

## THE CONFIDENTIAL ADVISOR

The Confidential Advisor is a figure provided for by the "Code of Conduct for the Protection of the Dignity of Persons Studying and Working at the University of Messina" and in accordance with current regulations. The Confidential Advisor is appointed by Rector's Decree, upon nomination by the Academic Senate, from among individuals external to the University who possess documented professional training and experience, along with sensitivity and the ability to listen and communicate. The position is for a three-year term. To this end, a specific public selection process is launched for the comparative evaluation of the applicants' CVs.

Without prejudice to civil and criminal law protections, anyone who has been subjected to sexual or moral harassment or discriminatory acts may, within 60 days of the occurrence, initiate either:

- a) the informal procedure by contacting the Confidential Advisor directly;
- b) the formal procedure, pursuant to Article 9 of the aforementioned Code.

A person who is a victim of conduct that undermines their dignity may request the Consultant's intervention through an informal procedure, which must be completed within 90 days.

The Consultant will examine the case and undertake not to take any action without first discussing it with the alleged victim of harassment and obtaining their express consent.

In seeking, where possible, a conciliatory solution, the Consultant will take the most appropriate steps to restore a peaceful work and study environment.

The Confidential Counselor, upon request of the individual concerned:

- assumes the handling of the case and advises on the most appropriate methods, including legal ones, to address it;
- intervenes, with broad discretion (through interviews, obtaining any testimonies, conciliatory meetings between the victim and the perpetrator of the harassment, etc.) to ascertain the facts and to facilitate, within a reasonably short timeframe, the resolution of the distressing situations and the restoration of a peaceful working environment.

To this end:

- has the necessary means and tools to fulfill his/her duties;
- has access to administrative documents pertaining to the case in question;
- may avail himself/herself of internal University consultants;
- acts with respect for the injured party and the accused and ensures absolute discretion regarding the facts, to protect all parties involved in the investigation of the matter, both to guarantee the right to confidentiality and to avoid any form of retaliation;
- participates in training activities promoted by the University and other organizations, regarding equal opportunities, communication techniques, mobbing, self-esteem courses, counseling, etc.

The Confidential Advisor may be invited to participate in CUG meetings, as an expert and in an advisory capacity, to suggest specific or general actions aimed at promoting a working environment that ensures equal dignity and freedom of all individuals. He or she is required to report on his or her activities annually to the CUG and the Rector.

If the interested party deems any attempt at an informal resolution to the problem inappropriate or insufficient, or if, after such an attempt, the undesirable behavior persists, the injured party may file a formal complaint with the Director General, if the accused is a member of the technical-administrative staff, or with the Rector, if the latter is a faculty member or student, pursuant to Article 9 of the Code of Conduct for the Protection of the Dignity of Persons Studying and Working at the University of Messina.

When the perpetrator is a student, the Rector appoints a disciplinary commission composed of five members: the Rector or his/her delegate, one member chosen by the Rector, the Confidential Advisor, and two members chosen by the CUG.

In all other cases, if the competent disciplinary body deems the facts reported during the relevant proceedings to be well-founded, the Rector, in the case of a faculty member, or the Director General, in the case of technical-administrative staff, may adopt, upon the recommendation of the Confidential Advisor, appropriate organizational measures to immediately cease the harassing behavior.

All those responsible for preventing and resolving reported cases are bound by the strictest confidentiality regarding the facts and information they become aware of during the course of the case.

If the complaint proves manifestly unfounded, the Administration must ensure the rehabilitation of the accused person and reserves the right to initiate any disciplinary action against the opposing party.

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