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UNIVERSITY

Office of the University Ombuds

## *How to Write a Letter*

Writing a letter to appeal a decision (such as grades or fee charges) or to complain about the service at an office on campus is not an overly difficult task. However, many students find themselves sitting wordlessly in front of a computer with no idea of what to say or how they should say it.

### *Don't Keep Them in the Dark!*

When you begin your letter, let the person on the other end immediately know why you are writing. For example, "I am writing to appeal a grade I received." Also, let them know all the relevant information. If you are appealing a grade, you should include the following information:

- class name
- course number
- time and quarter
- your name and social security or campus ID number

If you are writing to complain about an administrative or other decision or problem, make sure you include all relevant dates, times and names.

### *Just the Facts, Ma'am!*

Write a concise letter. Try to keep its length to one typed page, or two pages at the most. A lengthy letter has a greater chance of losing its reader's attention. Now that you have decided that your life story can't fit on two pages, what information should you include? Provide facts that relate directly to the issue you are complaining about or appealing. Explain clearly and simply why you are appealing the grade or making the complaint. Keep in mind that you are attempting to persuade this faculty or staff member to your point of view. At the same time, you must remain truthful and as objective as you can be.

### *In Closing...*

Remember to thank the faculty or staff member for taking the time to review your letter. You might also want to include a date when you will be following up your letter with a phone call or e-mail.

*The Office of the University Ombuds can help with your letters concerning a University problem, complaint or appeal. We are located on the second floor of Crewson House, which is at the top of Court Street across from Scripps. Our phone number is 740-593-2627. You can also e-mail Elizabeth Graham, University Ombuds, at [grahame@ohio.edu](mailto:grahame@ohio.edu) or Katherine Ziff, Assistant Ombuds, at [ziffk@ohio.edu](mailto:ziffk@ohio.edu)*

(With thanks to the Office of the Ombudsman at University of Texas at Austin)