

Managing conflict and effective dispute resolution in higher education

Certificate Programme

Elke Welp-Park, ENOHE Annual Conference
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- Developed in cooperation with ENOHE and co-funded by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Women, Science and Research
- Programme start October 2026
- 24 ECTS, 2 semesters, part-time
- Blended learning (predominantly online, 1 week on location in Krems, Austria (May 2027))

Aim and Target Group of the CP

- **Aim:** professionalization of conflict and complaint management at HEI and providing professional development for ombudspersons;
- **Target group:** explicitly designated ombudspersons in HE as well as individuals dealing with (student) complaints and conflict on campus (in student counseling, academic units, diversity management, etc.)
- Heterogeneity of backgrounds and levels of experience essential for achieving program learning outcomes
- Didactically innovative: strong focus on transversal skills development („future skills“) and peer-learning/peer-coaching: community of practice

MODULE 1: Higher education governance and the legal framework for ombuds work

- Course 1a. The organizational structure and governance of higher education
- Course 1b. Legal and Ethical Aspects of Ombuds Work

MODULE 2: Communication and negotiation in higher education

- Course 2a. Communication in higher education
- Course 2b. Negotiation Lab

MODULE 3: Conflict resolution and ADR techniques in higher education

- Course 3a. Conflict resolution in higher education
- Course 3b. Applying ADR Techniques in Higher Education

• MODULE 4: Reflective Practice

- Course 4a. Self-care and stress management in ombuds practice
- Course 4b. Case-based individual project and peer-learning/peer-feedback

Peek into Module 1: Higher Education Governance

- Universities as „special, hybrid“ organisations [AND/OR]
- Universities as institutions
 - Status groups
 - Hierarchies
 - Role of management and „third-space professionals“ (NPM)
 - Student Participation
- Analytical focus on **institutional culture**
- Special session on academic and research integrity
- **Teaching Team:** Department for Higher Education Research, University for Continuing Education Krems, Austria

Conflict management as an emerging strategic function of universities?

- Conflict time-consuming, can incur high costs for institutions: hierarchical escalation, litigation, attrition (i.e., student dropout and staff retention)
- Conflict management structures at many HEI currently scattered (across HR, various other units, reliance on informal negotiations,....)
- Ombuds services established at several European HEIs as a result of (reputationally costly) institutional conflicts
- Safeguarding neutrality and independence of ombuds positions vital
- Importance of clear processes and procedures
- Leadership training

Contact



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