

A Modest Outline for an “AI Policy” for an Ombuds Office— for Brainstorming

February 2026 by AI, with assistance from Mary Rowe

1. Purpose

This policy describes how the Ombuds Office may and may not use artificial intelligence (AI) tools. Its goals are to protect **confidentiality, independence, impartiality, and informality** ([the four pillars](#) of the International Ombuds Association Standards of Practice) while allowing limited, low-risk uses of AI.

2. Core Principles

- **No case consultation with AI.** AI will not be used to analyze, evaluate, or document individual cases.
- **No AI access to confidential information.** Information shared with the Ombuds Office will not be entered into external AI systems.
- **AI is a tool, not a decision-maker.** AI outputs never determine Ombuds actions or recommendations.

3. Permitted Uses of AI in Ombuds Work

AI tools may be used only for **generic, non-case-specific tasks**, for example:

1. **Public information and outreach**
 - Drafting or editing website text, brochures, or outreach materials that describe the Ombuds’ role, standards, and processes.
 - Drafting general educational content on conflict resolution, communication, or similar topics.
2. **Templates and standard language**
 - Creating or refining generic templates (e.g., intake scripts, opening statements, standard emails), without including real names, dates, or facts.
3. **General research and learning**
 - Summarizing publicly available laws, policies, or conflict-resolution literature.
 - Generating generic checklists or frameworks for training and professional development.
4. **Internal skills development**
 - Practicing fictional scenarios or role-plays that do not derive from identifiable cases.
 - Requesting general feedback on communication techniques using invented examples.

4. Prohibited Uses of AI in Ombuds Work

The Ombuds Office will **not** use AI tools for:

1. **Individual cases**
 - Entering or describing any real case, even in “anonymized” form, including indirect identifiers of a case (roles, units, dates, unique events).
 - Asking AI for options, strategies, or risk assessments in relation to a specific visitor, dispute, or party.
2. **Case records and notes**
 - Drafting, storing, or summarizing case notes, logs, or visitor information.
 - Transcribing or analyzing audio or text from actual conversations with visitors.
3. **Visitor data and surveys**
 - Collecting, storing, or analyzing identifiable visitor feedback or survey data with external AI tools.
 - Linking any AI output to individuals, groups, cases, or offices.
4. **Decision-making or profiling**
 - Using AI to predict behavior, outcomes, or credibility of individuals or groups.
 - Asking AI to suggest ombuds methods, sanctions, remedies, or formal process referrals.

5. Technical and Governance Requirements

When AI is used for the **permitted purposes** above, the following technical and governance requirements should be followed:

- **Controlled environment**
 - Preference is given to AI systems that are local, closed, or contractually governed by the organization’s confidentiality and data-protection rules.
 - Consumer AI tools may be used only for generic text that contains **no case-related information**.
- **Data minimization**
 - Inputs are limited to what is strictly necessary for the task (e.g., “draft a neutral outreach email,” not “rewrite this email about a harassment complaint”).
- **No automated storage of confidential data**
 - AI tools must not be integrated with any Ombuds case-management or note-keeping systems or with any data stored in any fashion.

6. Transparency and Review

- The Ombuds will be prepared to **explain, in general terms**, how AI is and is not used in the office.
- This policy will be **reviewed periodically** to reflect changes in technology, organizational policy, and professional standards.

Note: AI may display incomplete, inaccurate or offensive information.

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