

# PRESENTATION

## *REVISTA UNIVERSIDAD, ÉTICA Y DERECHOS* (*Rued@*)

María Acale Sánchez  
Ombudsperson, University of  
Cádiz Chief editor

The figure of the University Ombudsperson was created in Spain by means of the 14<sup>th</sup> section of the University Law, as a guarantor, who must “*take care for the respect of the rights and freedom of teachers, students and staff, to act before the actions of different parts and/or university services*”. In, some cases, his/her competence on members of the university goes farther, as the Ombudsperson also guards people who arrive or approach the University in a direct or indirect way (e.g. students who have denied their access to University) or other people enrolled in it by means of successive subcontracting (e.g. staff from coffee shops or copy shops, cleaning or computer services, security service, etc.).

If we leave aside matters of election or designation, mandate and dedication, it can be said that, from a substantive viewpoint, the Ombudsperson’s action -whose main target is to improve the “*university quality over his/her field*”-, is not subject to imperative mandate. Different meanings are condensed in this sentence, which are developed by each University in their own internal laws and regulations.

With that broad purpose and its autonomous and guarantor character, we act in each of our Offices in pursuit of the welfare of members of our university, and in the defense of all the rights that we have recognized as members of the Spanish University. Correspondingly, we too monitor compliance with the duties imposed on us by our legal system.

The means at our disposal to achieve these goals are simple: head, heart, and courage, on one hand; and common sense, logic, and ethics, on the other -although it is not clear in what order-. And with these, we mediate, give advise, or propose solutions to the complex problems raised in daily university life. Yet the success or failure of our work depends upon a series of factors that are beyond us, but we are the ones who, in some cases, push for solutions, hence making life in our Universities *wheel*, while we remain in the shadows.

To meet the objectives that are expected of us, we need a specific training to accomplish a combination of different skills to be developed in mediation, advice, and peaceful conflict resolution.

So from our first recommendation or advice to the last of them, made to our community, we have to study very different and dispersed material, which has been difficult for us to find because nowadays there is no common point of reference to focus from, despite the fact that each of us comes from a different field of Science; logically, the result of our effort is also interdisciplinary. In that way, we can find partial answers to our questions in journals on Ethics, Administrative Law, Criminal Law, Criminology, or even Psychiatry Science, among others.

Generally, given the complexity of publishing such specific articles, the results of our work are only known by ourselves, and many times we don't even take advantage of it. Besides, we don't even know if a problem that we face today in our University was already solved by one of our colleagues somewhere else.

So the results of our work are unknown, mainly because we do not publish them, as we believe that scientific journals could not be interested in them at all. Among other reasons, because we do not really know what journal may be interested in publishing our instances, which usually combine such different things on Criminal Law, Medicine, occupational risks, etc., together with some logic or imagination. That is, our doubts about the scientific character of our work force us to keep the essay in our desks, depriving it of its potential.

Hence *Revista Universidad, Ética y Derechos* is born with the objective to become a reference of the university life in an international framework. Its Spanish acronym *-Rued@*, i.e. *wheel-* reflects movement, dynamism, modernity, and gear: all of them are what we do as University Ombudspersons.

*Rued@* wants to bind together different works that, directly or indirectly, make University problems visible and thus suggest solutions. Being such a referent, it will be very simple for us to find answers to our problems, taking advantage of the work made for each one of us. With this publication, we would like to value the invisible work made for the defense of the rights of the people who work and study at the University, and of their welfare.

It aims, ultimately, to move the academic world by boosting it.

In addition, we want to attract the attention of those in our community who scientifically approach the university world: research on mobbing, administrative resources to cope with the decisions of our Provosts; the nature of reports from our legal services; dermatological problems caused by the stress of those who have a career in the University world; transmission of illness; or even the storage and disposal of our waste pollutants are, definitely, specific -yet so different- problems that affect university life and are dispersed by different publishing fields. *Rued@*'s objective is to facilitate Ombudspersons some special works about a subject that is beyond his/her training so he/she can find it more easily.

This journal is born at the same time of *Rued@' Prize*, given by the *Conferencia Estatal de Defensores universitarios*, aimed to recognize the career of people who worked responsibly or improved a project specially interesting for the University. This Number 0 contains most of the papers discussed during the annual meeting of the 17<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Spanish University Ombudspersons (held in Badajoz, 22<sup>nd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> October, 2014), as well as during the Workshop on legal changes announced by the Ministry of Education at Madrid, April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015).

With this journal, we also want to bring to the public opinion our commitment and our concerns about the University.