



**Deusto**

Aldezle  
Defensora Universitaria  
University Ombudsman

# ANNUAL REPORT

<b>June</b>	<b>May</b>
<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>

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## Legal Framework for the University of Deusto Ombudsman

Pursuant to section 15 of the Regulations governing Organization and Functioning of the University Ombudsperson of the University of Deusto<sup>1</sup> which, in turn, follows on from the basic principles established in the fourteenth provision of the legislation in force (LOU 6/2001), we hereby present the Annual Report on management by the Aldezle – University Ombudsperson during the inclusive period between 1st June 2015 and 31st May 2016, the latter being the last date covered by the report. In accordance with customary procedure, the report will be disseminated among the University Community and available on the Aldezle – University Ombudsperson2 website.

Section 15. The University Ombudsperson shall prepare an annual report containing details of the activities pursued during the previous academic year. The report shall include information about the number and type of claims filed, about those that were not admitted and the grounds for not doing so, as well as information about those that were admitted and the result thereof. No type of confidential or personal information shall be provided in the report that may enable the interested parties to be identified<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Approved by the Academic Board on 14th March 2013 and published in BOUD No. 45, dated 14th March 2013.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.deusto.es/cs/Satellite/deusto/es/universidad-deusto/aldezle-defensora-universitaria>

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## Introduction

This report contains details of the activity carried out by the Ombudsperson during the inclusive period between June 2015 and May 2016 and is the third report since this service was established. This triennium coincides with the duration of the Aldezle's term of office – three years – which will be taken into account in order to establish the relevant comparisons and assess the extent of implementation, trajectory and evolution of the service over the aforementioned time period. The content of this report will as a consequence be kept in line with the basic profile of previous ones, namely; introduction, analysis and description of proceedings, accompanied by a data assessment. The following section will describe both the internal and external institutional proceedings that have taken place throughout the year and the report will end with a final reflection.

The report from the previous year – the second year of activity – was submitted before the Academic Board on 18th June 2015. It was disseminated via the usual internal channels - on the Intranet for university staff, and on the Extranet for students and via the social networks for both groups. The university website makes the annual reports available to the general public via the area set aside for the University Ombudsperson.

One year on, the Aldezle has attempted to maintain and continue the spirit that feeds the University of Deusto as an institution that is committed to defending the rights and interests of the university community, and has conducted proceedings in such a spirit. In so doing, she has also strived to resolve any disputes that have arisen by facilitating dialogue and establishing appropriate channels of consensus, and with the honesty, impartiality, confidentiality and independence that correspond to the nature of the post.

Acknowledgement is due to the university bodies that have cooperated by providing their information and assistance, and to all those individuals who have approached the Aldezle to make a complaint, submit a claim, make an enquiry or explain a problem and, in general, request her intervention, for the trust placed in the Ombudsperson Service. This is also a reminder, alongside our apologies, to those individuals who have not felt suitably defended by the actions taken by the Aldezle or who may feel that their rights have not been upheld.

As regards the gender used in drafting this respect, use has been made of neutral, inclusive terms. The use of the masculine form referring to both genders has constituted an attempt to avoid reiterating expressions that might otherwise result in the text being too cumbersome for the reader.

## Previous considerations and nature of the consultations

Action taken by the Aldezle has continued along the lines embarked on in previous years, based on the principle of openness and accessibility to all members of the university community, her being prepared to listen attentively, showing flexibility in the way of doing things - to a certain extent more so than in previous years – and responding swiftly and subsequently monitoring cases, while of course always respecting the competences attributed to each body.

Actions taken by the Ombudsperson revolve around the following: the filing of complaints in cases where a presumed violation of rights of a member of the university community exists; consultation when what is required is guidance and information; and even interpretation of university regulations or about the specific scope of rights that may help the interested party in view of a possible or foreseeable disputes. Mediation is another area, at the request of a member of the community or group, when an attempt is made to reach a satisfactory agreement for the parties involved in a dispute.

Among the duties performed by the Aldezle, the possibility exists to act ex officio when any faults or omissions are detected that may violate community rights, or when the actions of one or more members of the community or a group show disrespect for such rights. In the course of this academic year, intervention by the Aldezle has, apart from the odd minor case, been confined to requests by third parties.

Lastly, there have been quite a few cases of another type of proceeding which in fact have not ended up being processed. In these situations, the only thing the interested party wishes to ensure is that the Ombudsperson be aware of a situation that gives them cause for concern and that might lead to a dispute or, on occasions, to a possible violation of their rights. The aim is to simply put on record certain facts or behaviour without any interest being declared in taking the possible problem further. These cases have not been included among the statistics provided in the report.

As in previous years, there have also been non-regulated proceedings that do not appear in the report. These are cases in which parties turn to the Ombudsperson in view of a possible problem or some university action to simply have someone to take heed of their case and listen and, nearly always, act as an outlet for their concerns. Obviously, they are attended to and, where appropriate, the relevant individual advised, and an attempt is always made to accompany them.

The customary procedure has been pursued in view of requests for intervention. Once a request has been received, a decision is then taken as to whether it should be admitted or not. Firstly, the fact of whether the request meets the regulatory requirements in accordance with which the Aldezle may or needs to act is assessed.

When said requirements are not met, they are not admitted and, consequently, proceedings are not pursued. There are also cases where previous channels open for filing claims that the applicant may have available to them have not been exhausted. Neither are such cases admitted and the applicant is informed of the steps they need to take. Notwithstanding the aforementioned, openness to initiating proceedings has been made more flexible according to the nature of a specific case and for humanitarian reasons.

Without prejudice to the fact that there may have been some unrecorded case, the data referring to this area of activity is as followings:

- a) Cases not admitted because they have not been previously processed by the relevant authority: PDI (teaching and research staff): 1; PAS (assistance and services staff): 2; Students: Degree students: 12; Master's degree students: 2 (1 graduate and 1 student).
- b) Cases not admitted because they do not fall under the competence of the Aldezle: PDI: 2; PAS: 1; Students: 3.

The application of requirements aimed at filing complaints or other requests have to a certain extent been made more flexible, always ensuring that the request is in line with the legal security required. By way of initial contact, the channels most commonly used have tended to be email and the telephone, in addition to personal visits which, in comparison to previous years, have become less common. Depending on the nature of the case, a request is made to complete the corresponding official form.

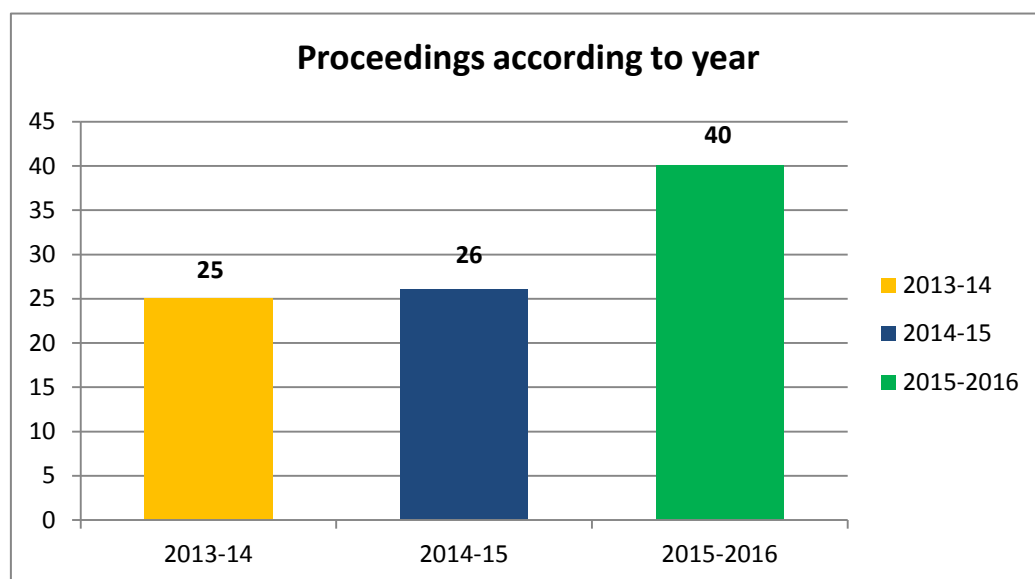
## **Data, analysis and description of procedures**

Below is provided a summary of the data referring to proceedings that have been pursued over the course of the year in the form of complaints and enquiries that have been subject to statistical analysis. This is accompanied by a general analysis of the aforementioned, followed by a description of cases, and disputes that have not required the intervention of university bodies have not been included. The graphs obtained show: the type of proceeding, their distribution according to campus, language used, distribution according to sectors, centres and services, group and gender, centres and groups and cases according to level of studies. Lastly, the result of the resolutions and a data assessment are provided.

## 1. Issues processed

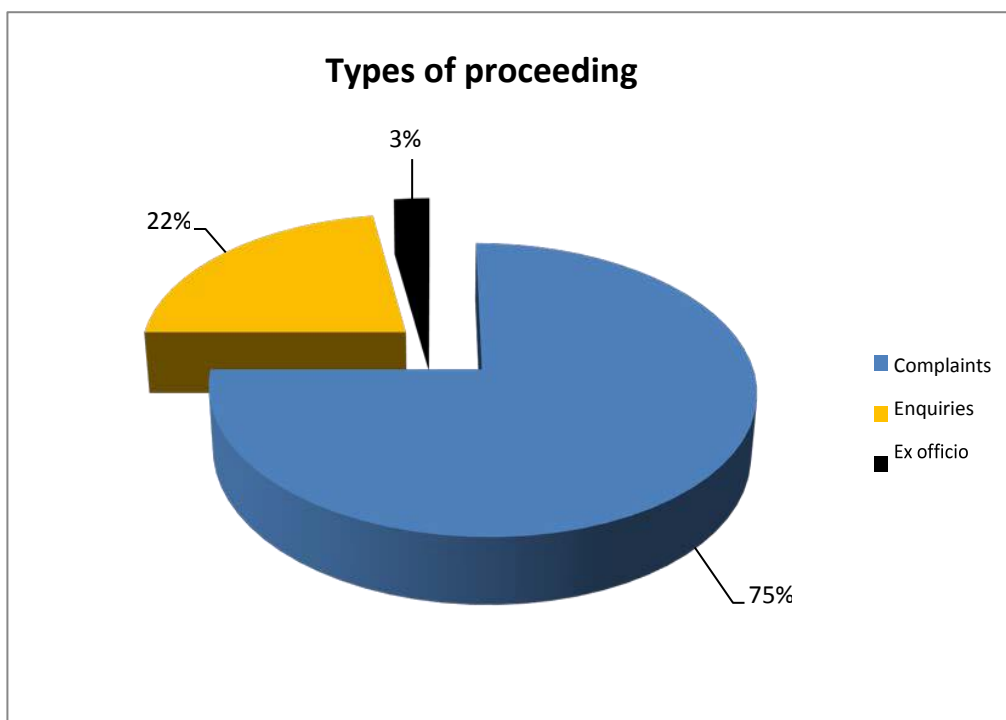
With a view to assessing how this service has evolved over its first three years, a comparison is first made of overall data corresponding to this period that coincides with the duration of the first term of office of the Aldezle. Figures from graphs are also compared with each other, where deemed appropriate.

### *i. Distribution of proceedings according to year*



The greatest increase has occurred during this third year, with a 50% increase in the number of interventions over previous years. We consider that, when an analysis of the cases processed is viewed as a whole, this data does not need to be interpreted negatively in terms of numbers from the first two years. This does not mean that there has been a great deal of dissatisfaction over this period but rather, that the service has become better known and integrated into the university's social fabric. It can be therefore be stated that one of the main objectives set out since the outset has been achieved – to make the service visible to the university community. Both the Aldezle and the duties they perform are without doubt now better known than they were, as one would expect to be the case.

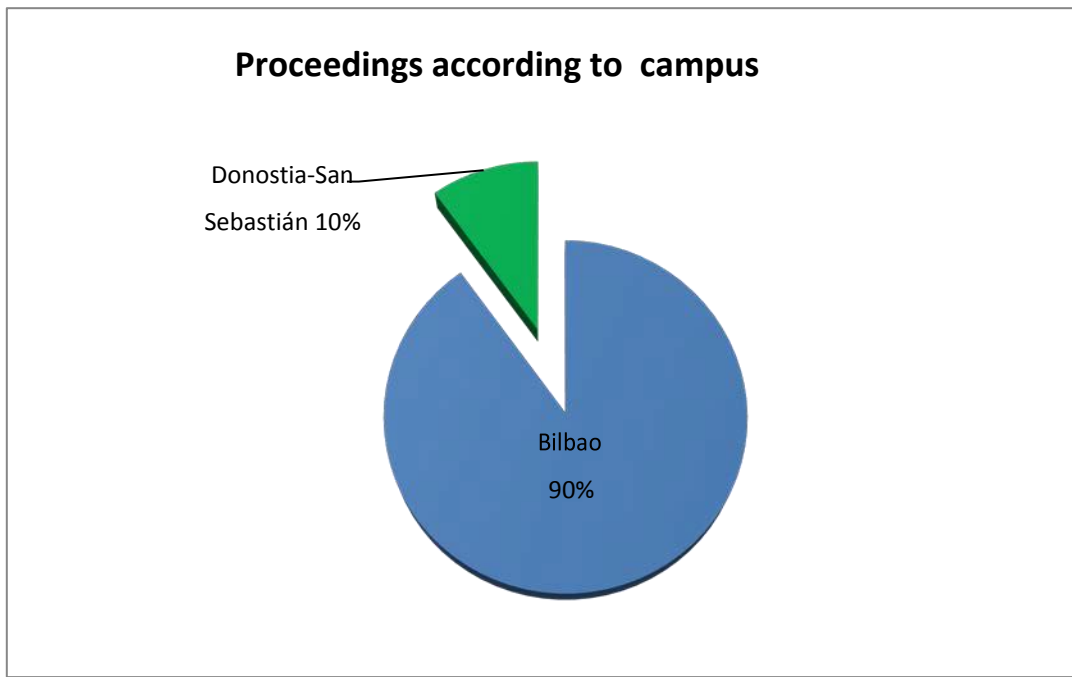
## ii. *Casses according to type*



Of the 40 cases there have been this year, the most significant number refer to complaints – 30. The proportion compared to those from previous years has been maintained – 19 the first year, which meant 76% of the total, and 18 the second year, which represented 69% of the total.

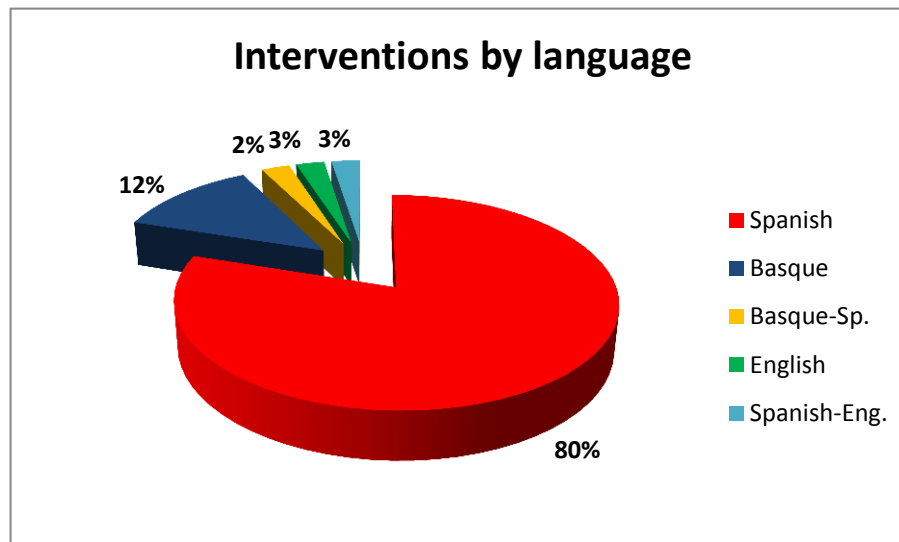
The number of enquiries – 9 in total – is very low compared to the number of complaints, and also corresponds to the number dealt with during the previous two years – 6 and 5, accounting for 24% and 19% respectively. We should recall that a large number of cases have not been taken into account that would be included in the Enquiries section. They refer to many telephone calls and even visits to the office that have not been recorded. In all these cases, the guidance and assistance provided to settle a possible dispute does not require management by a university department – at most, information or a small collaboration is requested. These types of proceeding lend flexibility to the matters being dealt with without losing sight of the rigour and consistency demanded of the Ombudsperson, meaning they do not fail to comply with legal nature required of the case in hand. There has also been an increase in these proceedings over this past year in relation to the previous one.

### *iii. Distribution according to campus*



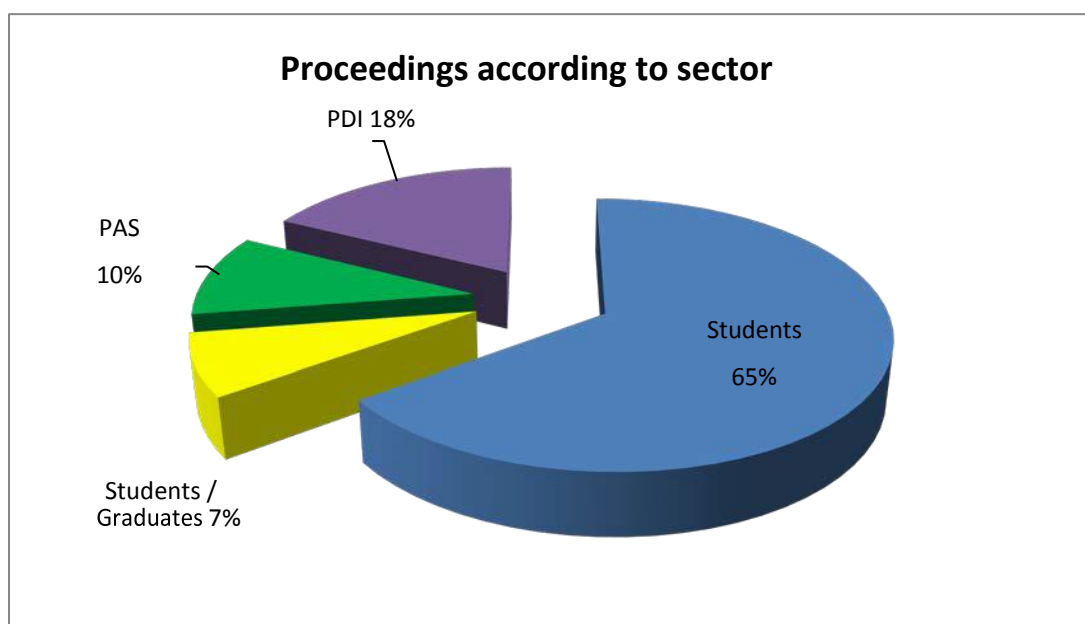
Although the proceedings in San Sebastian have doubled in comparison to the previous year - 4 instead of 2, with only one case in the first year – there remain more proceedings on the Bilbao campus and the quantitative increase has been greater: 24 the first year, 26 the second and 36 this past year.

#### *iv. Language used*



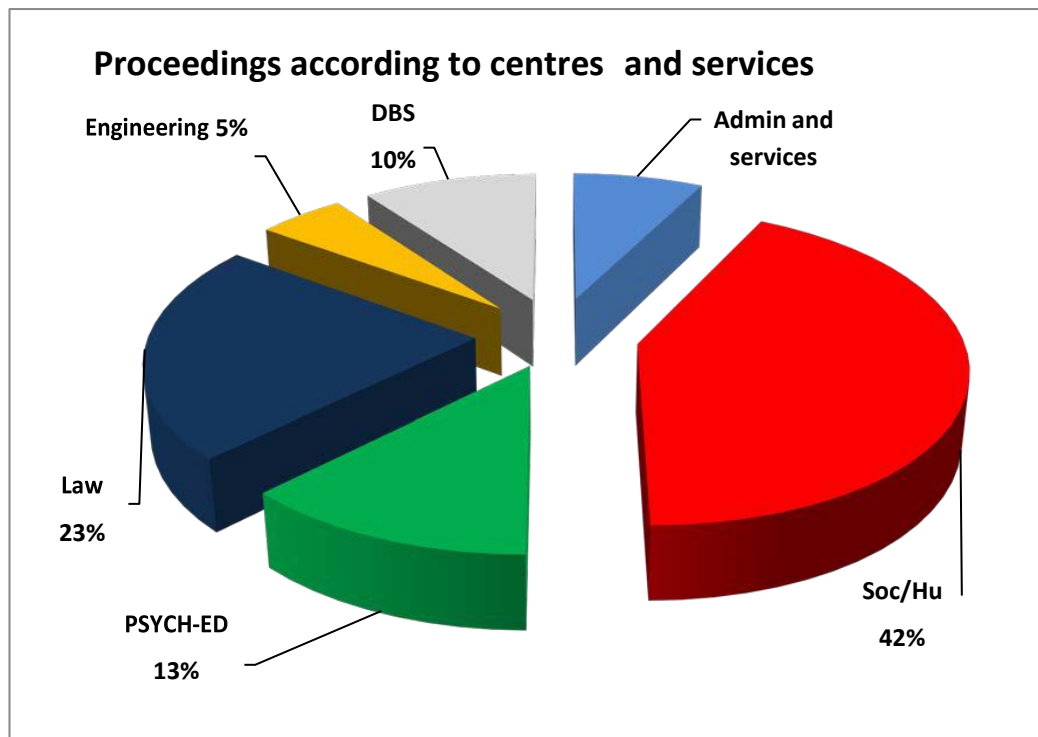
As can be seen in the graph, the use of language has diversified over this past year. There have been 32 interventions in Spanish – 80% - which is somewhat higher than the first year and similar to the second: 19 the first year, accounting for 76% of cases, and 21 the second year, with 81%. There was 1 proceeding in English and 1 bilingual Spanish/English case, which made a timid appearance for the first time, and also 1 bilingual Basque/Spanish proceeding, which is comparable to the previous year. Diversity has reduced the use of Basque, in which 6 cases were submitted the first year accounting for 24% of cases, 4 the second year – with 15% - and 5 this past year with 12%.

#### *v. Distribution according to sectors*



This year the group that has most requested the Aldezle's services has been that of students, accounting for 65% - 29 – to which 3 cases of graduates should be added. This is a higher rate than in previous years, when they accounted for 50% with 13 students in the second year and 60% with 12 students the first year, although in these last-mentioned cases they were groups. In terms of the other sectors – PAS and PDI – the same figures have been maintained as the previous year, with 4 and 7 in total. The number of individuals from PAS who requested the Aldezle's services the first year – 6 – was in turn higher than in these last two years and with a sole applicant from PDI. No research staff – PDI – has filed any complaint this year, unlike 1 case in the first year and 2 in the second.

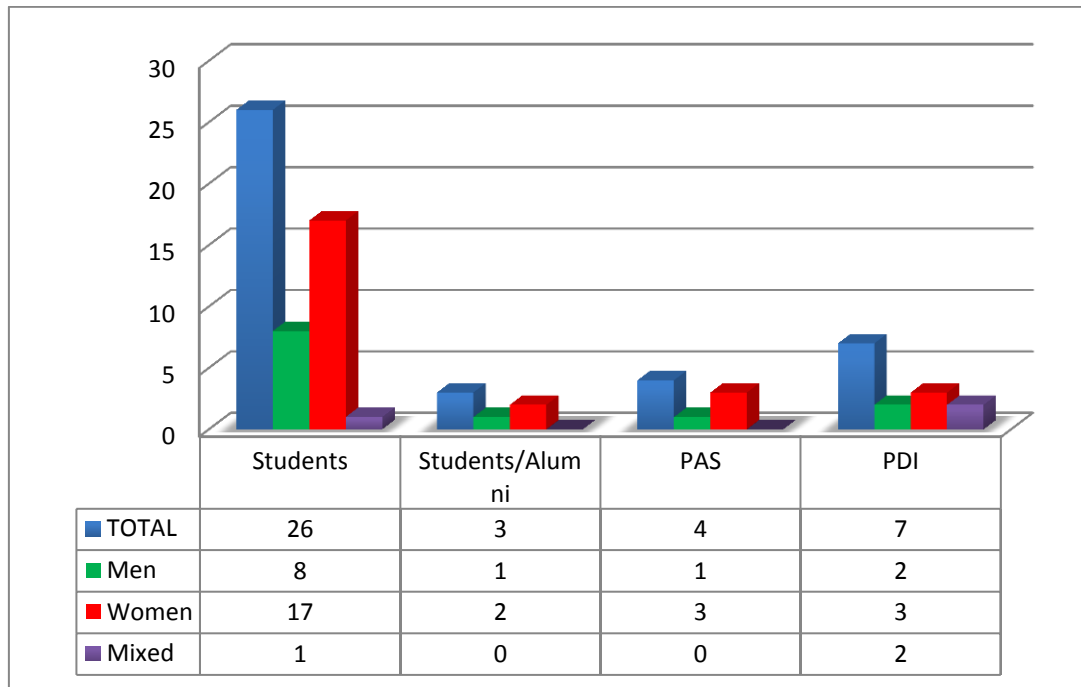
*vi. Distribution according to centres and services*



The centre that has requested the most proceedings this year is the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences with 17 cases, followed by Law with 9, Psychology and Education 5 and Deusto Business School (DBS) with 4. Engineering lies in bottom position with 2. By way of a comparison to the previous years – Social and Human Sciences has always been the faculty that has requested the most and most increased their number of proceedings dealt with by the Aldezle, namely 7 the first year and 12 the second year. Law also increased from 2 to 7 respectively and DBS, which requested no proceedings the first year, requested 3 in the second. The remainder is more unevenly distributed: Psychology and Education evidenced a lower number the second year in comparison to the first year – 4 and 6 respectively. Nor did Engineering submit any case in the first year although 2 each were submitted in the second and third years.

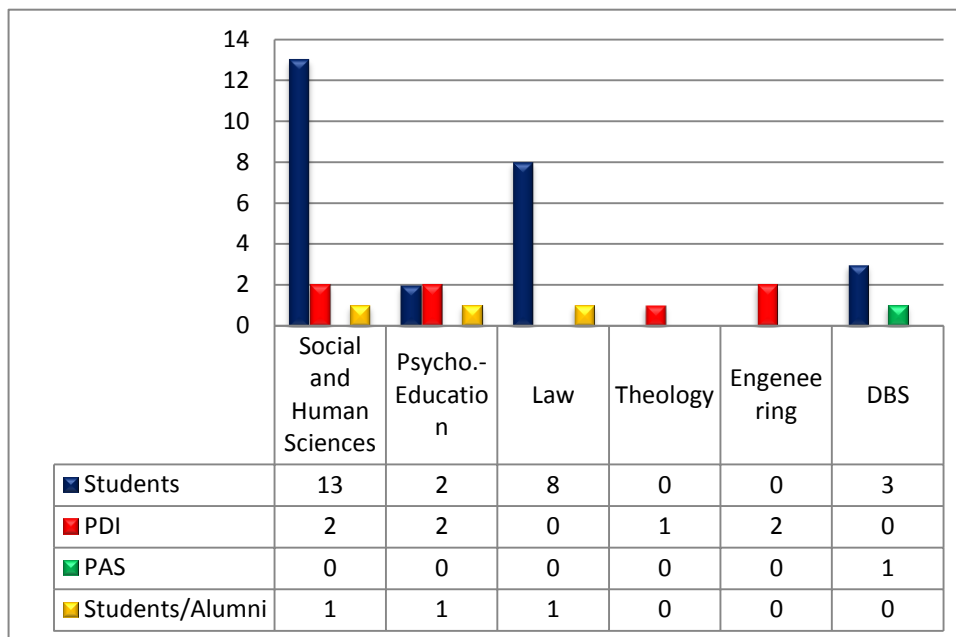
Lastly, attention to General Services has demanded attention in 3 cases, with the number thus dropping from 3 cases in relation to previous years with 4 the first year and 5 the second.

*vii. Distribution according to group and gender*



As can be noted in the graph, in the case of all groups the number of women has been higher than that of men – in total, 25 women as opposed to 12 men. This trend also manifested itself in previous years. Except in the first year when the PAS group evidenced a larger presence of men, the number of women has stood out as having requested the Ombudsperson's services among all other sectors over both years.

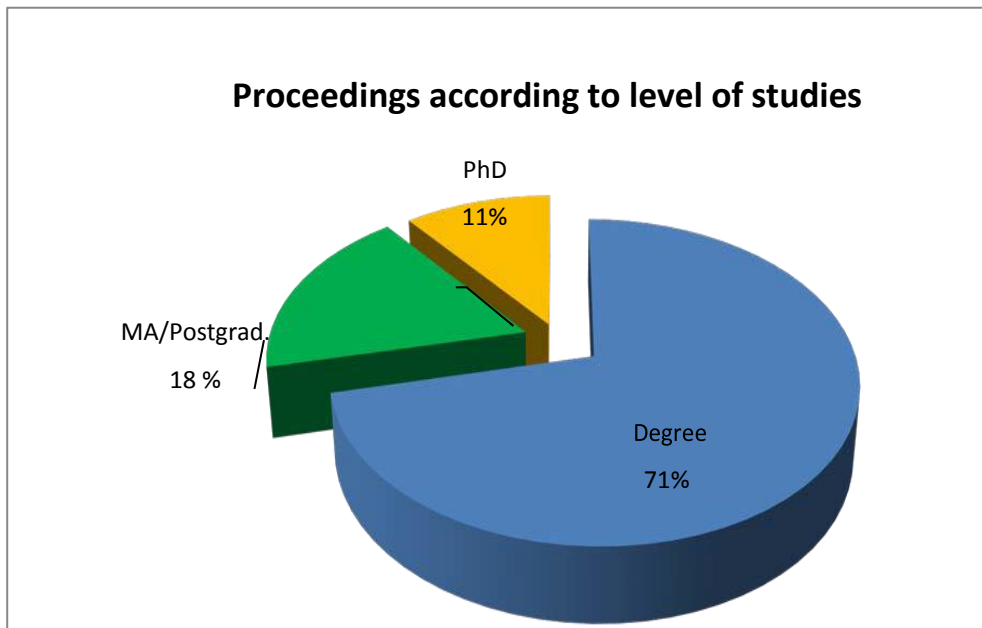
*viii. Cassetes according to centres and groups*



During the year 2015-16, the crossover between centre and group has provided a variable result according to faculty. In Social and Human Sciences, Psychology and Education, Law and DBS, students – including graduates – have accounted for most requests for services. Engineering students have not submitted any type of claim, nor has there been any request from teaching and research staff in the Law and Theology faculties and DBS, the last-mentioned being the only one to submit a proceeding from assistance and services staff.

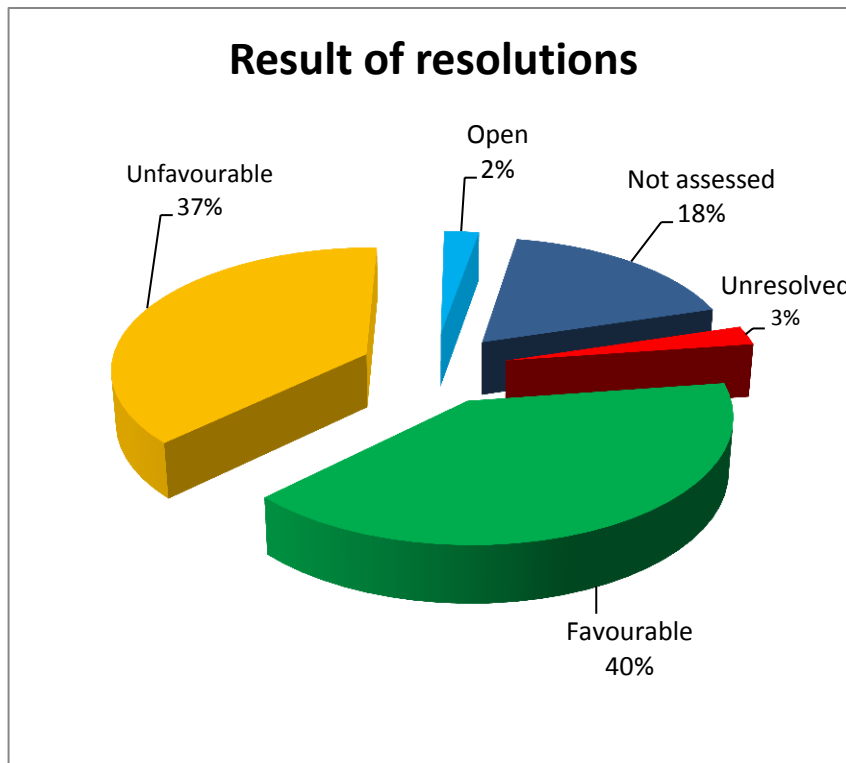
Data refers to the proceedings that took place with students in the two previous years which, albeit accounting for smaller numbers, are very similar to that for the past year. In absolute terms, although there have been some differences regarding the different sectors as a whole, they have been of limited relevance owing to the small number of cases.

*ix. Cases according to level of studies*



In line with the trend from previous years, degree students are the ones who have most requested the Aldezle's services, accounting for 20 this year, 10 in 2014-2015 and 13 the first year. As in the first year, there have been 5 cases of postgraduate and MA students and the number of requests of PhD students has increased from no cases in the first year, 1 in the second year and 3 in the third. For obvious reasons, those referring to BA students have disappeared.

*x. Situation and result of resolutions*



The data referring to percentages are as follows: 16 unfavourable, 15 favourable and 7 unresolved. At the time of drafting the report there was still 1 case open. Following comparison with results from previous years, it can be stated that the number of favourable resolutions has numerically fallen this year: 13 the first year and 15 the second. Although there has been one more, the difference lies in the fact that the figure for the previous year referred to 26 cases in total and that of this year 40 cases in total. Consequently, the number of unfavourable resolutions has significantly increased from 5 in the first year, 3 in the second to 15 in the third, although these unfavourable results do not necessarily mean a lack of recognition of the claim submitted where this is not in accordance with the possible right that could assist the applicant. One case has remained unresolved this year owing to the fact that it was unable to be processed and at the time of drafting this report there remained one open case pending resolution.

*xi. Proceedings according to reason for request and group*

As in previous years, the reasons for requests both in terms of complaints and enquiries have been quite varied. For a more orderly overview, reference is made to the subject matter of cases distributed according to groups, which are arranged in the table as follows:

Reason for request for proceeding	No. of students	Students Graduates	PDI*	PAS**
Request/deadlines in programmes (SICUE,	3			
Interpersonal relations between students – teaching and research staff/personal tutor	3			
Thesis supervision	2			
Review of exams, evaluation and marks,	4			
Adaptation of evaluation	1			
Change of dates/timetables exams	2			
Error/change in assigning groups	1			
TFM conditions	1			
Last examination opportunity	1			
Disciplinary action	2			
Contempt for authority	1			
Problem with teaching staff	1			
Cyber bullying	1			
Student satisfaction	1			
Cafeteria	1			
Assessment for compensation	1			
Certified issuance		1		
Fees and payments		2		
Plagiarism			1	
Management of good practices in the classroom			1	
Appointment to teams/areas			1	
Administrative management			1	
Appointments			1	
Hiring staff			1	2
Job posts, recognition, wages and promotion			1	1
Job post and health				1
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>

\* Teaching and research staff.

\*\* Assistance and services staff.

## 2. Data assessment

As in previous years, the number of proceedings has not seen a major increase in the number of proceedings, even though numbers have risen. Students' presence has grown significantly, as this has been the group that has most turned to the Ombudsperson. Within this group, attention should be drawn to the large number of cases in which individuals have turned to the Aldezle before resorting to other previous channels – cases that have been duly channeled which, after the relevant advice has been given, are then disregarded. This type of proceeding reflects the lack of knowledge among students about the channels they need to use, and we acknowledge the major effort that is being made to notify and inform students about the channels available to them in their own centres/faculties. However, the reality of the situation is something else and there remains a lack of concern with listening and attending to matters that should be of their concern and which are of great importance to them.

In terms of managing and dealing with problems that concern students, special mention should be made of the fine work carried out by the dean's offices: vice-deans and persons in charge of students and tutors, who settle a large number of disputes of varying types appropriately and pertinently, thus preventing students from having to turn to higher authorities.

Continuing within the sphere of activity of the student body, the subject matters dealt with have been very varied. Some claims submitted in previous years disappeared in the third year, such as those referring to grants and other forms of assistance. There were more in the first year owing to unfavourable circumstances beyond the scope of the university. A significant drop was also noted in the second year and there have been no cases this year. At this point, the major effort made by the University of Deusto – both in qualitative and quantitative terms – to attend to less favoured groups should also be acknowledged, which is in line with its mission.

On an academic and teaching level, there have been no interventions this year on behalf of students who are currently doing their BA studies or regarding matters related to such qualifications this year, owing to the withdrawal of the corresponding syllabuses.

As in previous years, there have been sporadic or very occasional cases regarding class dates and times, establishing groups, evaluations and review of exams and, in general, problems that have mainly been able to be dealt with without much effort. Interpersonal relations have also been more common this year and of more varying types than in previous years - problems regarding the relationship between student and teacher in tutorials and academic supervision either of a thesis or end-of-degree work, among the latter cases several that have not ultimately been included in the calculations. There has also been the odd problem regarding conciliation between student and supervisor on some end-of-master's degree work. Such interventions tend to be delicate and need to be treated with tact, and the solution desired by the Ombudsperson has not always been the one found. Another recurring theme, albeit a sporadic one, has been that referring to non-compliance with class attendance by some teacher.

Cyber bullying has also been in evidence this year. Unlike the previous year, in this case it has not involved a group but, rather, on an individual level - one case of racial and sexual harassment which, apart from the attention and assistance provided to the person affected, was regrettably not able to be resolved because it was not deemed to be a matter to be dealt with by the university. In view of this blot on our community, we on these pages should like to encourage any individuals who suffer from such cyber bullying not to lie down, but to be brave and make use of the channels available to clarify any such cases. Acting in this way will enable not only a specific case at hand to be cleared up, but also the necessary channels to be opened up in order to try and reduce incidents of this type.

Without going into details about enquiries, interventions involving teaching and research staff have been loosely linked to labour-related matters such as types of contract and administrative issues. Problems have arisen from the appointments to a specific centre, relations between teacher and students and matters related to good practices in classrooms. Generally speaking, there have been fewer new features than in cases from previous years.

Lastly, in terms of assistance and services staff, the cases that have come to the Aldezele's attention have been linked to hiring staff and, in general, to labour-related problems, wages, recognition and problems related to jobs and health.

Broadly speaking, there have been quite a few cases that have been satisfactorily resolved, albeit not always in the way desired by the claimant and, in some cases, without the initial situation having varied. In this sense, as has been referred to above, cases that have not resulted in a favourable resolution – 39% as opposed to 38% that were resolved favourably – account for no small figure. Results from previous years were as follows: 52% favourable and 20% unfavourable outcomes in 2013-14 and 58% favourable and 11% unfavourable outcomes in 2014-15. It is true to say that not all the complaints admitted need to be resolved in their favour despite what the claimant may believe. Having said this, we estimate that there has been a certain lack of flexibility on occasions – and I would say also a lack of humanity – when attending to demands, without prejudice to the fact that the criteria attached to application and non-discrimination in cases have remained clear.

The average time taken to provide a response and the consequent closing of the case is also a point that does not shed this report in an excessively favourable light. We believe proceedings that very often only require arbitration of a material-type measure or even when a decision-making is involved tend to take too long to deal with. These types of proceeding, even if not relevant, do not help to facilitate the degree of harmony and service that are assumed to also be features common to our university.

### **3. Institutional Proceedings**

#### **3.1. External proceedings**

Below are chronologically described the external proceedings pursued by the Aldezle over the course of the year. Mention should be made in this section of the presence of two specific networks in meetings. Firstly, the more institutional one referring to the CEDU – the University Ombudspersons' State Conference – which is a corporate group of which the University of Deusto is a member and which holds two annual sessions: one ordinary and another extraordinary, the latter taking more the form of a technical conference. Furthermore, another no less institutional network is the G9 State University Network unique to an autonomous region, which also holds two sessions a year to which the Aldezle is invited - an invitation to which we wish to express our sincere gratitude. In all cases, meetings between Ombudspersons prove to be very fruitful and highly gratifying.

- The first G9 meeting took place on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> June 2015 in Cuenca and was organized by the University of Castile-La Mancha. The subject matters covered and analyzed were: “Problems deriving from regulations governing progress and flexibility in dealing with matters within university administration”, “Problems associated with modifying enrolment” and “Thoughts on the figure of the University Ombudsperson”.
- The 18<sup>th</sup> State Meeting of the CEDU took place in Madrid between 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> November 2015 in Madrid, and was organized by the European University. There were three working sessions related to the following subject matters: “Problems with *RFG* and *TFM*”, “Right of request, responsibility and flexibility in dealing with matters within university administration” and “Disciplinary sanctions and legal security”. Furthermore, in the course of the meeting was held the CEDU’s Annual Assembly, during which the 2015 economic report and 2016 budget were approved and posts corresponding to the CEDU Presidency and Executive Commission renewed.
- The second G9 Ombudspersons’ meeting was held on 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> January 2016 in Guadalupe and organized by the University of Extremadura. The subject matters covered there dealt with: “Abstention and rejection among teachers”, “the University Ombudsperson and protocols governing access” and “Approved for compensation”.
- This year’s Technical Conference organized by the CEDU was held on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2016 at the Rey Juan Carlos University. The conference revolved around two lectures. The first – titled “*University and regulatory changes: Act 39/2015 dated 1<sup>st</sup> October governing the Common Administrative Procedure in Public Administrative Bodies and Act 40/2015 governing the Legal System applicable to the Public Sector*” – was given by Agustí Cerrillo Martínez, and the second, given by Joaquín Aparicio Tovar, revolved around “*New Legislative Royal Decrees 5/2015 dated 30<sup>th</sup> October, whereby the amended text of the Law governing the Basic Statute regarding Public Employees is approved, and 2/2015, dated 23<sup>d</sup> October, whereby the amended text of the Law governing the Workers’ Statute is approved*”. The Aldezele did not attend this conference owing to the nature of the subject, which was more in line with issues that concern state-run universities and

their bureaucracy.

- The excellent relations existing between the two Aldezles of the Basque Autonomous Community – that of the EHU/UPV, Itziar Etxebarria, and that of the University of Deusto, Rosa Miren Pagola, lent a favourable atmosphere to the joint visit to the new Basque Government Ombudsperson or Ararteko, Manuel Lezertua, appointed by the Basque Parliament on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2015. This visit was made on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2015 and took place in a climate of excellent cordiality, turning into a courteous, introductory visit into a genuine working meeting in the course of which we had the opportunity to comment on a range of aspects regarding our management.

### **3.2. Internal proceedings**

- The report for the year 2014-2015 was submitted before the Academic Board on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2015.
- Continuing on the path forged the previous year, the University Ombudsperson Service was presented to new students at the Welcome Conference. The presentation in person was conducted over the first two weeks of September at the Law and Social and Human Science faculties.
- The Aldezle attended the solemn inauguration of the academic year 2015-2016, which took place at the Donostia-San Sebastián campus on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2015.
- In response to the Paris terrorist attacks of 13<sup>th</sup> November, the Aldezle attended the silent vigil organized by the University of Deusto in solidarity with the victims and in defense of human rights (16<sup>th</sup> November 2015), and was also present at the one which took place as a result of the terrorist attack on the 20<sup>th</sup> of the same month in Mali (23<sup>rd</sup> November 2015).
- At the invitation of the Vice-Rector of the University Community and Identity and Mission, the Aldezle took part in different meetings with the group that were geared towards reflection and planning of the fostering of co-responsibility and participation of students in the university. This formed part of the plan envisaged

in Project 3 of the Strategic Plan “Students for Social Transformation”.

#### 4. Miscellaneous

With regard to the section on training and activities with students, attention should be drawn to the following activities. Within the framework of extracurricular academic facilities offered to students, the course/workshop “Tools and techniques for the positive management of conflict: negotiation and mediation” was given in the first semester and, as on other occasions, the course proved to be a resounding success.

The Aldezle took part as judge in the 15<sup>th</sup> *Beato Garate University Debating Championship*, with the subject being “Is the international community adhering to its responsibility towards the refugee population?” (26-28/11/2015) and in the 10<sup>th</sup> *San Francisco Javier Debating League* (UNIJES), with the subject being “Is global economic growth compatible nowadays with a reduction in social inequality?” (02/25-27/2016).

She also attended the *Loyola-Student Chamber Forum* to present the *work café* to took place with students (02/24/2016).

A *work café* took place with students at the Bilbao campus on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2016 with a view to learning about and debating types of conduct that constitute offences and the degree of responsibility students may incur, their possible implication and the means available to avoid them or, where appropriate, put an end to them. The subject matter which, as could be deduced, revolved around the disciplinary system regarding student regulations obtained a limited response among the target group. There were probably several reasons why it turned out not to be successful, although one of them might be linked to the supposed limited appeal of the content of the message sent out. Notwithstanding the aforementioned and taking into account the fact that all students received the information about its content, which was both important and essential for them, this should perhaps lead us to reflect somewhat on possible indifference on the part of the student body to initiatives unrelated to teaching, albeit nonetheless formative ones.

Lastly, it should be pointed out that reports and recommendations have been sent to different groups in order to improve the service provided, especially that aimed at students.

### **Final considerations**

The ideas put forward in this report as well as those from the previous years may contribute or help to reflect on the attitude and way to proceed with our proceedings while always seeking to provide a better service to members of the community.

Following the initial period of three years' service, the Ombudsperson has become visible, the community is aware of this office and it has become reasonably well-established. Moreover, the Ombudsperson's office has become consolidated as a meeting point for attending to members of the university community from where attitudes geared towards understanding and consensus by listening and dialogue are promoted. It can therefore be stated that one of the key objectives put forward since the post was first established has been to be viewed in a positive light.

The actions carried out and the reports, recommendations and proposals made have always been undertaken with a view to improving our university's activity. Furthermore, the fact that actions pursued by the Aldezle are not subject to an imperative mandate together with the lack of executive power lends them suitable independence and neutrality with which to defend the Deusto community. It can be stated by way of a conclusion to this core idea that the Aldezle's intention and chief line of activity has always been geared towards improving the climate of human coexistence and interpersonal relations among the different groups that make up the university community.

However, some major objectives remain still partially realised such as gaining the degree of trust required in the post of Aldezle by members of the university community in order to ensure they view the person occupying that post as the one who defends their legitimate rights and interests. In this sense, it can be stated that an attempt has been made on all occasions to act in accordance with this prior commitment. If understood in this way, any misgivings or possible

misunderstandings of the type that occur in the course of some proceedings would be avoided.

Following along these lines while always maintaining the desire to be constructive in terms of our considerations by exercising the competences attached to the post of Aldezle, the actions taken should have a bearing on some aspects that must not be overlooked. With all the respect shown by the Ombudsperson to those individuals who perform executive duties, the collaboration required for swift resolution of the matters that arise should be requested. Generally speaking, the speed of response is highly acceptable, although one should insist on the due diligence with which to act in all cases. We believe that deadlines for dealing with some paperwork are excessively long and, insofar as they affect us, we at the Ombudsperson's office also consider ourselves to be co-responsible. It is our duty to not only try but succeed in ensuring cases are resolved within a reasonable time period.

Another aspect that should be improved is the degree of communication and interpersonal relations not only with the Ombudsperson but also with individuals who require attention in view of a given situation. We believe that the University of Deusto takes great care in this aspect and it is precisely for that reason that cases that do not adhere to this course of action prove to be the most striking ones.

Despite the limited expectations of success, we are compelled to insist on a recurring issue. We insisted in last year's report on the need to ensure a moderate, sensible interpretation of the norms and regulations based on respectful yet strict observance. We referred to humanization in terms of applying the law to the benefit of the individual. Over this period we have been in a position to ascertain that those words have had limited or no success insofar as we have needed to act. As one of the duties of the Ombudsperson is to insist – albeit repetitively – on what can be understood as being beneficial to the university, we keep returning to this issue. Individuals and their actions are surrounded by a given context and certain circumstances, meaning it would not be a bad idea to take both into consideration when applying the law and imposing sanctions.

In concluding this report we wish to express our gratitude for the confidence placed in us and for the help received in pursuing this task which is by no means a simple one and, of course, can be improved. We are aware of the huge task that facing the

challenges currently demanded of a university entails, and our challenges are being met with decisiveness and commitment. We should congratulate ourselves for this effort we have made without ever losing sight of the values that inspire the task at hand and make it so much easier to pursue the duties entrusted to the Ombudsperson. Thank you very much.