Mediation Frequently Asked Questions

What is the objective of mediation?
The objective of mediation is for neutral, independent mediators to assist those in conflict situations to resolve their differences and reach a mutually acceptable agreement on the way forward.

Mediation is:

- A chance for parties to consider their real needs and interests in confidence
- An opportunity for discussions on a confidential basis
- Future focussed, in addition to reviewing past events and present circumstances
- An opportunity for the parties concerned to reach creative solutions.

Will mediation work?
Mediation has a high success rate but of course there can be no guaranteed outcome. The mediators are there to facilitate but it is up to the parties involved to reach their own agreement.

What is my role in mediation?
Mediation is only as successful as you make it. Your responsibilities are to:

- Decide what the issues are for you in the dispute
- Come to the meeting with an open mind
- Listen respectfully to the other party's point of view
- Look for solutions
- Work with the other party to determine which solution is best for all parties.

What can I expect to happen in mediation?
The mediators will meet with each of you separately to find out more about the situation from your own perspectives before bringing you together in a joint meeting. At the joint meeting your mediators will encourage you to participate. They will work with you to ensure you each have the same opportunity to express your feelings and concerns, look at the problems in turn and move towards a mutual agreement. Your mediators will support and encourage all parties to generate ideas for this solution but will not tell you what you should do.
Do I have to agree to take part in mediation?
No. Mediation is entirely voluntary and needs the agreement of all parties. If you agree to take part you are also free to leave or withdraw at any time. This allows you and the other party to drive the process yourselves and come to your own agreement. It is hoped that this will make you all feel more committed to what you agree.

Will records about mediation be put on my personal file?
Only minimal records are kept by the Mediation Service. They include a brief outline of the presenting issues along with the broad outcome of the mediation. Only in the event that mediation had taken place as part of a formal grievance, complaint or disciplinary process would there be a record that a meeting had taken place on an individual's personal file. The mediation process is confidential and no notes are kept of the process.

Who are the internal mediators and what is their role?
The internal confidential mediators are experienced volunteers from within the University of Bath who have undertaken formal mediation training from Mediation at Work through the Open College Network and receive regular refresher training to enhance their mediation skills.

The mediators are neutral and impartial. They are only interested in helping you reach a mutually acceptable solution. They will manage the mediation process, creating a safe and supportive environment so that you can talk honestly and openly about what has happened and how it has affected you. In particular, the mediators will help you to:

- Clarify the problem and identify a path to resolution
- Identify and acknowledge each other's needs and interests
- Move toward an improved relationship
- Make informed, considered and balanced decisions

Why are there two mediators?
The mediation service uses co-mediation whereby two mediators work together as a team. Neither mediator supports any particular participant, but they simply work together. The advantages of this approach are that you can benefit from the more diverse characteristics of the two mediators (gender, age etc) and their combined skills which usually enhance and complement each other. The mediators themselves benefit from joint debriefing, reflection and encouragement.

What if I don’t get on with the mediators I am allocated?
Mediators are carefully chosen for each case. The general practice is that mediators do not assist people from their own departments. All mediators are trained to a high standard and carefully matched to each case. If you have difficulties with the allocated mediators please contact the Mediation Service Manager and different mediators will be appointed to your case.
What if I am unhappy with the mediation process?

Should you feel uncomfortable or unhappy with any aspect of the mediation process itself you should raise this with the mediator or Mediation Service Manager. If your concerns cannot be resolved the mediation will have to be abandoned.

You will also be given the opportunity to complete an anonymous mediation evaluation form at the end of the process to provide feedback on what we are doing well and where we need to improve. Your response will be treated confidentially.

equalsdiv@bath.ac.uk