
Charles University Ombudsman in place since January

Charles University has created a new position of ombudsman. From 1 January 2023 this role is performed by **PhDr. Kateřina Šámalová, Ph.D.**, whom students and employees of CU can contact in writing about various issues regarding, for example, inappropriate treatment at the University.

This new position was introduced mainly for preventive reasons in order to help prevent undesirable situations and to allow anyone from the academic community to talk about possible emerging problems openly and in good time. In doing so, the ombudsman is obliged to maintain the confidentiality of all facts of which they have become aware in connection with the performance of their duties and which could lead to the identification of the authors of the complaint or other sensitive information. The intention is to allow everyone at the University to openly highlight possible problems without having to worry about any punishment or reprisals against them. The ombudsman's task will also be to formulate recommendations on the systemic impact of conditions relating, in particular, to equal treatment.

"The position of ombudsman is a vital one in a large institution such as Charles University. Although some of our faculties already have an ombudsman, in my opinion there should be one person to cover the whole university, who will always be willing to deal with interpersonal problems, which are as important for the proper functioning and unity of the institution as professional or study problems. Above all, this person should be conscientious, non-judgemental and able to listen. I believe that our new ombudsman, Dr. Šámalová, possesses these qualities and was an excellent choice for this job. Let us now grant her the traditional 100-day honeymoon in office to allow her to fully acquaint herself with her remit and get this necessary role in the university environment off to a good start," said **the Rector, Milena Králíčková**.



"I accept the position of ombudsman with humility, seriousness and commitment to students, academics and other persons who have a similar relationship with the University. I believe that taking into account their social needs and creating favourable conditions for the exercising of their rights is an essential condition for successful study or the fulfilling of professional obligations. In exercising the position of the ombudsman, I will draw on not only my expertise, which is based on the helping professions, but also my rich experience from working with vulnerable groups of people," added **Charles University Ombudsman Kateřina Šámalová**.

For Charles University, the creation of this new role is essential and gives a clear signal of the direction that it intends to take. In connection with this, in June 2023 Charles University will host the ENOHE's regular international conference of higher education ombudsmen. The higher education environment of the Czech Republic will thus have a unique opportunity to become familiar with the good practice of individual European and other countries and to create space for professional discussion on the topic.

The position of ombudsman of Charles University is filled by the Rector of the University on the basis of an open selection procedure and following a statement of opinion of the University's Academic Senate. A person is elected to this new position for a period of three years with the possibility of one re-election. The ombudsman's conclusions are of a recommendatory nature and are therefore not a substitute for the decisions of other institutions. The rights and obligations arising from this function are defined in Rector's Measure no. 28/2022 (in Czech only).

CONTACT

You can contact the new CU Ombudsman via e-mail at:

ombudsman@cuni.cz