



Conflict Resolution

1. Purpose

St. Mary's University (the "University") strives to maintain a positive, collaborative environment where concerns are addressed promptly and constructively, with the ultimate goal of promoting solidarity, subsidiarity, and the dignity of employees. This policy provides a clear, fair, and respectful process for addressing and resolving conflicts in the workplace.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all full-time, part-time or casual employees of the University.

3. Definitions

- 3.1. Conflict - Any disagreement, tension, misunderstanding, dispute, or difference of opinion that arises between employees or within a team in the workplace.
- 3.2. Employee - An individual employed by the University.
- 3.3. Leader - The individual with direct supervisory responsibility for an employee's work, scheduling, and operational coverage.
- 3.4. Workplace - the "workplace" includes the University premises or any other location where employees may engage in University representation, activities or social events.
- 3.5. Good Faith - acting with sincere intention to be fair, open, and honest, free from malice or a desire to defraud another individual or infringe upon their rights, and regardless of the outcome.

4. Principles

- 4.1. The University is committed to maintaining a positive, collaborative environment where concerns are addressed promptly and constructively.
- 4.2. All employees are responsible for ensuring that communication and interactions are respectful where all parties are treated with dignity and fairness.
- 4.3. Early resolution for conflict(s) will be addressed as soon as possible to prevent escalation and with a focus to preserve working relationships and collaboration.
- 4.4. Discussion to address conflict will be solution-focused.
- 4.5. Any information shared during the resolution process should be treated with the utmost confidentiality, except when disclosure is required by another University policy or law.
- 4.6. Resolutions will be sought without bias or favoritism.

| Approval Authority | Responsible Office | Effective Date | Date Last Revisited | Review Frequency |
|---------------------|---|----------------|---------------------|------------------|
| President's Council | Assistant Vice President Human Resources | May 27, 2026 | | Every 5 years |

4.7. No employee will face retaliation for raising a concern or participating in the resolution process in good faith. However, knowingly making false or malicious complaints may result in corrective action.

5. Related Policies

- 5.1. Respectful & Inclusive Community Policy
- 5.2. Standards of Professional Excellence Policy
- 5.3. Institutional Privacy Policy
- 5.4. Human Resources Records Policy

Appendix A: Procedures for Conflict and Complaint Resolution

Appendix A outlines a 3-step escalation process that should be used in addressing and resolving conflict or complaints and the storing of related information.

Procedures:

1. Employees are encouraged to first address the issue directly with the other party in a respectful manner. If needed, a Leader or Human Resources can facilitate an informal discussion. This is considered an informal complaint.
2. If the conflict cannot be resolved informally, the employee should request a mediated complaint, which means that their Leader will assist with dialogue to reach a mutual understanding and resolution. The Leader should mediate but may choose to request that Human Resources mediate.
3. If the conflict cannot be resolved informally or through mediated dialogue, the employee may submit a written complaint to their Leader. The Leader should mediate but may choose to request that Human Resources mediate. The written complaint must include details of the issue, steps taken to resolve it, and desired outcomes. This is considered a formal complaint and the steps to resolution will occur in this order:
 - 3.1. The Leader and/or Human Resources will review the complaint, appropriately investigate the concern(s) and take corrective action to address the concern(s).
 - 3.2. If the conflict is about Human Resources, the President and/or their delegated representative will manage the complaint process. If the complaint is about the President, Human Resources will work directly with the Chair of the Board of Governors.
 - 3.3. Upon completion of an investigation, a resolution plan will be developed and communicated to all parties involved. Follow-up meetings may be scheduled to ensure the resolution is effective.
 - 3.4. When an investigation is conducted, the investigator will:
 - 3.4.1. Presume that the individual(s) named in concerns, disputes or formal complaint(s) is innocent unless a formal decision to the contrary is reached under the terms of this policy,
 - 3.4.2. Endeavour to determine the extent to which other individuals possess information germane to the investigation,
 - 3.4.3. Interview individuals with relevant information,
 - 3.4.4. Gather and review documents, records, or other evidence relevant to the investigation,
 - 3.4.5. Prepare an investigation report, and
 - 3.4.6. Provide findings on if a breach of University policy occurred.
4. Investigative notes and reports will be stored in alignment with the University's Information Management policies, Human Resources Records Policy and *Alberta's Personal Information Protection Act*.