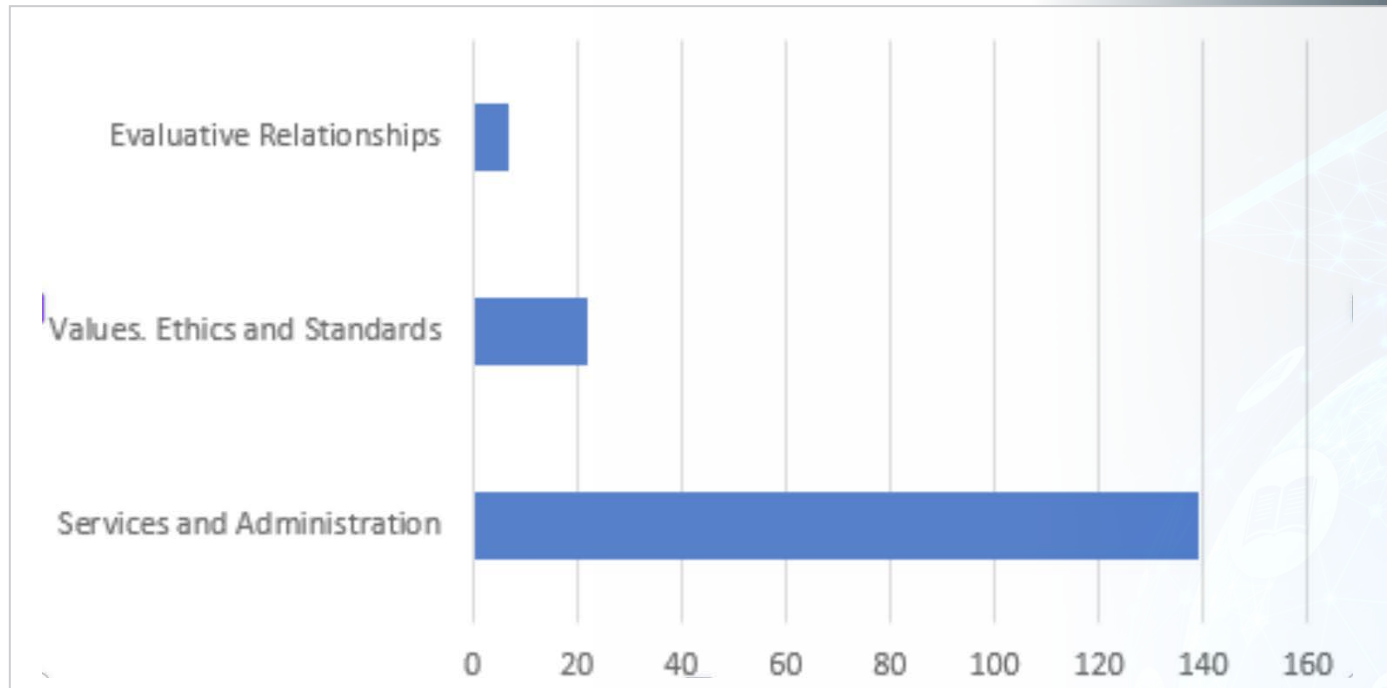
3. The Interim Ombud held monthly meetings with the Vice Chancellor where key thematic issues that arise from the work of the Ombud Office were discussed and remediation actions agreed; the Vice Chancellor also arranged, based upon her assessment, meetings of the Interim Ombud with the full University executive; and,

4. As part of the University's staff development and training programmes, the Associate Ombud conducted a presentation about the role of Ombud Office, and spoke to key thematic issues that should be top of mind for members of the University community.

During 2022, the office was contacted by 174 visitors, where these consisted of 76 visitors seeking information and 98 having received extended assistance labelled below as those seeking consultation. Excluding these numbers, the office offered one presentation.

Although we show 76 visitors seeking information only, some of these contacts resulted in extended consultations, although even a first contact consisting of providing information can take the format of a protracted conversation.



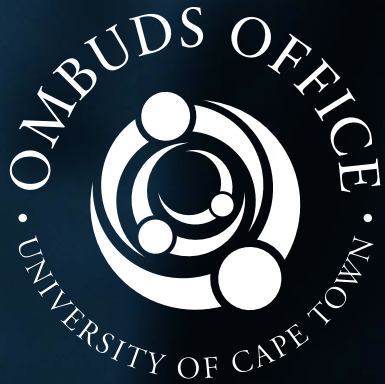


From a total of 79 external visitors, 50 represent those who are not a part of the University community; they are not related to students or staff but are chiefly constituted by those seeking non-academic ombudsing advice, or those asking general questions pertaining to the University, or those enquiring further into the nature and role of the Ombud's Office.

The 50 non-University contacts include 3 contacts made by other tertiary education institutions.

Furthermore, at the beginning of the academic calendar, we have an increase of parents of students and applicants contacting the office, in many cases concerning issues of application, registration, fees, funding, and residence as well as those appealing readmission outcomes. In 2022 we were contacted by a total of 24 parents/relatives of students and applicants.





CASE STUDIES 2023



CASE STUDIES

1. Transforming socially constructed identities and the matter of a student's enrolment identity number

A visitor contacted the Ombuds Office for assistance to change their student number. The student had legally changed their birth name and wished for their student number to reflect this change. The visitor advised that their birth name had "caused [them] a great amount of upset in [their] youth, and it is extremely taxing to be made to continue to identify... with those details every day that I am on UCT's campus." The visitor further indicated that, "[t]his practice, and the lack of a policy to update these details, feels discriminatory and dehumanising to ...trans people at UCT as a whole." We contacted Access Control to enquire about the student number change process and was referred to Admissions Office. The Admissions Processing unit responded with, "changing the student number would affect multiple systems and involve extensive investigation and updating of back-end data", but referred us to the Office of the Registrar.

When we reached out to the Office of the Registrar, we were informed that changing a student's

number was not possible since it is linked to a student's record, and is the digital footprint of the student, linked with tests, assignments, exams scripts, certification and graduation. This information is also archived. It was explained that it was highly impossible to obtain the student's assessments to facilitate the change, that taking such action would "mess" up the student's record, and that consequently the requested change could not be allowed.

The University is guided by the Norms of Certification for the Higher Education Sector within the context of the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework. Hereafter referred to as the CHE policy. Section 6.3 of the CHE policy deals with student academic records. In terms of section 6.3.5 of the CHE policy, "the student academic record database is structured and formatted in line with the stipulations of authorities that conduct data and/or record audits, provided that the stipulations are determined in consultation and agreement with the institution and are reasonably feasible."

Furthermore, section 6.3.6 illustrates that, "[a]ccess to the student academic records database is controlled with strict segregation of roles and delegation of authority. For example, the capturing of records into the system, the verification of the information, and the approval thereof, are three different responsibilities assigned to different individuals or parties with properly delegated authority. Staff, contractors and agents are granted access only to those parts of the student academic records that are necessary for them to fulfil their respective duties."

Section 6.4.6 stipulates that, "requests to change names that already appear on an issued certificate are normally not entertained, as doing so requires changes to the entire set of student academic records of the recipient of the certificate; and this carries a high level of risk of compromising the integrity of student academic records."

The proviso also states that, "...as technology developments advance, and where such permit change in the names of holders of qualifications without compromising the integrity of student academic records, an institution may use its discretion to accept applications for change of names on certificates issued previously."

"The full names of the recipient reflected on the certificate are those recorded at admission and/or first enrolment to the relevant learning programme." An exception is allowed where the recipient has undergone legal change in one or more of her or his names (notice the durability of this dual sex and/or gender classification system) prior to completing the studies leading to the qualification, and where such change is duly brought to the attention of the institution prior to the issuing of the certificate. We were unaware of this exception at the time when we consulted with the Office of the Registrar, and we are encouraged by it when consulting with such an issue going forward.

Section 6.9.5 of the CHE policy provides guidance on the information contained on a student's academic transcript. It lists more than fifteen categories of information that should appear on the academic transcript. It states that, "an academic

transcript issued upon completion of a programme of learning should contain the full names and identification number of the recipient (to appear on each page of the academic transcript); and, the registration details of the recipient." This proviso needs to be updated to allow for full name and identity number changes when a person's full name and or identity number is changed legally.

During our consultations, we were also informed that the University is considering doing away with the campus ID and moving possibly to a numerical student number system as opposed to the current student number that is a combination of the student's surname and name followed by three numbers. When the visitor was contacted with feedback, they were deeply disappointed that the student number could not be changed. They admitted to being "significantly distressed" about having to use the student number that they do not identify with. The visitor felt so strongly about the issue that they wanted an opportunity to address the Prioritisation Meeting (where changing the student number system was to be discussed and which was taking place a few days after this consultation) personally to advocate for change. We did not perceive this as an unreasonable request and communicated the request to the Office of the Registrar, but we did not receive a reply.

RECOMMENDATION

It is paramount that the University designs an effective system where a student number can be changed if the person has changed their identity, name, etc., without compromising the integrity of

its system. We know it can be done, and that it was not "highly impossible" as communicated. If a person can change their sex or gender status, the University should be able to change their student number upon request. A suggestion would be that student numbers take the form of numbers only, as is the case with staff numbers. However, if the current letter number remains, each case should be dealt with on its own merits, provided all Home Affairs documentation is changed to reflect accurately.

2. Staff retention and remuneration policy

A PASS Visitor approached the Ombuds Office with a remuneration matter in June 2023. The Visitor had applied for an external position for which they were successful in December 2022. The Visitor informed their Line Manager about the new offer, with the expectation that a counteroffer would be made, as was the practice within their unit of scarce skills. The Manager advised the Visitor to decline the external offer as the university was busy with salary increase negotiations for the following year. Six months later the Visitor wanted clarity on the university's official stance on such matters and was getting increasingly frustrated as none seemed forthcoming, even after following up on this matter numerous times during the six month period.

The Law dealing with retention is contained

in the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 and the subsequent Code of Good Practice on the Integration of Employment Equity in Human Resource Policies and Practices. Section 18 states that employers "should develop and implement retention strategies" and subsection 18.2.4 denotes that "fair remuneration contributes to the retention of employees."

When our Office made enquiries to the university's retention guide to the Staff Wellness, Rewards, Compensation and Benefits directorate, we were informed that "the University's position would depend on the context. If the position is scarce or critical and there is evidence to support this, then a motivation could be submitted for approval to the relevant delegated authority. In other instances where the position is not scarce the staff member may then choose to resign. There was no policy dealing with retention specifically."

When asked about this Visitor's situation, the Manager agreed it had been an oversight and that she would attend to the matter and resolve it within the following two weeks. The Visitor then confirmed the matter was resolved.

It is evident that the university does not have a clear and comprehensive Remuneration Policy for PASS staff members. At best, there is a "Guide" dealing with 'Academic Remuneration and also a Scarcity Policy', which is not contained on its website as it is in the process of being reviewed. It is a "Guide" in my opinion, as it does not conform to the general requisites of a policy. It consists of only three paragraphs which amount



Continued ... CASE STUDIES

to six sentences, mainly stating that the page was last updated in June 2012. Any policy that consists of three paragraphs is bound to cause confusion. A policy should be clear, and easy to read and understand, especially for an institution with a diverse body of employees. It should, at a minimum, consist of a purpose, scope, objectives, definitions, applicable principles, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation clauses.

Our recommendation is that a new Remuneration Policy be drafted, to include both Academic and PASS employees, and also an Award for the Achievement of a Recognised Qualification's. It would cause less confusion and staff may feel less aggrieved when engaging with remuneration related concerns. The Scarcity Policy should not be a policy on its own and should form part of the Remuneration Policy. Additionally, any policy that is under review, should be accessible to staff members until the revised policy is approved.

3. Unravelling the Complex Web: Reviving Grievances and Unravelling Procedural Entanglements in Human Resources at UCT

Within the halls of UCT, a narrative unfolds that

brings to the forefront the intricate challenges embedded in addressing grievances and bullying complaints as above. The focal point of this narrative revolves around disputes that have traversed the intricate pathways of UCT policies, procedural nuances, and constitutional rights. The saga began in 2016 when a complainant lodged a grievance under the UCT Grievance Policy for PASS (Professional, Administrative, Support Staff) Staff. The matter was dealt with after a protracted procedure, at the end of 2021, after the complainant had taken the grievance procedure to stage 3. After stage 1 and 2, the resolution did not align with expectations, prompting a revival of the grievance in 2023 when it was taken to stage 4 of the grievance process and sent back to HR for implementation of the 2021 report's outcomes. However, it must be noted that the full report of 2021 was implemented at the time, and also to note that this time, the nature of the complaint shifted - from a grievance to a bullying complaint.

The complexities of this case are underscored by the convoluted investigation processes. Communication from Human Resources dated March 2021 reveals that the concerns were subjected to an investigation. This investigation, as per the Visitor, led to 1 disciplinary inquiry and counselling sessions with the rest of the people implicated in the initial grievance. However, the heart of the matter lies in the perceived violations of procedural fairness. The visitor (people who raise concerns at the Ombuds Office) contends that the stages 1 and 3 investigations was a breach of constitutional rights, citing a lack of

invitation for representation and failure to apprise them of the underlying complaints. Furthermore, procedural missteps are alleged, asserting that disciplinary proceedings should have been initiated within 14 days of completing the investigation, as mandated by UCT policies. The temporal intricacies of the case are exacerbated by the revival of the matter in 2023, incorporating two new incidents post the 2021 findings. The visitor questions the fairness of these actions, arguing that UCT is attempting to abuse internal powers by reviving a matter whose statute of limitations has long passed. The imbroglio deepens as the narrative transitions to the current UCT Policy Addressing Bullying, which came into effect on June 19, 2021. The visitor contends that UCT HR and the advisory panel put together in 2023 have misdirected themselves by applying this new policy retroactively. They assert that the advisory panel, instead of relying on current, post 2021 original complaints, used and relied upon a formal investigation report and previous grievance proceedings up until 2021.

Within the intricate narrative surrounding the revival of grievances at UCT, a significant development occurred when the Ombuds office proposed recommendations to alter the trajectory of the ongoing processes. The response received from Employee Relations, supported by the HR:ED (Acting) illuminates the institutional stance on these suggested changes. In response to the Ombuds' recommendations, the proposed alterations to the existing process was acknowledged. The acknowledgment, however, was coupled with an explanation of

the institutional perspective. It emphasized the adherence to established policies and procedures, asserting that the current trajectory aligns with the framework in place, or rather the Ombuds was of the perspective that was their interpretation of the framework in place.

This response highlights the delicate balance between the Ombuds' recommendations, which may seek to address fairness and procedural concerns, and the institution's commitment to upholding existing policies or their interpretations thereof. The engagement between the Ombuds office and the HR becomes a crucial juncture where the intricacies of institutional processes and the pursuit of procedural justice intersect. As the narrative unfolds, it underscores the ongoing dialogue and negotiation required to navigate through complex grievances at UCT.

The interaction between the Ombuds office and the acting HR becomes a pivotal element in shaping the trajectory of the dispute resolution process, highlighting the nuanced interplay between institutional policies and the pursuit of equitable outcomes.

This intricate web of events raises fundamental questions about fairness, due process, and the effective application of UCT policies. The revived investigation, altered nature of the complaint, and purported procedural lapses challenge the integrity of the institution's internal processes. In response to these challenges, the visitor is alleging victimization and bullying by both UCT HR and UCT Management. They contend that the ongoing processes violate constitutional rights, and they are

being subjected to unfair disciplinary procedures. As this saga unfolds, it becomes a clarion call for UCT to scrutinize and refine its grievance and bullying complaint resolution mechanisms once again. The need for clarity in policy application, adherence to procedural fairness, and a commitment to timely and effective resolution has never been more pronounced.

In the crucible of this complex narrative, the question lingers: How can UCT navigate the delicate balance between addressing legitimate grievances and ensuring procedural integrity, fostering an environment where justice and fairness prevail? The answers may well define the trajectory of future dispute resolution within the institution.

4. Navigating Transparency: Access to Recruitment and Selection Documents and Resolution of Concerns

In the intricate landscape of recruitment and selection processes, transparency and access to information are paramount. A visitor to the Ombuds office at UCT expressed concern about being denied access to documents related to

a recruitment process, believing they were the most suitable candidate but ultimately faced an unsuccessful outcome. The Ombuds office, in pursuit of fact-finding, sought clarification from the recruitment department, as access to this information is governed by The Basic Conditions of Employment Act, No. 75 of 1997.

The response received from the recruitment department sheds light on the complexities and confidentiality measures embedded in the recruitment and selection processes at UCT. The recruitment and selection process is guided by the provisions of the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) and a confidentiality clause agreed upon by committee members. These measures are in place to protect the integrity of the recruitment and selection process. In the specific case of the query, the response outlined that the recruitment policy for payclass 9 to 13 staff is the guiding framework. This policy, available on the UCT Human Resources website, details the procedures and guidelines followed in recruitment and selection. The response emphasized that all candidates receive feedback on the process. However, the recruitment and selection report, containing information about all candidates, is deemed confidential and is not for external consumption. It is restricted to the parties detailed in the Guidance for Staff Recruitment documents.

Importantly, the recruitment documents are only accessed by other parties as part of evidence in the event of a Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) arbitration. Even at this stage, it was said that access is

limited to the CCMA commissioner. As a CCMA Commissioner myself in a past life, this is untrue, as CCMA arbitration proceedings are public proceedings, and any evidence submitted must be provided to the other side to allow an opportunity for cross-examination. However, the recruitment team believes the documents will not be shared with an appellant for reasons related to confidentiality and the protection of the recruitment process.

Post the consultation with the visitor, providing this feedback, they became very irate, making all types of demands and threatening to go to the media.

A few days later, after addressing this concern with the Executive Director of Human Resources (ED: HR), a commitment was made to ensure that the visitor receives the information requested related to their recruitment and non-selection, as was rightfully entitled to.

This advancement highlights the crucial role of the Ombuds office as a proficient mediator in addressing grievances within the UCT community, regardless of the nature of the issues at hand or who the matter must be addressed by. It also highlights the responsiveness of the institution to address concerns and uphold the principles of transparency and fairness in its processes. As UCT continues to refine its procedures, this case serves as a valuable lesson in fostering open communication and addressing issues in a manner that aligns with the institution's commitment to equity and justice.

5. 224 Visitors to the Ombuds Office in 2 weeks, post the release of the Mpati Report

The Mpati Report, officially known as the "Report of the Investigating Committee into Allegations of Misconduct and Maladministration at the UCT" was released by the University Council on 1 November 2023. This caused a surge in concerns to the Ombuds office (224 in total during the first two weeks of November 2023 alone), which reflected a wide array of issues, encompassing not only the findings of the report, but also broader systemic challenges within the university community. These concerns displayed a range of issues, reflecting the heightened scrutiny and introspection prompted by the findings of the report. They not only underscored the urgency of addressing systemic issues and promoting a culture of respect and accountability within university, but also the complexities surrounding psychological safety, mental health strain, heavy workloads, feelings of exclusion, and fears of job insecurity. Here are some of the key issues brought forward:

1. At the forefront of these concerns was the issue of **psychological safety**. Many of the Visitors voiced distress over the lack of psychological safety in the workplace, citing instances of bullying, harassment, and discrimination. These

experiences not only eroded morale but also compromised professional efficacy, casting a shadow over the university's commitment to fostering a supportive environment for all.

2. The **strain on mental health** emerged as a pressing issue. The heightened stress and anxiety stemming from workplace dynamics, including bullying and perceived job insecurity, exacted a heavy toll on staff members. Heavy workloads further compounded these challenges, with employees grappling to balance professional responsibilities with personal well-being.
3. **Feelings of exclusion** permeated the discourse, as some individuals expressed dismay over being overlooked or marginalized during the investigation process followed by the Panel itself. Instances where others were acknowledged and invited to participate in the investigation for experiencing bullying or receiving apologies highlighted disparities in recognition and support, exacerbating feelings of isolation.
4. Moreover, **fears of job insecurity** loomed large. Concerns about perceived alliances within the institution, fuelled anxieties about potential repercussions for speaking out or seeking support. This climate of uncertainty further strained emotional well-being.
5. Emotional Strain and Fatigue: Dealing with challenges as staff and student, navigating interpersonal conflicts, and managing uncertainties took a toll on many individuals seeking advice and guidance from our office.

In response to these concerns, in a press-release from The Chair of Council, sent with a summary of the Mpati Report, as well as the full Report, UCT recognized the need for concerted action to address systemic challenges and foster a healthier culture. Through transparent dialogue, proactive measures, and a commitment to accountability, UCT endeavoured to navigate the complex landscape of challenges post the Mpati Report.

The journey toward a more resilient and supportive organizational culture requires collective effort and unwavering dedication to the well-being of all members of the university community. Overall, the Mpati Report served as a catalyst for organizational introspection and reform at UCT, highlighting areas for improvement and guiding efforts to enhance governance, transparency, and effectiveness within the university.

6. Workplace bullying continues to be a concern at UCT

Despite ongoing efforts to foster an inclusive and respectful environment within UCT, bullying continues to be a significant concern, even in the aftermath of the Mpati Report. The findings of the report underscore the urgency of addressing systemic issues and promoting a culture of respect and accountability. Fostering a conducive and supportive environment for both staff and students is paramount. The frequent workplace bullying concerns brought to the Ombuds

Office, especially in this quarter, sheds light on the persistent issue within the university community.

Workplace bullying encompasses a range of behaviours that undermine an individual's dignity, well-being, and professional efficacy. Such behaviours not only erode morale and productivity but also create an atmosphere of fear and apprehension among staff and students alike. Several factors contribute to the perpetuation of workplace bullying within academic settings. Hierarchical structures, power imbalances, and competitive environments can exacerbate tensions and foster hostile interactions. Additionally, high-pressure workloads, conflicting priorities, and limited resources may fuel frustration and resentment, leading to interpersonal conflicts. Furthermore, the lack of effective communication channels and mechanisms for conflict resolution can impede the timely resolution of disputes, allowing tensions to escalate unchecked.

From the concerns we deal with, we can see that the repercussions of workplace bullying are profound, extending beyond the immediate targets to affect overall organizational climate and culture. Visitors who are Staff subjected to bullying experience heightened stress, anxiety, and diminished job satisfaction, leading to decreased productivity and increased absenteeism. Similarly, Visitors who are Students who witness or experience bullying struggle academically, disengage from campus activities, and even contemplate dropping out. Moreover, the erosion of trust and collegiality within the university community



undermines collaborative endeavours and impedes the pursuit of academic excellence.

Addressing workplace bullying requires a multifaceted approach that addresses both individual behaviours and systemic issues. UCT has policies and procedures for reporting and addressing bullying incidents. What is not addressed however, is the relationships post the procedures. Navigating relationships post-lodging a bully complaint requires patience, resilience, and a commitment to fostering a healthy workplace culture, especially when there is a power dynamic at play, such as a staff member lodging a bullying complaint against their line manager or a student lodging a bullying complaint against their lecturer.



Continued ... CASE STUDIES

In addition to policies, providing victims with avenues for recourse and protection and training programs on conflict resolution, assertiveness, and bystander intervention can empower staff and students to recognize and address bullying behaviours proactively. Moreover, fostering a culture of respect, empathy, and inclusivity through leadership commitment and community engagement is fundamental to creating a supportive and nurturing environment for all members of the university community.

7. Navigating relationships post-complaint or grievance resolution internal process

Lodging a bully complaint or grievance is a

courageous step toward fostering a safe and respectful work environment. However, navigating relationships post-complaint can be challenging. Addressing workplace bullying is a priority for UCT, and fostering healthy relationships post-lodging a bully complaint or grievance is equally crucial.

Several returning Visitors were seen this quarter who had gone through the process after lodging or receiving a bullying complaint or grievance during last year. These individuals sought support internally to understand how to proceed with their working relationships following the release of investigation reports related to their cases. Surprisingly, regardless of the report's outcome, both parties involved described their feelings as awkward, uncomfortable, and filled with uncertainty. Many expressed fear, demotivation, and even contemplated resignation or seeking alternative positions within the institution. Returning Visitors shared their experiences of seeking support internally post-complaint

resolution. While some were referred to ICAS for further assistance, many were told that the process had concluded with the release of the investigation report. Those dissatisfied with the outcome were informed of their option to refer the matter to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA).

Recognizing the challenges individuals face in navigating relationships post-bully complaint or grievance, is a necessary part of UCTs commitment to fostering healthy work dynamics. This commitment should extend beyond the conclusion of the complaint process and encompass ongoing support for all parties involved. An acknowledgement of the importance of addressing the emotional impact and restoring trust and collaboration in the workplace appears to be amiss. A recommendation may be to extend comprehensive internal support services to individuals navigating relationships post-complaint resolution.

OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section of the annual report, we typically present observations and recommendations specific to the current year.

However, by taking it a step further and including insights from previous years, specifically spanning from 2019 to 2022, we provide valuable context for the current state of affairs within our organization. These reports serve as historical records, documenting trends and patterns of concern that have persisted over time. By showcasing the recurrence of certain issues across multiple annual reports, we underscore the significance of these challenges and the necessity for proactive measures to address them.

Moreover, by acknowledging the continuity of these issues, we signal our commitment to transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement. It's imperative that we not only recognize these persistent challenges but also demonstrate our resolve to tackle them head-on, fostering a culture of adaptability and resilience within our organization.



2019

DECISION MAKING

a) In a constitutional country like South Africa, decision-making should adhere to principles of fairness outlined in the constitution. However, there's often a misunderstanding of what fairness entails, with decisions sometimes prioritizing consistency over true fairness. Despite this, recommendations from the Ombuds office aim for a case-by-case approach.

b) Individuals entrusted with decision-making roles may sometimes be limited by their own perspectives, hindering their ability to make reasonable accommodations when necessary. This is concerning, especially when those individuals hold discretionary powers meant to serve the university's mission and vision.

A large, bold, dark blue number '2019' is centered on a light blue background with a subtle wood-grain texture. The number has a slight drop shadow, giving it a three-dimensional appearance.

2020 |

The absence of an annual report for 2020 is notable, with reasons being due to the delayed release of the 2019 annual report in that year. This delay may have been influenced by various events that unfolded subsequently, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

and other organizational challenges. As a result, it's essential to recognize the interconnectedness of these factors and their potential impact on reporting processes and organizational dynamics during that period.

2020

2021 |

SERVICES AND ADMINISTRATION

Student Navigation: Navigating administrative processes, such as filling out forms and following procedural guidelines like applying for a leave of absence (LOA), proves challenging for students. This lack of understanding often leads to delays and frustrations for both students and administrative staff. Variability in the process of returning to studies after an LOA adds to the confusion, potentially resulting in errors on applications and misunderstandings about student intentions.

Staff Workload and Stress: Staff members experience difficulties in managing their workload, frequently working long hours and making mistakes due to pressure, particularly during high-volume periods like registration. This strain can lead to heightened stress levels among staff, occasionally resulting in abrasive interactions with students.

Rigid Adherence to Rules: There exists a prevailing reluctance among staff to deviate from established rules or policies, fearing the creation of undesirable precedents. However, adhering strictly to these rules may not always produce fair outcomes. Thus, there is a need for flexibility in decision-making, particularly when unique circumstances arise.

EVALUATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Student Navigation: Navigating administrative processes, such as filling out forms and following procedural guidelines like applying for a leave of absence (LOA), proves challenging for students. This lack of understanding often leads to delays and frustrations for both students and administrative staff. Variability in the process of rete circumstances arise.

PARENT'S CONCERNS

There has been a notable increase in parental involvement, with families expressing frustration over unanswered queries and perceived indifference from faculties. While the university invests in orientation programs to engage parents, there's a disconnect in the responsiveness of faculties to parental concerns. The Ombud's Office plays a crucial role in addressing these issues promptly and effectively, often serving as a bridge between concerned families and university departments.

2021

2022



In 2022, the Ombud's Office encountered numerous issues within the university's administrative processes, revealing ongoing challenges in student services and academic administration. Despite addressing 174 concerns throughout the year, many issues remained unresolved, shedding light on persistent deficiencies in the system.

A notable area of concern revolved around student forms and registration procedures as reported the previous year. It became evident that a significant portion of students struggled to navigate these processes effectively, leading to various complications and disadvantages. For instance, several students encountered difficulties in properly completing forms, resulting in adverse consequences such as financial liabilities for outstanding fees or improper registration status.

One particularly illustrative case involved a student who attempted to cancel their studies but faced hurdles due to unclear de-registration procedures. Despite notifying relevant university personnel via email, including lecturers and administrators, the student received no response. This lack of communication left the student unaware of the proper channels to follow, ultimately leading to prolonged bureaucratic delays and financial consequences. Similarly, another student sought reimbursement for fees after a medical emergency forced them to withdraw from classes. However, their request was denied due to technicalities surrounding the submission of medical documentation. Despite the extenuating circumstances, the university

upheld its policy strictly, highlighting the need for greater flexibility and compassion in decision-making processes.

Furthermore, the Ombud's Office observed difficulties faced by students navigating review and appeal procedures, particularly in cases of academic exclusion. Confusion surrounding these processes, coupled with inadequate support services, left students feeling overwhelmed and unsupported. Moreover, the timing and accessibility of appeal information posed additional challenges, particularly for students with limited internet access. The designated appeal dates coincided with public holidays, potentially hindering students' ability to submit appeals promptly.

In light of these challenges, the Ombud's Office advocates for comprehensive evaluation and improvement of the university's administrative procedures. Addressing gaps in de-registration, academic exclusion, and appeal processes through enhanced guidance, support services, and accessibility measures is crucial for fostering a fair and equitable academic environment. By prioritizing these improvements, the university can better fulfil its commitment to sound academic administration and positively impact the academic success of its students.

2022



OMBUDS OFFICE

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

INDEPENDENT INFORMAL IMPARTIAL CONFIDENTIAL

2023

1. TRANSFORMATION OF IDENTITIES RELATED TO SEX, GENDER CLASSIFICATION, AND STUDENT IDENTITY NUMBERS

To address the issues raised regarding the transformation of identities related to sex, gender classification, and student identity numbers, several recommendations can be made:

1. Policy Development and Review:

- The university should develop clear and inclusive policies that support individuals who undergo legal changes in their names, sex, or gender identity.
- Review existing policies, such as those governing student records and identification, to ensure they are aligned with current legal and societal understandings of gender identity and diversity.

2. System Adaptation:

- Implement technical solutions that enable the modification of student identity numbers without compromising academic records.
- Explore the possibility of transitioning to a numerical student number system that does not encode personal information like surnames, thus allowing for easier updates and accommodating individuals with diverse identities.

3. Engagement and Advocacy:

- Foster dialogue and engagement with relevant stakeholders, including student representatives and advocacy groups, to advocate for changes that promote inclusivity and respect for diverse identities.
- Provide opportunities for affected individuals to voice their concerns directly to decision-making bodies, such as the Prioritisation Meeting, to influence policy changes.

4. Training and Awareness:

- Conduct training sessions for university staff and administrators on issues related to gender diversity and identity.
- Increase awareness of the challenges faced by individuals with diverse identities, emphasizing the importance of respectful and inclusive practices.

5. Case-by-Case Consideration:

- Establish a transparent and accessible process for individuals to request changes to their student identity numbers based on legal name or identity changes.
- Ensure that each request is evaluated

on its own merits, considering the unique circumstances of the individual and the potential impact on academic records.

6. Continuous Improvement:

- Regularly review and update policies and practices to reflect evolving societal norms and legal frameworks related to gender identity and diversity.
- Solicit feedback from affected individuals and stakeholders to identify areas for improvement and ensure ongoing responsiveness to the needs of the university community.

By implementing these recommendations, the university can create a more inclusive and supportive environment for individuals with diverse identities, ensuring that policies and practices are respectful, adaptable, and aligned with principles of equality and human rights. This approach not only benefits the individuals directly affected but also contributes to a more equitable and welcoming campus culture for all members of the university community.

2. STAFF RETENTION, REMUNERATION, ACADEMIC PROCESSES, AND GOVERNANCE

As a recommendation based on the issues highlighted in the text, it is essential for the university to prioritize the development and implementation of comprehensive policies and procedures that address various aspects of staff retention, remuneration, academic processes, and governance. Here are specific recommendations based on the discussed issues:

1. Develop a Comprehensive Remuneration Policy:

- The university should draft and implement a robust Remuneration Policy that covers all categories of employees, including Academic and PASS staff.
- This policy should outline clear guidelines for fair and equitable remuneration, considering factors like job scarcity, critical roles, and individual performance.
- Ensure that the Remuneration Policy is easily accessible, transparent, and updated regularly to reflect current practices and legal requirements.

2. Clarify Academic Processes and Policies:

- Establish clear and standardized procedures for handling exceptional circumstances related to academic matters, such as

deferred exams due to personal reasons.

- Provide guidance on how such requests should be evaluated, ensuring that decisions are made on a case-by-case basis with sensitivity to individual circumstances.

3. Enhance Governance and Decision-Making Transparency:

- Strengthen governance processes to ensure adherence to correct procedures, particularly regarding appointments and decision-making.
- Implement measures to prevent leaks of confidential information, especially pertaining to sensitive matters like candidate selections or governance decisions.

4. Ensure Policy Accessibility and Clarity:

- Make all policies, guidelines, and procedures easily accessible to staff members through the university's official channels, such as the intranet or HR portal.
- Ensure that policies are written in a clear, concise manner that is easy for diverse employees to understand, regardless of their role or background.

5. Encourage Stakeholder Engagement and Feedback:

- Foster a culture of open communication and engagement with stakeholders, including staff members, students, and governance bodies.
- Solicit feedback regularly to identify areas for improvement and address concerns raised by stakeholders effectively.

By implementing these recommendations, the university can enhance transparency, fairness, and efficiency in its operations, thereby fostering a positive and supportive environment for staff members and students alike. Clear policies and procedures contribute to organizational clarity, trust, and accountability, ultimately leading to improved employee satisfaction and academic outcomes within the institution.

2023

3. GRIEVANCES AND BULLYING COMPLAINTS AT UCT

To address the challenges highlighted in the narrative concerning grievances and bullying complaints at UCT, several key recommendations can be made to enhance the effectiveness, fairness, and timeliness of the university's response mechanisms:

1. Review and Streamline Grievance Procedures:

- Conduct a comprehensive review of existing grievance procedures to identify bottlenecks and areas for improvement.
- Streamline processes to ensure timely and transparent handling of complaints, with clear timelines for acknowledgment, investigation, and resolution.

2. Enhance Communication and Transparency:

- Implement robust communication protocols to keep complainants informed at every stage of the process.
- Ensure transparency in decision-making and provide regular updates on the status of investigations and actions taken.

3. Prioritize Emotional Well-being and Support:

- Establish support mechanisms for individuals involved in grievances or bullying complaints,

including access to counseling services and designated points of contact for emotional support.

- Consider temporary workplace accommodations to minimize exposure to alleged perpetrators during investigations.

4. Training and Awareness Programs:

- Provide training to staff members, including line managers and supervisors, on recognizing and addressing bullying behavior.
- Raise awareness among the university community about the importance of respectful workplace interactions and the avenues available for reporting grievances.

5. Review Staffing and Resources:

- Assess the adequacy of staffing and resources allocated to handling grievances and bullying complaints.
- Consider additional resources, such as dedicated personnel or specialized training for investigators, to expedite the resolution process.

6. Incorporate Restorative Practices:

- Explore restorative justice approaches to resolving workplace conflicts, focusing on

repairing harm and rebuilding relationships.

- Encourage dialogue and reconciliation where appropriate, fostering a culture of mutual understanding and accountability.

7. Continuous Improvement and Feedback Mechanisms:

- Establish feedback mechanisms to gather input from complainants and stakeholders on their experiences with the grievance process.
- Use feedback to drive continuous improvement efforts and adapt policies and procedures based on lessons learned.

By implementing these recommendations, UCT can foster a more supportive and respectful workplace environment, where individuals feel empowered to raise concerns without fear of reprisal and have confidence in the fairness and effectiveness of the university's response to grievances and bullying complaints. These actions demonstrate a commitment to upholding institutional values of equity, inclusion, and justice, ultimately enhancing the overall well-being and cohesion of the university community.

4. MAINTAINING THE INTEGRITY OF RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESSES

Addressing the challenge of navigating the delicate balance between addressing legitimate grievances and ensuring procedural integrity at UCT requires a nuanced approach that upholds transparency, fairness, and access to information. The following recommendations can guide the institution in fostering an environment where justice prevails while maintaining the integrity of recruitment and selection processes:

1. Enhance Transparency and Communication:

- Implement clear and accessible communication channels to inform candidates about the recruitment and selection process, including the criteria used for decision-making and the avenues available for feedback.
- Provide timely and detailed feedback to unsuccessful candidates, outlining the reasons for their outcomes and addressing any concerns they may have regarding the process.

2. Review Confidentiality Measures:

- Conduct a comprehensive review of confidentiality measures in recruitment and selection processes to balance transparency with the need to protect sensitive information.
- Ensure that confidentiality clauses are applied judiciously, considering the principles of fairness and accountability in decision-making.

3. Clarify Access to Information:

- Establish guidelines for accessing recruitment documents and reports, outlining the circumstances under which candidates or stakeholders may request access to relevant information.
- Educate stakeholders, including HR personnel and committee members, on the requirements of relevant legislation (such as POPIA) and the rights of individuals to access information related to recruitment processes.

4. Adopt Best Practices in Recruitment Policy:

- Continuously update and refine recruitment policies to align with best practices and legal requirements, emphasizing fairness, equity, and transparency.
- Ensure that recruitment policies are readily available and accessible to all stakeholders, promoting a culture of accountability and procedural integrity.

5. Provide Training and Support:

- Offer training sessions and workshops for HR professionals, recruitment committees, and other stakeholders on ethical recruitment practices, confidentiality protocols, and compliance with relevant legislation.
- Establish support mechanisms, such as

designated ombuds offices or grievance procedures, to address concerns related to recruitment processes and ensure that candidates' rights are upheld.

6. Engage in Continuous Improvement:

- Foster a culture of continuous improvement by soliciting feedback from candidates, staff, and external experts to identify areas for enhancement in recruitment and selection processes.
- Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of recruitment policies and procedures, incorporating lessons learned and emerging best practices to strengthen institutional integrity and accountability.

By implementing these recommendations, UCT can navigate the complexities of recruitment and selection processes while upholding principles of transparency, fairness, and accountability. This approach will contribute to fostering an inclusive and equitable environment where candidates' rights are respected, grievances are addressed effectively, and procedural integrity is upheld throughout the institution.

2023

5. ANTI-BULLYING POLICIES

Addressing workplace bullying and fostering a respectful, inclusive environment within UCT requires a comprehensive approach that prioritizes prevention, intervention, and institutional accountability. The following recommendations aim to mitigate workplace bullying and promote a culture of respect and professionalism:

1. Develop and Implement Anti-Bullying Policies:

- Establish clear and comprehensive anti-bullying policies that define workplace bullying, outline prohibited behaviors, and specify reporting procedures.
- Ensure that these policies are widely communicated and accessible to all staff and students, emphasizing a zero-tolerance approach to workplace bullying.

2. Provide Training and Awareness Programs:

- Offer training sessions and workshops on recognizing and addressing workplace bullying for both staff and students.
- Incorporate modules on conflict resolution, effective communication, and building respectful workplace relationships into orientation programs and professional development initiatives.

3. Strengthen Reporting and Support Mechanisms:

- Enhance reporting mechanisms for workplace bullying incidents, ensuring confidentiality, accessibility, and timely follow-up on complaints.
- Designate trained personnel, such as HR professionals or ombuds officers, to support individuals who experience or witness workplace bullying and guide them through the reporting process.

4. Promote Accountability and Intervention:

- Implement procedures for investigating and addressing workplace bullying complaints promptly and impartially.
- Hold perpetrators of bullying behaviors accountable through appropriate disciplinary measures, while also providing support and remedial actions for affected individuals.

5. Cultivate a Positive Organizational Culture:

- Foster a culture of mutual respect, empathy, and professionalism through leadership commitment, role modeling, and transparent communication.
- Encourage collaborative teamwork, open dialogue, and participatory decision-making

to mitigate hierarchical tensions and power imbalances.

6. Conduct Regular Climate Assessments:

- Conduct regular climate surveys or assessments to gauge perceptions of workplace culture, identify potential areas of concern related to bullying, and monitor progress over time.
- Use survey data to inform targeted interventions and continuous improvement efforts aimed at cultivating a positive and supportive organizational climate.

7. Provide Resources and Support Services:

- Offer comprehensive resources and support services, such as counseling, mediation, and conflict resolution assistance, to individuals impacted by workplace bullying.
- Collaborate with external partners, such as mental health professionals or community organizations, to provide specialized support for victims of workplace bullying.





8. Encourage Collective Responsibility and Engagement:

- Encourage collective responsibility for promoting a respectful workplace culture by involving staff, students, and stakeholders in awareness campaigns, policy reviews, and initiatives aimed at preventing workplace bullying.
- Empower individuals to speak up against bullying behaviors and actively contribute to creating a positive and inclusive environment.

By implementing these recommendations, UCT can take proactive steps to address workplace bullying, promote psychological safety, and foster a supportive organizational culture. Building a respectful and inclusive environment requires a sustained commitment to systemic change, continuous improvement, and collaborative efforts across the university community. Together, these efforts can contribute to enhancing well-being, promoting professionalism, and upholding the values of equity and respect within UCT.

6. POST-BULLYING COMPLAINTS OR GRIEVANCE

Addressing the challenges faced by individuals post-bullying complaints or grievances and

enhancing succession planning initiatives are critical components of fostering a healthy and thriving workplace environment at UCT. The following recommendations aim to address these areas and promote continuous improvement in supporting staff development and organizational stability:

Post-Complaint Support and Relationship Navigation:

1. Comprehensive Support Services:

- Extend comprehensive internal support services beyond the conclusion of the complaint process to assist individuals in navigating relationships and rebuilding trust in the workplace.
- Offer access to counseling, mediation, conflict resolution, and professional development resources to promote emotional well-being and facilitate healthy interactions post-complaint resolution.

2. Relationship Restoration Programs:

- Develop targeted programs or workshops focused on relationship restoration and conflict resolution skills for individuals involved in bullying complaints or grievances.
- Facilitate open dialogue sessions and team-building activities to foster understanding, collaboration, and trust among colleagues post-resolution.

3. Ongoing Communication and Feedback:

- Implement regular feedback mechanisms to gauge the effectiveness of post-complaint support services and identify



areas for improvement.

- Encourage ongoing communication between HR, managers, and employees to address concerns, monitor progress, and promote a supportive work environment.

And enhanced succession planning initiatives will contribute to a resilient and inclusive organizational environment that values continuous learning, collaboration, and employee development.

LOOKING AHEAD TO

2024

In the face of the unprecedented challenges brought about by the pandemic, the Office of the University Ombud has demonstrated remarkable resilience and adaptability. We have not only weathered the storm but have emerged stronger and more prepared to serve the needs of the UCT community.

Our collaborative efforts with stakeholders across campus

have been instrumental in ensuring that key policy updates are not only implemented but also align seamlessly with the respective policies and procedures within the university. By fostering open communication and cooperation, we have been able to address potential conflicts and discrepancies, thereby promoting transparency and accountability in our administrative processes.

Continued... LOOKING AHEAD TO 2024

In addition to our policy alignment endeavors, we have taken proactive steps to enhance procedural fairness and decision-making within the university. Through our collaboration with the university, we have drafted comprehensive guidelines that emphasize relational fairness during grievance and bullying investigations. These guidelines not only uphold the principles of justice and equity but also prioritize the well-being and dignity of all individuals involved.

Furthermore, recognizing the importance of effective communication and outreach, we have developed a robust strategy to reintroduce the Office to all stakeholders. By leveraging various communication channels and platforms, we aim to foster greater awareness and engagement within the UCT community, ensuring that our services and resources are readily accessible to those who need them most.

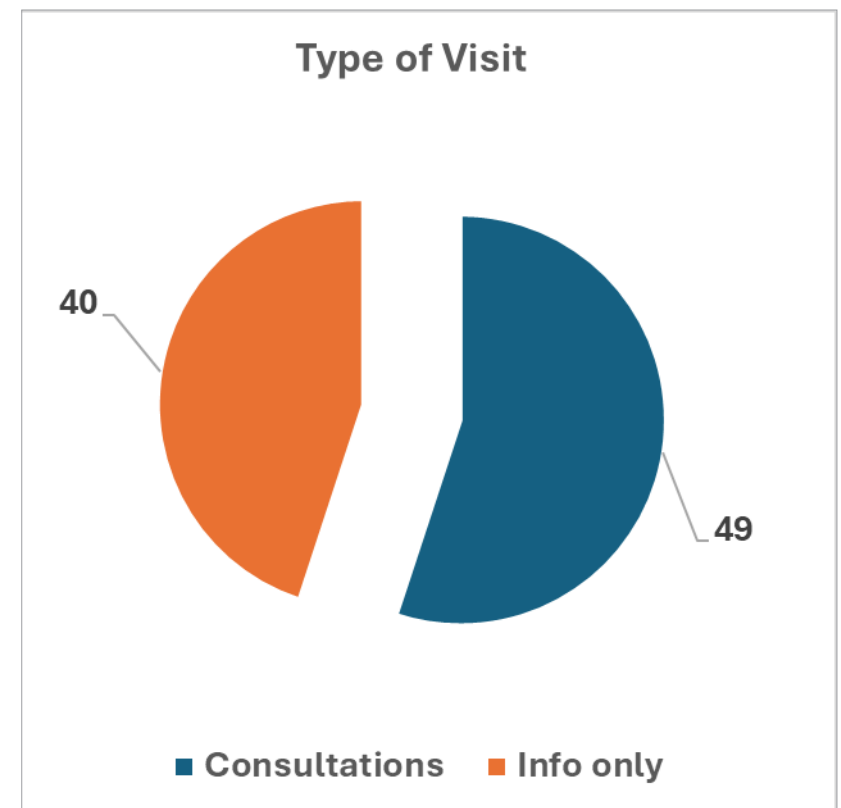
Moreover, our commitment to identifying and addressing systemic issues affecting individual faculties and departments remains unwavering. Through careful analysis and collaboration, we strive to identify root causes and implement sustainable solutions that promote a culture of inclusivity and support across the university.

As we look ahead to 2024 and beyond, we are firmly resolved to build upon our past achievements and continue to evolve in response to the ever-changing needs of the UCT community. By remaining flexible, adaptable, and proactive, we are confident that

we can overcome any challenges that may arise and continue to serve as a trusted resource and advocate for students, staff, and faculty alike. Together, let us embrace the opportunities ahead and work towards a brighter, more inclusive future for all members of the UCT community.

This insight serves as a sneak peek into what Quarter 1 of 2024 has already revealed – it's going to be a busy year! The graph illustrates the visitor statistics for the first quarter of 2024, indicating a total of 89 visitors during this period. Among them, 49 sought consultations, while 40 contacted us for information purposes, guidance, or advice. Quarter 1 of 2024 also showed a significant majority, accounting for 88% of visitors, raised concerns related to services and administration. These encompassed a range of issues, including the provision of information on various Ombudsing methods, detailed explanations of the office's function, discussions leading to potential resolutions within the University framework, and dissemination of information obtained from internal University sources with the visitor's consent. Predominantly, these concerns centred on student administrative matters such as admissions,

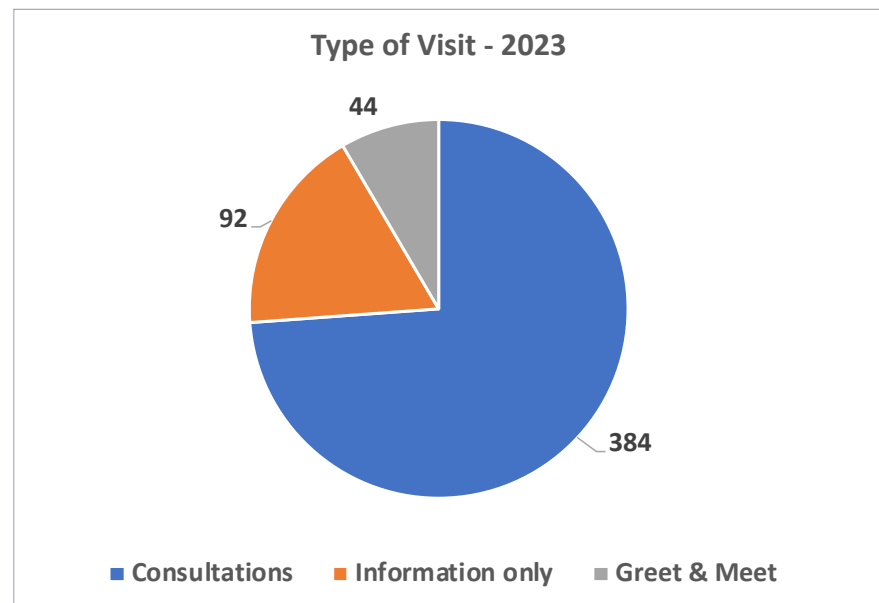
registration, readmissions, fees, and funding, indicative of the challenges typically faced at the onset of the academic year. Additionally, residence and supervision issues were recurrent themes brought to our attention, underscoring the relevance of our services during this period.



ANNEXURE A

1 JANUARY 2023 – 31 DECEMBER 2023

The graphs and tables below record and describe the visits to our office during the calendrical year of 2023. The office was contacted by 476 visitors, where these consisted of 92 visitors seeking information and 384 having received extended assistance labelled below as those seeking consultation. Our new Ombud, Ms Nashira Abrahams, joined our office on the 2nd May 2023 and conducted 44 visits during which she met different executive staff. In November, the Ombud was consulted by 224 visitors in the wake of the Mpati report to discuss issues sparked by the report.

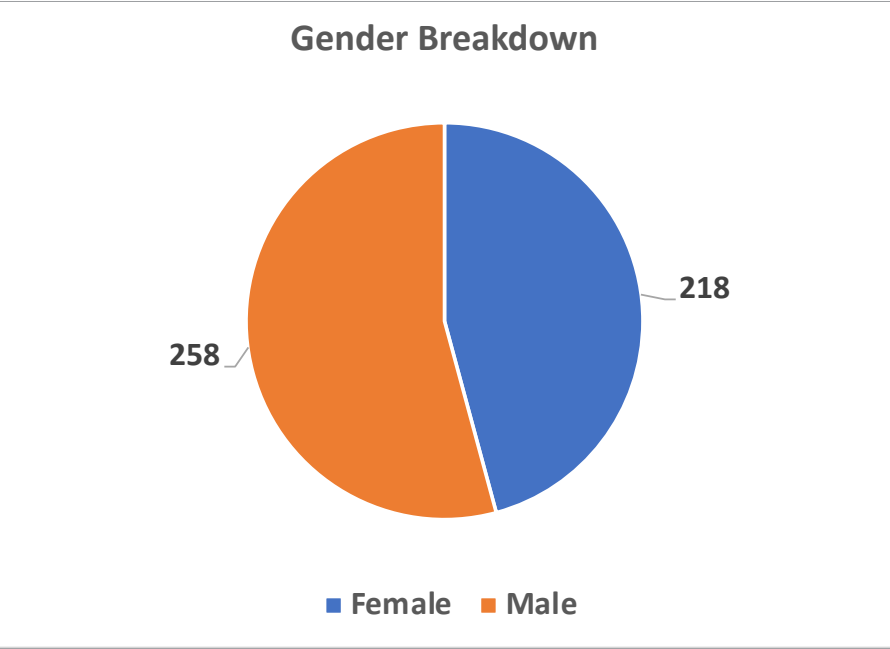


The following graphs and tables will show various breakdowns of the visitors who sought either information or consultations, thus the 44 "Greet & Meet" will be excluded since in these circumstances the office contacted the visitor and the meeting was not based on the visitor bringing an issue to the office, resulting in 476 visitors as the total.

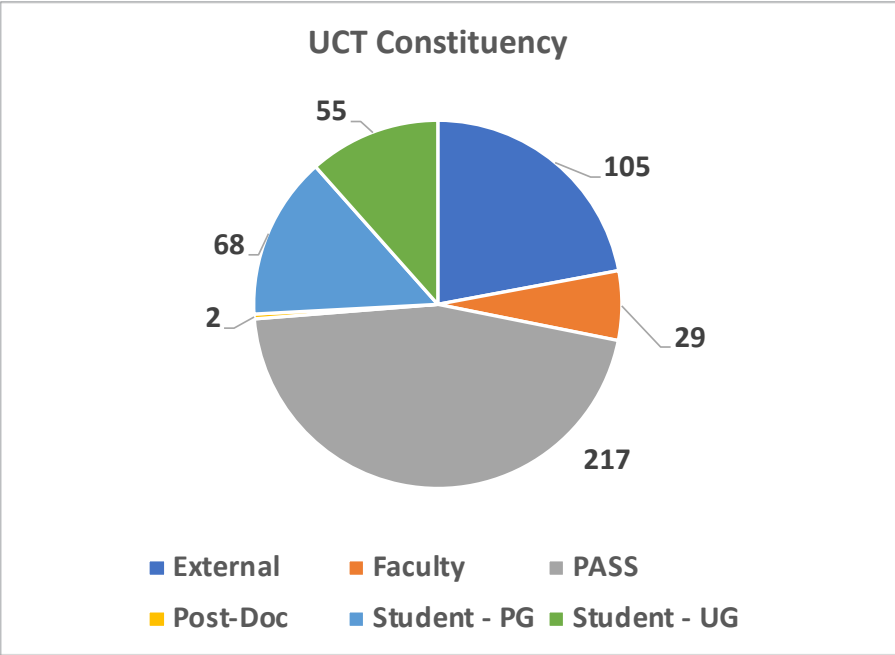


Continued... ANNEXURE A. 1 JANUARY 2023 – 31 DECEMBER 2023

The next graph shows the gender breakdown of these 476 visitors:



The below pie chart detailing the visitors according to sections of the university community is shown below in the format of a table:



External	105
Faculty	29
PASS	217
Post-Doc	2
Student - PG	68
Student - UG	55
	476



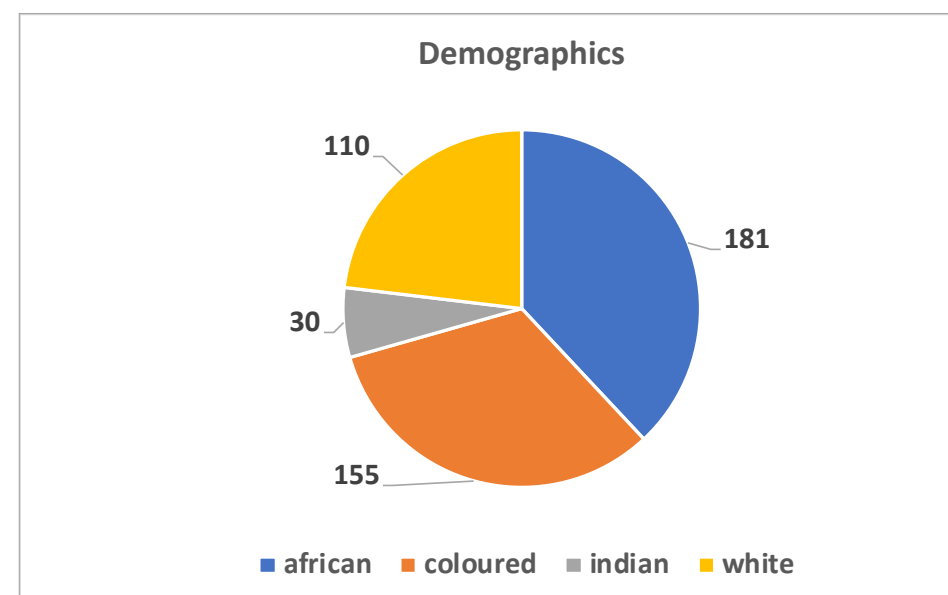
Below is a further breakdown of the type of external visitor to the office:

TYPE OF EXTERNAL VISITOR:

alumnus	4
attendee at Summer School	1
consultant	1
ex-staff	1
external institution	1
Ex-Vendor and vendor	2
friend or relative of student	26
GetSmarter student	4
job applicant	2
Mpati report	3
tender issues	1
unknown	59
	105

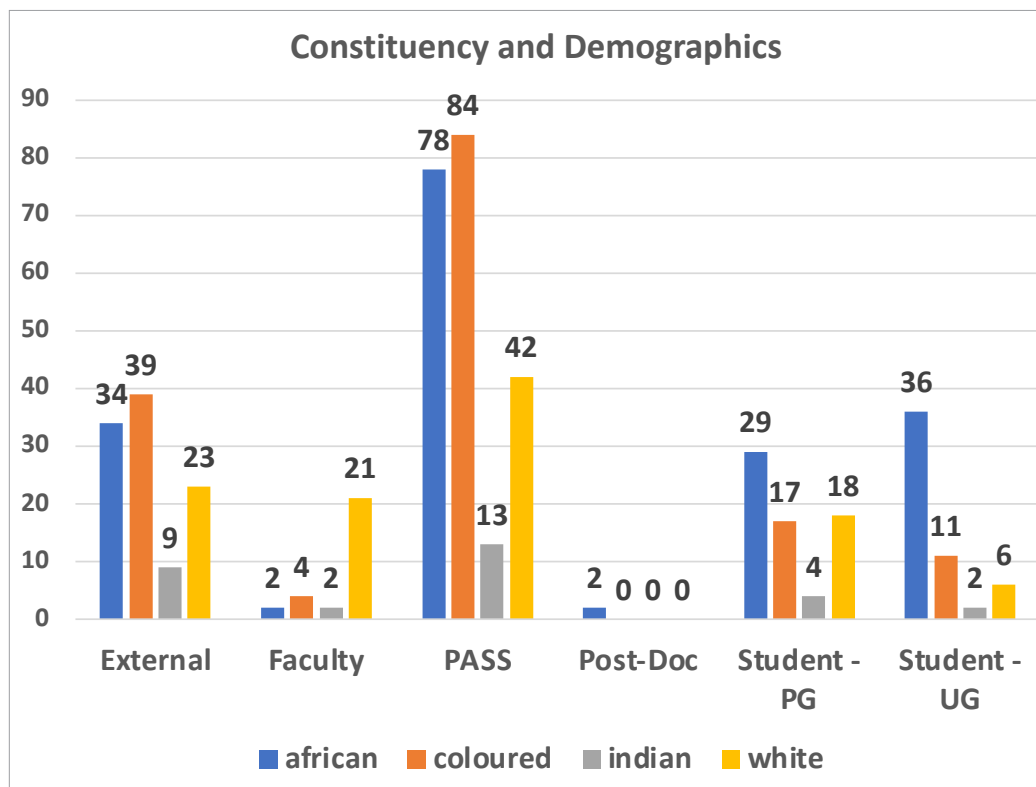
From a total of 105 external visitors, 59 (56 %) represent those who are not a part of the university community; they are not related to students or staff but are chiefly constituted by those seeking non-academic Ombudsing advice, or those asking general questions pertaining to the university, or those enquiring further into the nature and role of the Ombud's Office. Although the first graph shows 92 visitors seeking information only, some of these contacts resulted in extended consultations, although even a first contact consisting of

providing information can take the format of a protracted conversation. Typically, at the beginning of the academic calendar, we have an increase of parents of students and applicants contacting the office, in many cases concerning issues of application, registration, fees, funding, and residence as well as those appealing readmission outcomes. In 2023 we were contacted by a total of 26 parents/relatives/friends of students and applicants. The release of the Mpati report led to a total of 224 visitors contacting the Ombud specifically around issues emanating from the report, three of these were external visitors.



The above pie chart shows the demographic breakdown of the visitors during 2023, followed by a graph below which combines the UCT constituency with the demographic breakdown.

Continued... ANNEXURE A. 1 JANUARY 2023 – 31 DECEMBER 2023



The above graph showing further detail of the various visitors is based on the following table:

	african	coloured	indian	white
External	34	39	9	23
Faculty	2	4	2	21
PASS	78	84	13	42
Post-Doc	2	0	0	0
Student - PG	29	17	4	18
Student - UG	36	11	2	6

The next table offers a different form of breakdowns of the types of issues brought to the office:

	Issue type re IOA ¹	No. of issues
1	Compensation, benefits, honours, recognition	5
2	Evaluative relationships	9
3	Peer and colleague relationships	2
4	Career progression and development	2
5	Legal, regulatory, financial, and compliance	1
6	Safety, health and physical environment	2
7	Services and admin	196
8	Organisational, strategic, mission related	0
9	Values, ethics, standards	259
		476

The previous table shows that 41 % of visitors brought issues pertaining to services and administration, which includes the provision of information relating to other forms of Ombudsing, information regarding the nature and working process of the office, discussions of issues resulting in the visitor perceiving and reviewing options towards handling the issue within the university structure, and offering information gleaned with the help of university staff, having first received permission from the visitor to share both the issue and their identity. The 54 % of visitors listed in the 9th category included the 244 visitors contacting the Ombud in the wake of the release of the Mpati report.

¹ Categories as per the International Ombudsman Association, ombusassociation.org.

The table below is a further detailed breakdown of the various issues brought to our office.

Breakdown of issues:

access control	1
application and registration	8
dissertation and supervision	8
diversity	1
DPR appeal	1
fees and funding/financial aid	24
GetSmarter	4
graduation and certification	5
harassment	27
health and safety	1
highly confidential and sensitive	2
HR	25
information only	86
job application issues	3
media	1
Mpati report	224
NBT issue	2
parking issues	1
plagiarism	1
residence issues	9
student administration incl curriculum, deferred exam	38
teamwork issues	1
tender issues	2
vendor issues	1
	476

Apart from 47 % of visitors contacting the Ombud around the Mpati report, 86 visitors sought information only.

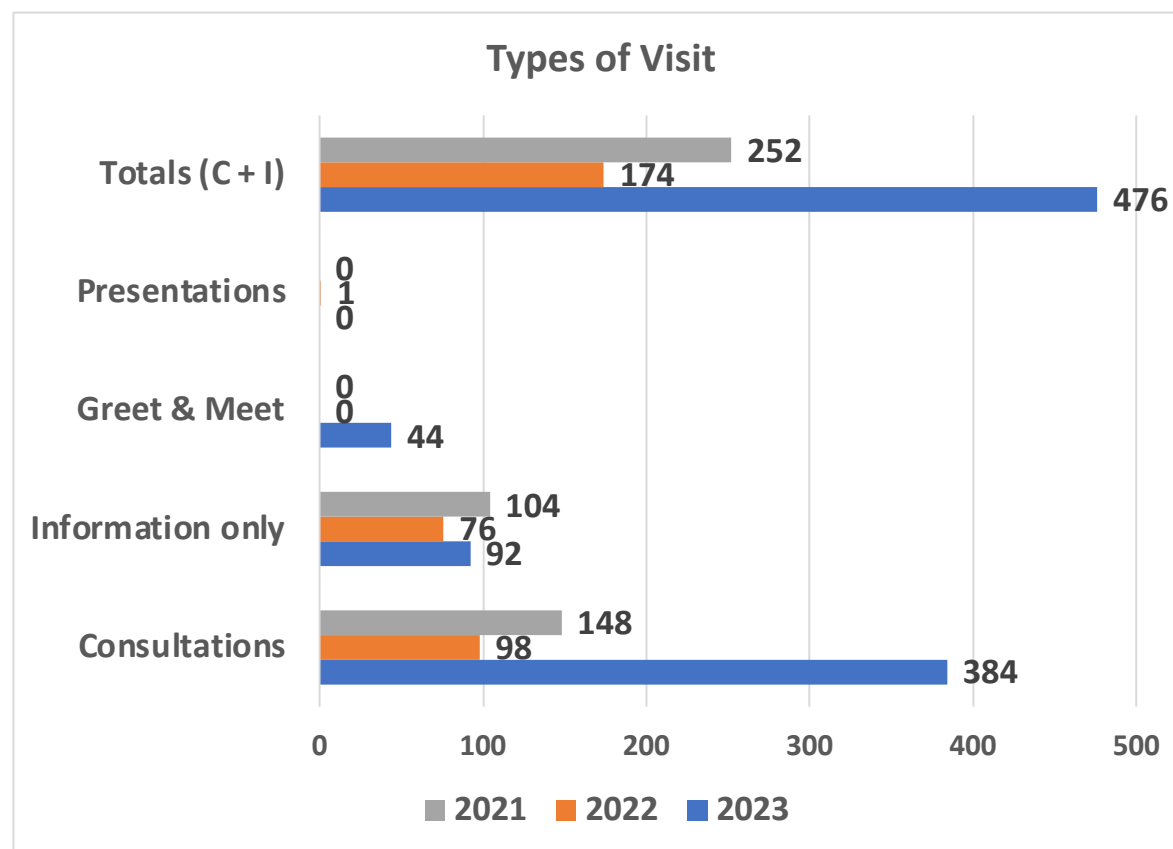


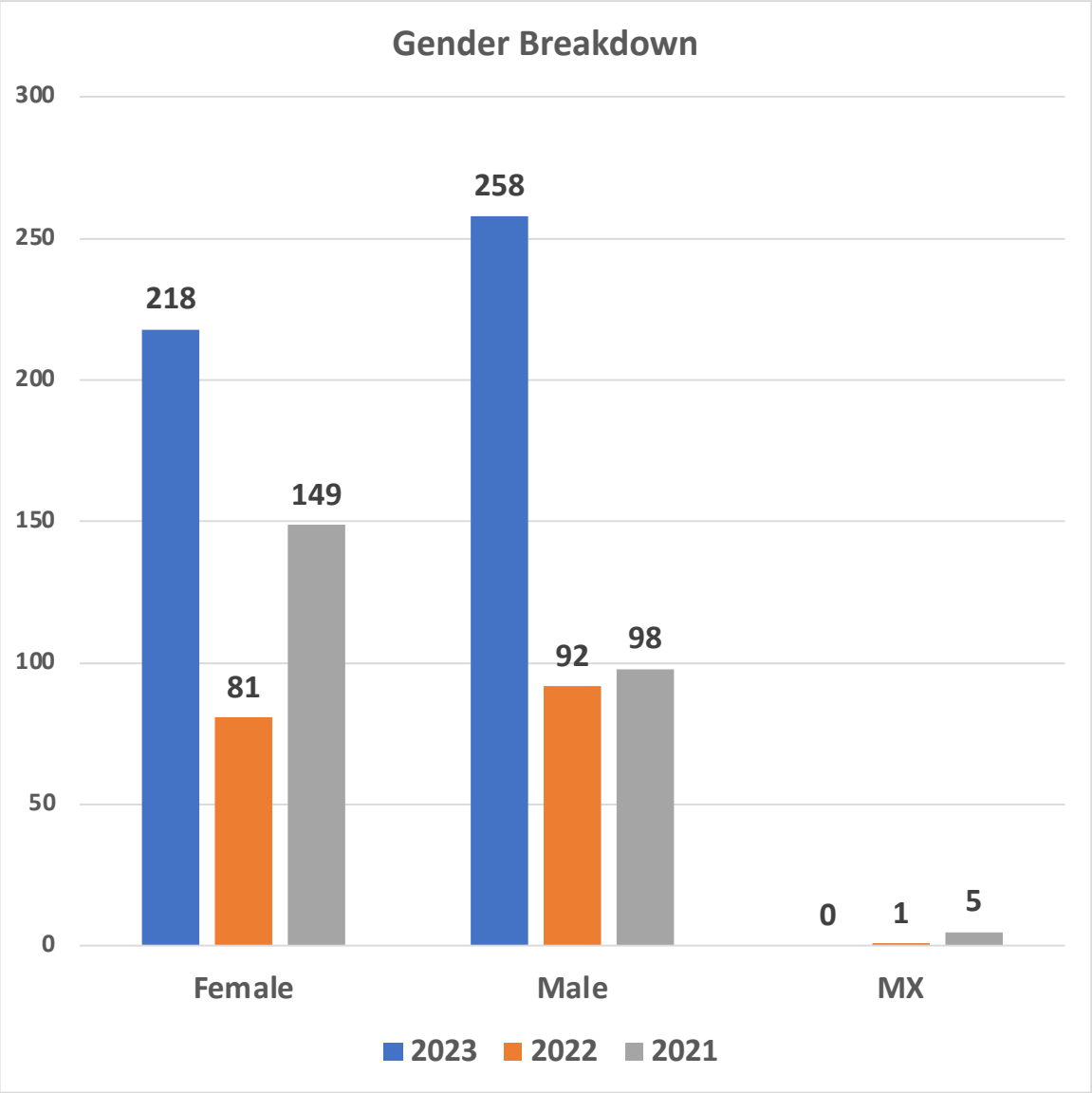
COMPARISON BETWEEN THE DATA FOR 2023, FOR 2022, AND FOR 2021: RECENT TRENDS

The total number of visitors contacting our office for the purposes of information and further in-depth consultations for 2023 was 476, which excludes the 44 “Greet & Meet” occasions but included the 244 visitors bringing issues around the release of the Mpati report. If the Mpati report visitors were excluded, then the total number of visitors for 2023 would be 232 which is more in line with the totals of the two previous years.

The information in the graph to the left is also shown in the table below:

	2023	2022	2021
Consultations	384	98	148
Information only	92	76	104
Greet & Meet	44	0	0
Presentations	0	1	0
Totals (C + I)	476	174	252
C + I + P	476	175	252





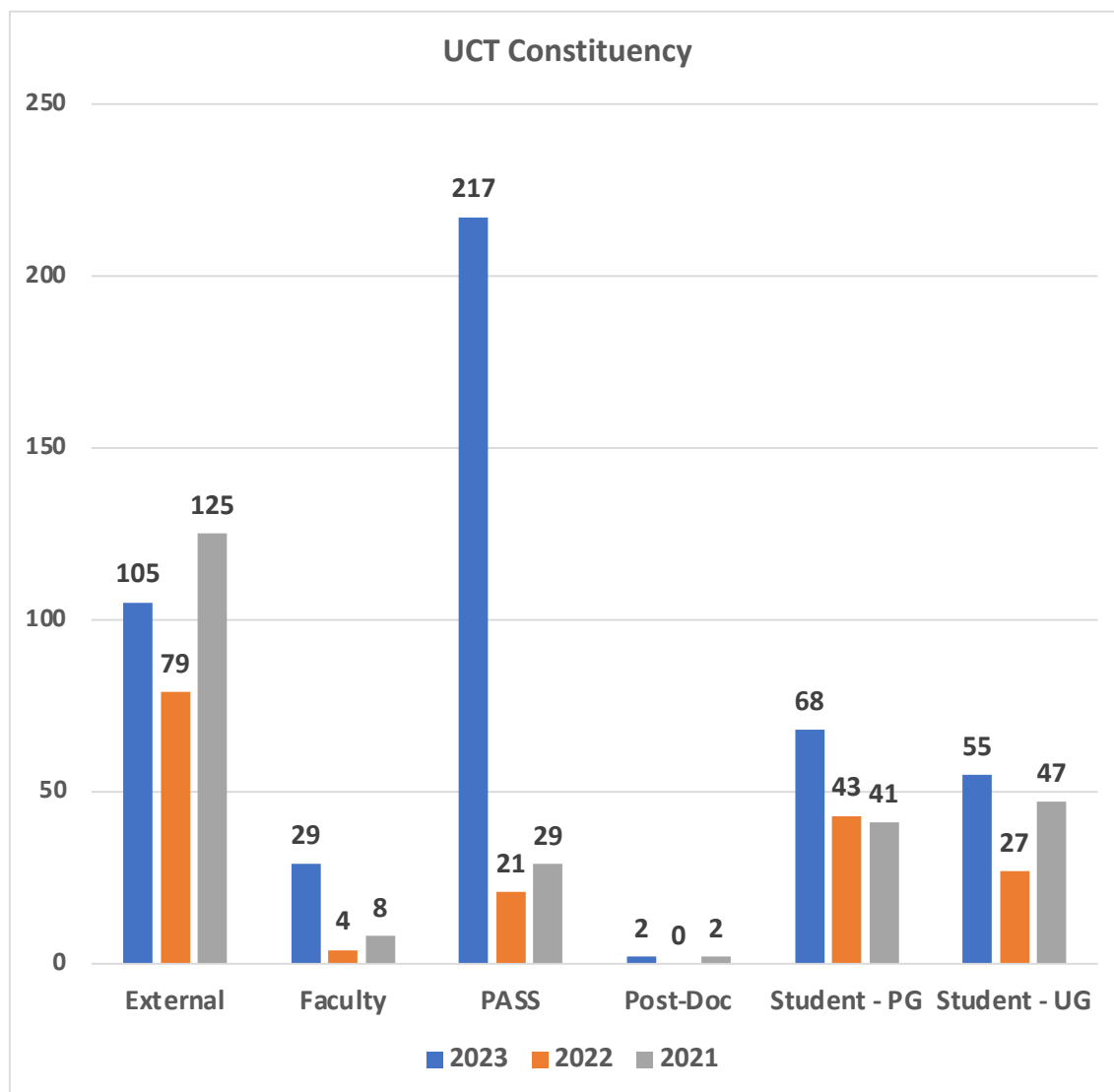
The table below provides the comparative figures for the gender breakdown. The totals reflect sums of visitors for the purposes of information and consultation, thus excluding presentations.

Female	218	81	149
Male	258	92	98
MX	0	1	5
Totals	476	174	252

Below is a table followed by a graph, both showing the number of visitors according to the constituent parts of the university community per year.

	2023	2022	2021
External	105	79	125
Faculty	29	4	8
PASS	217	21	29
Post-Doc	2	0	2
Student - PG	68	43	41
Student - UG	55	27	47
	476	174	252

Continued... COMPARISON BETWEEN THE DATA

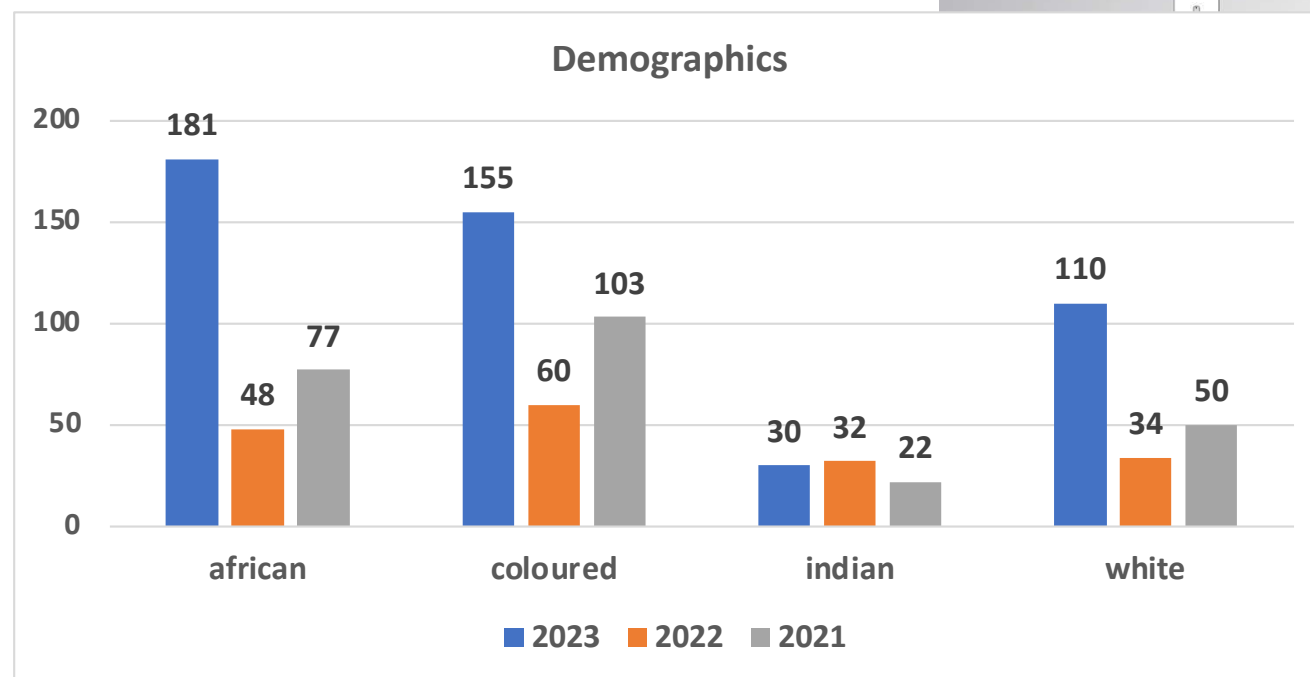


The table below breaks down the types of external visitors over the last three years.

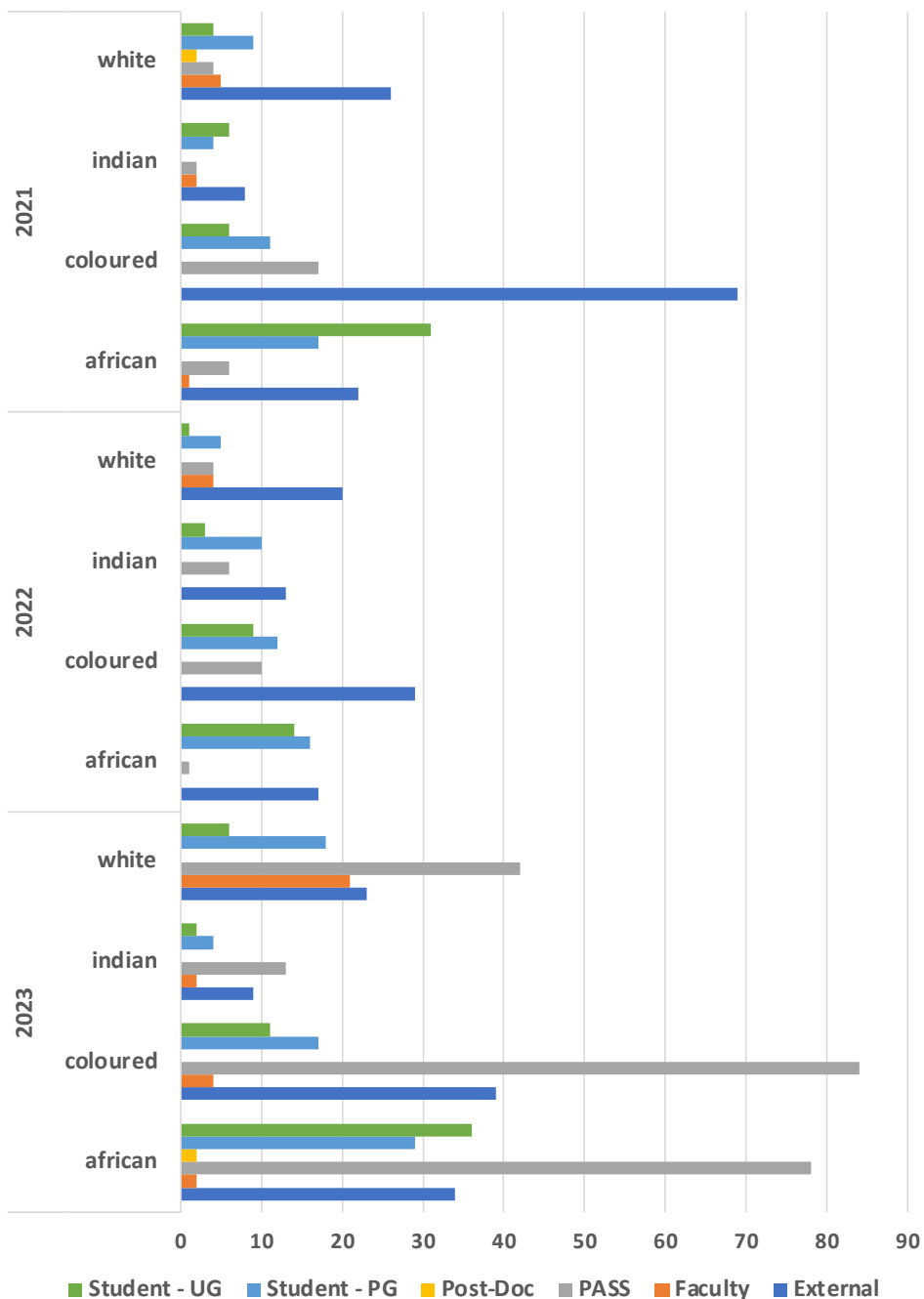
Type of External Visitor:	2023	2022	2021
Alumni	4	2	1
Applicant for staff position	2	1	0
Attendee at Summer School	1	0	0
Complainant against a UCT student or staff	0	0	1
Consultant	1	0	0
Ex-staff	1	0	1
External institutions of education	1	3	0
Ex-Vendor or vendor	2	2	0
Friend or relative of student	26	24	20
GetSmarter staff or student	4	0	0
Mpati report	3	0	0
Noting harassment	0	0	6
Partner/relative of UCT staff	0	0	1
Seeker re study information and university	0	0	10
Tender issues	1	0	0
Unrelated to UCT seeking information	59	47	84
	105	79	124

The next table and graph show the comparison of the demographics of our visitors:

	2023	2022	2021
african	181	48	77
coloured	155	60	103
indian	30	32	22
white	110	34	50
	476	174	252



Constituency and Demographics



Continued... COMPARISON BETWEEN THE DATA

The information shown in the above graph is also portrayed in the table below:

	2023				2022				2021			
	AFRICAN	COLOURED	INDIAN	WHITE	AFRICAN	COLOURED	INDIAN	WHITE	AFRICAN	COLOURED	INDIAN	WHITE
External	34	39	9	23	17	29	13	20	22	69	8	26
Faculty	2	4	2	21	0	0	0	4	1	0	2	5
PASS	78	84	13	42	1	10	6	4	6	17	2	4
Post-Doc	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Student - PG	29	17	4	18	16	12	10	5	17	11	4	9
Student - UG	36	11	2	6	14	9	3	1	31	6	6	4

Breakdown of issues:	2023	2022	2021
access control	1	1	0
administration	0	0	3
application and registration	8	18	13
compensation and recognition	0	1	0
Covid - 19 regulations	0	0	1
disability	0	0	2
dissertation and supervision	8	0	8
diversity	1	0	0
DPR appeal	1	0	0
evaluative relationships	0	4	12
external educational institutions	0	1	0
fees and funding/financial aid	24	21	32
food services/vendors	0	3	0
GetSmarter	4	0	0
grading and DP	0	0	3
graduation and certification	5	1	3
harassment	27	10	16
health and safety	1	0	1
highly confidential and sensitive	2	0	0
HR	25	9	9
information only	86	67	106
job application issues	3	0	0
legal	0	0	2
LOA (leave of absence)	0	2	1
media	1	0	0
Mpati report	224	0	0
NBT issue	2	0	2
parking issues	1	0	0
pension and retirement	0	0	1
personal loan	0	1	0
plagiarism	1	0	0
remuneration	0	1	1
residence issues	9	3	6
security services	0	0	1
student administration incl curriculum, deferred exam	38	22	22
student tribunal	0	3	1
teamwork issues	1	0	0
tender issues	2	0	0
vendor issues	1	0	0
	476	174	252

To the left, is a comparative table of a further breakdown of issues brought to our office during 2023, 2022, and 2021.

Although it is informative to have access to the above data, it is impossible to evaluate the Ombud's office by the number of visitors it services because the numbers do not reflect a success rate of the office. While a lack of visitors might conceivably suggest a negative impression of the office, ongoing numbers, whether they are higher or lower than before, do not in themselves show a decrease or an increase in success.



ANNEXURE B - FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 2023

1 JANUARY 2023 –
31 DECEMBER 2023

The operating budget approved for 2023 was R 172 753, in addition there was a small carry forward budget for open purchase order of R866. The total expenses for the year was R356 370, the shortfall against the budget was funded by VC Discretionary funding of R182 751. Table to the right is a detailed breakdown of expenses for the operating fund 232428 (VCO1079).

DETAILS	FULL YEAR ACTUALS 2023	FULL YEAR BUDGET	VARIANCE FY	% Var
TOTAL INCOME	0	0	0	0,0%
ADMIN & OPERATING COSTS	167 679	130 314	-37 365	28,7%
Conference Registration	44 191	7 000	-37 191	531,3%
Admission & Entry Fees	837	0	-837	0,0%
Plants & Shrubs	3 385	3 200	-185	5,8%
Subscriptions & Affiliations	0	0	0	0,0%
Consulting & Management Fees	20 240	64 000	43 760	-68,4%
Bank Charges	1 033	0	-1 033	0,0%
Catering & Functions	11 192	6 034	-5 158	85,5%
Computer Consumables	8 478	1 500	-6 978	465,2%
Computer Equipment & Hardware	29 308	0	-29 308	0,0%
Computer Software & Services	7 488	0	-7 488	0,0%
Photocopying & Printing	12 916	16 660	3 744	-22,5%
Stationery	3 007	2 000	-1 007	50,4%
Telephone & Fax	25 604	29 920	4 316	-14,4%
TRANSPORT, TRAVEL & SUBSISTENCE	97 314	40 000	-57 314	143,3%
Travel Airfare	37 885	24 000	-13 885	57,9%
Travel Accommodation	30 600	10 600	-20 000	188,7%
Travel S&T	17 679	3 944	-13 735	348,3%
Travel Ancillary	11 150	1 456	-9 694	665,8%
LIBRARY ACQUISITIONS	12 417	2 439	-9 978	409,1%
INFRASTRUCTURE & SPACE	3 004	0	-3 004	0,0%
MINOR ASSETS & CAPITAL PROJECTS	32 216	0	-32 216	0,0%
COMPUTER ASSETS (NOT IN CO)	43 740	0	-43 740	0,0%
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	356 370	172 753	-183 617	106,3%
VC DISCRETIONARY FUNDING	-182 751	0	182 751	0,0%
Budget B/F 2023 Cfwd 2024 for open purchase orders		866	866	
FUND TOTAL	173 619	173 619	-0	0,0%



OMBUDS OFFICE

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN



INDEPENDENT INFORMAL IMPARTIAL CONFIDENTIAL