

Augusta University

Policy Library

Dispute Resolution – Mediation Policy

Policy Manager: Human Resources

POLICY STATEMENT

Augusta University embraces dispute resolution as a means for resolving conflicts and disagreements. It is the policy of Augusta University to resolve disagreements fairly and at the lowest possible level. The faculty, students, and staff of Augusta University are encouraged to seek an appropriate resolution to any conflict within our institution through discussion with those persons and departments that may be involved.

The University also encourages mediation as a form of alternative resolution and provides mediation coordination services to its employees through the Mediation Coordinator and Committee on Mediation Resolution, as necessary.

To define the procedure for resolving disputes and for handling informal mediations.

AFFECTED STAKEHOLDERS

Indicate all entities and persons within the Enterprise that are affected by this policy:

- ☐ Alumni ☒ Faculty ☒ Graduate Students ☒ Health Professional Students
☒ Staff ☒ Undergraduate Students ☐ Vendors/Contractors ☐ Visitors
☐ Other:

Please Note: Faculty members may also follow the procedures outlined in the University Senate Bylaws (2.5.12)

DEFINITIONS

Mediation Coordinator: The Director of Employee Relations/AVP of Employee Engagement within the division of Human Resources serves as the Augusta University Mediation Coordinator for faculty and classified staff matters. The Dean of Students will serve in this role for student matters. When a situation involves a student and a faculty member or a student and a classified staff member, the Director of Employee Relations/AVP of Employee Engagement and Dean of Students will have joint responsibility.

PROCESS & PROCEDURES

Informal Attempts

Conflicts and disagreements between employees and their supervisors are inevitable. It is the policy of Augusta University to resolve disputes fairly, and at the lowest possible level. When conflicts or disagreements occur, employees should first attempt to resolve them through discussion with their supervisor. However, an employee must follow their supervisor's directives, even if they disagree with them, unless the directives are clearly illegal or unsafe, in which case the matter should be brought

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immediately to the next higher authority. When discussion with their supervisor fails to resolve a disagreement, an employee has several other options. They may take the issue up with the next higher authority, or, they may consult the Human Resources Division. The Augusta University Informal Mediation Program is also available to help resolve disputes.

Faculty are welcome to contact the Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs for general inquiries regarding the mediation process.

Mediation

If all reasonable informal efforts to resolve the complaint fail, active members of the Augusta University community are encouraged to request mediation. Mediation is an informal process that involves a neutral third party who will assist in resolving the disagreement. The objective of this process is to come to an agreement that is fair and meets the needs of the parties involved. This process is confidential and private and is conducted in a closed setting. The request for mediation is submitted to Augusta University's Mediation Coordinator. The procedure for filing a request for mediation is given below:

A person makes a request to the Mediation Coordinator for mediation to resolve a conflict.

If either party contends the conflict involves a sexual harassment complaint, the matter will be referred to the AA/EEO Officer and the Title IX Coordinator; the Mediation Coordinator will have no further obligation with such a complaint. However, if neither party characterizes the conflict as involving sexual harassment, the conflict remains with the Mediation Coordinator.

The Mediation Coordinator will recommend a mediator. For mediation between parties who all hold faculty status, mediators will be selected from the group of faculty who are trained mediators. The Mediation Coordinator may consult with the Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs to ensure that no conflicts of interest exist between parties and mediators. Additionally, faculty mediators must not reside in the same college as the parties who are seeking mediation.

If both parties accept the recommended mediator, mediation moves forward. If the recommended mediator is not acceptable to one or both parties, a second mediator is suggested. This process continues until Augusta University's pool of trained mediators is exhausted, at which time a mediator may be sought through the University System of Georgia.

- A. **Oversight and Administration.** The Augusta University Informal Mediation Program shall be administered by the Mediation Coordinator.

The Director of Employee Relations/AVP of Employee Engagement will serve as the Mediation Coordinator as defined above. The Mediation Coordinator will serve as the Chair of the Committee on Mediation Resolution. In addition, the Mediation Coordinator shall:

Act as a first point of contact for any member of Augusta University community who wishes to use the Mediation Program, although those member of the community with faculty status may contact the Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs to initiate the process;

Screen requests for mediation using the criteria described below (and Exhibit “A”);

Provided that mediation is appropriate, arrange for an approved, neutral mediator to mediate the concern(s), including mediators from off-campus when necessary (costs to cover off-campus mediators will be at the expense of the requesting party’s college or department);

Obtain feedback from the participants in each mediation to find ways of improving the Mediation Program (using Exhibit “B”).

- B. **Mediators.** Upon the request of the Mediation Coordinator, mediators shall arrange an appropriate time and place to conduct the mediation in question, obtain the participants’ written consent per Exhibit “C” and conduct the mediation in accordance with their best professional judgment.
- C. **Mediations.** Participation in mediations shall be voluntary. However, managers are strongly advised to include mediation, where appropriate, in the early stages of a dispute before it results in a grievance. Failure to do so may subject the manager to required mediation prior to taking any final disciplinary action against an employee. Time spent in mediations shall be considered part of an employee’s normal working time. Employees shall not be required to take annual or other leave to participate in mediation, and supervisors are strongly discouraged from authorizing the use of overtime for mediations. Supervisors shall make reasonable efforts to make employees available to participate in mediation.

The Mediation Program shall be available for disputes between members of the Augusta University community of faculty, students, and staff, with the following exceptions:

- 1. Disputes that have been the subject of a final ruling or decision according to Augusta University policies and procedures. For example, if someone has already been terminated, mediation is not available. Also, if the President has ruled on a grievance or appeal, then the decision must stand.
- 2. Disputes involving purely academic decisions. Because academic decisions (such as the subjective assessment of a student’s paper) are not subject to administrative or judicial review, they are also inappropriate for mediation. However, concerns involving academic matters may concern other issues such as race or gender discrimination. In those cases, mediation may be available, but only for non-academic issues.
- 3. Disputes that do not concern a matter which, if left unaddressed, could result in either harm to the institution or discipline for an employee or student of Augusta University. This rule is intended to give the Mediation Coordinator the discretion to deny mediation for trivial matters, or for matters that have no relation to the official business of Augusta University.

Both the mediators and the parties should normally consider the statements made during mediation to be private, and the mediator shall normally destroy any notes kept during the mediation. However, there is no legal privilege that protects the statements made during mediations, and all participants, including the mediators themselves, are required to report statements that reveal conduct that is criminal or that poses a significant risk to the safety of others or the proper operation of Augusta University.

The parties to mediation should reduce their resolution of their dispute(s) to writing. Such written agreements must be consistent with the rules and policies of Augusta University. If appropriate, the mediator should remind the parties of the limits of their authority, and of the possible need to discuss their proposed resolution with their supervisors or with other departments on campus which may be affected or involved.

REFERENCES & SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Exhibit A
Exhibit B
Exhibit C

RELATED POLICIES

[USG Dispute Resolution Policy](#)

APPROVED BY:

Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, Augusta University

Date: 9/29/2025

President, Augusta University

Date: 9/30/2025



Mediation Intake Form

1. Person requesting mediation: Click or tap here to enter text.

Telephone number: Click or tap here to enter text.

Date of initial contact: Click or tap to enter a date.

Is mediation appropriate? YES ☐ NO ☐

If no, why not: Click or tap here to enter text.
2. Other potential party to mediation: Click or tap here to enter text.

Telephone number: Click or tap here to enter text.

Date of initial contact: Click or tap to enter a date.

Is mediation appropriate? YES ☐ NO ☐

If no, why not: Click or tap here to enter text.
3. If both parties agree to mediation, who will mediate: Click or tap here to enter text.
4. Are there any anticipated expenses? YES ☐ NO ☐
If yes, provide details: Click or tap here to enter text.
5. Follow-up survey sent on: Click or tap to enter a date.



Mediation Survey

Thank you for recently participating in mediation through the Augusta University Mediation Program. The Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee, which oversees the Mediation Program, would like to know your thoughts on how the mediation worked. Your feedback will help us to improve our program and your cooperation is appreciated.

1. Do you believe that the mediation was helpful? Click or tap here to enter text
2. What aspects of it did you like or dislike? Click or tap here to enter text
3. Have the issues that originally led you to mediation been resolved satisfactorily?
Click or tap here to enter text
4. Please provide us any suggestions you have for the Mediation Program.
Click or tap here to enter text

Again, thank you for taking the time to help us improve our service.



Mediation Agreement

We agree to enter into mediation in a good faith effort to resolve any disputes we may have. By doing so, we understand that we will not be obligated to agree to any particular resolution to our disputes and that we do not waive or forfeit any of our rights under applicable laws and policies. We agree to keep the statements made during this mediation confidential to the extent allowed by applicable laws and policies.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Name

Click or tap to enter a date.

Date

Click or tap here to enter text.

Name

Click or tap to enter a date.

Date

Click or tap here to enter text.

Mediator

Click or tap to enter a date.

Date