

## **Mediation Questions and Answers for Employees**

### **What is the UMB Workplace Mediation Service?**

The Workplace Mediation Service is housed in the Center for Dispute Resolution at the University of Maryland Baltimore (C-DRUM) and provides mediation services to all UMB employees. Any employee may request mediation to assist in the resolution of a conflict they are experiencing at work.

### **What is mediation?**

Mediation is a voluntary and private process to address conflicts. In mediation, parties have a private conversation in an informal setting with the assistance of a trained, neutral facilitator—the mediator. Each employee has an opportunity to discuss what is important to them, and to hear the other side’s point of view. The mediator assists the parties in clarifying issues, exploring interests, and generating solutions that are acceptable to all participants.

Mediation is beneficial because it allows participants to find solutions that will work for them.

Mediation is confidential. With few exceptions, the mediator will not disclose what is discussed in mediation. Mediation participants also agree that what is said in mediation will not be used in administrative or legal proceedings. Written agreements reached in mediation are not confidential. Depending on the agreement reached, a written agreement may be provided to the department that referred the parties to mediation.

### **What can we talk about in mediation?**

Many workplace conflicts can be resolved in the safe, collaborative environment of mediation. Issues such as communication breakdowns between coworkers, scheduling, relationships with co-workers, and disagreements about shared resources are just a few of the issues that can be addressed in mediation.

### **Who are the mediators?**

The mediators are staff members of C-DRUM. Each of them is an experienced practitioner in a variety of dispute resolution processes. The mediations take place in space at Maryland Carey Law, or in an alternative, mutually agreeable, location on the UMB campus.

### **What do mediators do?**

Mediators focus on helping the conversation progress in a way that meets the needs of the employees and fulfills the purpose of mediation. Their responsibilities include remaining neutral to the employees and the workplace issues, reflecting what has been said and asking open-ended questions to identify areas of agreement or disagreement.

**How long does it take?**

Mediation sessions are scheduled for three hours. The opportunity to participate in mediation is supported by UMB administration. Issues are often resolved during the first session. Additional sessions may be scheduled as needed.

**What issues are not appropriate for mediation?**

Sexual misconduct and discrimination should be reported to the Office of Accountability and Compliance. Workplace issues other than sexual misconduct or discrimination are appropriate for mediation. If the workplace issues involve family leave or medical issues you should contact UMB Human Resource Services before requesting a referral to the Workplace Mediation Service. If you are not sure if your situation is appropriate for mediation, call the WMS. The staff can talk with you to determine if mediation is the appropriate process.

**May employees have a mediation with their supervisor?**

Yes, employees may request mediation with their supervisor. The WMS will contact the employee and supervisor to determine their willingness to participate in mediation. The employee and supervisor may choose whether to participate in mediation.

**How do I request mediation?**

Employees may request mediation through one of the UMB referring offices, which provides referrals to WMS for mediation. WMS accepts referrals from the following campus offices:

- UMB Office of the Ombuds (410-706-8534)
- UMB Human Resource Services (410-706-2606)
- UMB Office of Accountability and Compliance (Title IX) (410-706-2281)

After receiving the referral, WMS staff will speak with all parties, assess whether the concerns are appropriate for a mediation setting, and schedule the mediation if all parties agree to participate.

**Questions? Contact WMS at 410-706-4270 or [mediation@umaryland.edu](mailto:mediation@umaryland.edu).**