

Conflict Management and Resource Policy

Conflict is normal.

Conflict is a normal part of human interaction and provides an opportunity for making change. While conflict can be uncomfortable, it should not necessarily be avoided and can result in creative solutions, new ideas and an advancement of knowledge.

Handle conflict early.

While there is a significant power differential in the student/advisor relationship, the very nature of the relationship and the academic enterprise requires that ideas and assumptions be challenged. If conflict arises in this dynamic, it is best that it is handled early. It is easier to handle smaller issues as they arise, and sometimes options for resolution may diminish over time.

Clear expectations help mitigate conflict.

Conflict can be helped when expectations are clear and commonly understood by both sides. Put them in writing and consider using the **Mentor-Mentee Compact & Expectations Form** (<http://dbbs.wustl.edu/Documents/Mentee-Mentor%20Compact%20and%20Expectations.pdf>) as a resource to accomplish this.

Students experiencing conflict with an advisor or other faculty member are encouraged to first discuss the situation with their Thesis Advisor or the faculty member and try to resolve difficulties amicably between the parties. If informal discussion does not resolve the problem, there is a process the student can follow.

As a next step, advice may be sought from the Program Director and/or Thesis Chair of the Committee. If resolution is not reached, the **University Ombuds** (<https://ombuds.wustl.edu/>) can be contacted. The University Ombuds is a confidential, off-the-record resource that can help the student or the advisor explore options, identify resources, manage expectations, and express frustrations. If resolution cannot be reached, the Associate Dean of DBBS may be contacted. Alternatively, a more formal complaint process can be followed as outlined below.

If the nature of the issue is academic or related to professional integrity, a student may pursue a formal complaint. All complaints should be addressed to an Associate Dean of the Graduate School; see the **Academic Integrity Policy** for more detailed information. (<https://graduateschool.wustl.edu/sites/graduateschool.wustl.edu/files/Academic%20Integrity%20Policy%202018.pdf>)

If the conflict is impacting the student's wellbeing, Student Health Services is available for confidential, onsite counseling. Student Health Services can be reached at 314-362-4357. The office is located at 4525 Scott Ave., Room 3420 (Third Floor), East Building. Students may also send a mail to studenthealthservice@wusm.wustl.edu or visit the website at wusmhealth.wustl.edu.