



Mediator Policy (Pilot 2024-2026)

Category: Operational
Date last Revised: October 29, 2024
Scheduled for review: Spring 2027

I. Overview and Context

The Mediator serves the MRFA community by providing confidential, impartial, and independent conflict management support. The Mediator is a resource for MRFA members who seek assistance with interpersonal conflicts with other Members in Association spaces and activities. This role is rooted in the principles of fairness, respect, and non-adversarial resolution, aiming to promote a collegial and supportive professional environment.

II. Limitations

The Mediator shall not address any charges or complaints that fall under the purview of the *Charges and Hearings* article of the MRFA Bylaws. Matters involving formal disciplinary action or legal proceedings initiated pursuant to the MRFA Bylaws are outside the Mediator's purview. In such cases, members must follow the procedures outlined in the MRFA Bylaws for submitting charges.

Matters that involve disputes between Members outside of Association spaces fall under the Employer's Code of Conduct Policy and are not under the purview of the Mediator. Members also have recourse to Employer's Code of Conduct Policy and are not compelled to utilize the services of the Association's Mediator.

The Mediator's role includes handling conflicts and disputes involving current MRFA Members in Association spaces:

- The Mediator may offer general advice or guidance on conflict management options prior to the initiation of formal proceedings, but shall not engage once formal processes are underway.
- The Mediator does not serve as a formal advocate for any party but works to facilitate fair and balanced outcomes.

III. Eligibility and Appointment Process

The Mediator shall be a Member of the MRFA with relevant experience in mediation and conflict resolution and shall be appointed in accordance with the Association's Appointments Policy.

Candidates must possess

- A background in mediation, negotiation, or conflict resolution.
- An understanding of MRFA policies and bylaws.
- A thorough understanding of the University's Code of Conduct and related policies.
- The ability to remain impartial and maintain confidentiality.

IV. Roles and Responsibilities

The Mediator's primary responsibilities include

- Offering confidential consultations to Members seeking assistance with conflict and relationship management.
- Mediating disputes between MRFA Members.
- Advising on processes for managing conflicts informally and formally within the Association.
- Educating Members, *in situ* or proactively, on conflict management techniques and best practices. This may include offering individual consultation and guidance to those interested in receiving this support.
- Recommending systemic changes to the MRFA Executive to address recurring or significant issues. This may include but not be limited to recommendations pertaining to MRFA Policies and Bylaws.

V. Operating Protocol

The Mediator shall operate according to the following principles:

- **Confidentiality:** All discussions and information shared with the Mediator are strictly confidential unless there is an imminent risk of harm or required disclosure by law.
- **Impartiality:** The Mediator remains neutral and does not take sides.
- **Voluntariness:** Participation in any mediation or individual consultation process is voluntary.
- **Independence:** The Mediator operates independently from the MRFA Executive and reports only in aggregate on general trends or systemic issues, not individual cases.

VI. Reporting

The Mediator shall provide an annual report to the MRFA Executive summarizing

- The types of issues and conflicts addressed (without identifying details).
- Systemic concerns or trends observed.
- Recommendations for improving MRFA processes or policies.

This report should be made available to the MRFA Membership and used to inform future policy developments and member support initiatives.

VII. Conflict of Interest/Loss of Trust

If a Mediator faces a potential conflict of interest in handling a case or if there is a perceived loss of trust by members, the following steps will be taken:

- The Mediator must disclose the conflict and withdraw from involvement in that specific case.
- In the event of a significant loss of trust, the MRFA Executive may recommend early termination of the Mediator's appointment after a thorough review and in consultation with the Mediator.

VIII. Related Policies

- Standards of Professional Conduct
- Community Agreements
- Meeting Policy
- Operational Complaints Policy

IX. Related Committee

The Mediator will work independently and shall report, in aggregate, to the Executive Board annually.