

# THE ACCREDITATION OF PROFESSIONAL MEDIATORS IN IRELAND

## Introduction

**T**his document is the culmination of four year's work by the MII Executive Committee and several working groups to establish professional standards for mediation and the accreditation of practitioner mediators. At a special General Meeting held in December 1994, the text was adopted almost unanimously by the membership.

Extensive discussions were held with the membership and those involved in providing training courses. The requirements set down by the Academy of Family Mediators (AFM) for practitioner membership were examined to see if they could be adopted for Ireland. Developments in the United Kingdom by National Family Mediation (NFM) were studied with the assistance of Marian Roberts.

While the document provides a general framework for the accreditation of all mediators across many arenas (family, commercial, community, schools and public policy mediation), the arrangements described here have been devised to meet the particular needs of family mediation in the first instance. It will be the responsibility of each other arena to adapt this framework to suit their particular needs. The framework is not cast in stone and must remain organic to respond to the changing and developing situation.

*MII wish to express their thanks to all those who took part in the working groups and consultations, particularly: Miriam Logan (Convenor), Siun Kearney, Geoffrey Corry, Maura Wall Murphy, Bill McLaughlin, Gabriel Kiely and Pdraig O'Connor.*

## 1. ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

**1.1. Educational requirement.** In deciding eligibility to enter accredited training courses or as part of direct accreditation, there needs to be a balance between prohibiting people who have not got third level education and leaving entry requirements so vague as to attract trainees who may not be suitable. Two entry routes will be operated. All persons must either have a third level qualification with experience or assemble a personal portfolio outlining their experiences as follows:

**1.1a. Formal degree:** a primary degree or third level qualification should form the optimal basic entry requirement to mediation training. In addition, a number of years professional experience and training in a primary profession or work experience will also be required, such details to be set out in a portfolio. Applicants are bound to come from a wide range of professional backgrounds and qualifications working in family law, therapy, human resource management or even a scientific background.

**1.1b. Without third level education:** persons without a third level qualification or formal education in general will be required to put together a portfolio of their experiences that provides a detailed and substantial account of the following:

## INSIDE

- ① Entry Requirements
- ② Structure Of Training Courses
- ③ Applying For Accreditation
- ④ The Accreditation Board
- ⑤ Accreditation Of Training Courses

- practical work experience with two references
- details of general education and analytical skills
- details of training and other courses attended in interpersonal work and other relevant areas

Definition: A "portfolio" shall be held to mean a written statement supported by documentation.

**1.2. Not less than 25** All persons must not be less than 25 years of age at the time of accreditation. In a situation where the person had not reached 25 years on completion of their accreditation booklet, a reasoned statement may be presented to the Accreditation Board.

**1.3. Essential personal attributes** The MII will furnish trainers with detailed guidelines as to what personal attributes a presenting trainee/student should have. Essential competencies and attributes at this initial stage will include the following:

- to conceptualise and take overviews of situations
- to analyse situations and draw out meanings and implications
- to demonstrate maturity, self-awareness, competence and intelligence
- to handle and balance variables in a situation
- to have good interpersonal communication skills
- a commitment to structure their own learning and to pursue their own ongoing professional development
- to demonstrate an openness and flexibility in their personal style.

A list of other desirable attributes will be outlined and form part of the selection process operated by trainers.

**1.4 Selection interview** It will be the responsibility of trainers and supervisors to assess trainees who plan to seek accreditation, before accepting them for Part II training. Such selection will be through a one-on-one interview and/or a group interactive assessment. This would be for both groups of people - those who come through the third level as well as those without a degree. A self-evaluation questionnaire or other recognised instruments may be appropriate. Where Parts I and II are being provided as an integrated 120 hour course, the interview must take place before the commencement of Part I. For organisations or supervisors/mentors offering stand alone Part II training, an interview will be required to screen trainees before the commencement of Part II.

## 2. STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF TRAINING COURSES

**2.1. Integrated training** The integration of knowledge, skills and attitude is the key to competency. It is only when learning is translated into practice that learning can be said to have taken place. Training courses will therefore need to have a practice dimension at every stage of learning, whether through role play or direct live experience.

**2.2** All training should provide a focus on mediation, the role of the mediator and the principles underlying both. Acquisition of skills is essential to training and these need to be assessed and supervised for competency. A detailed curriculum for trainers will be available from MII following further consultation with trainers.

**2.3 Training requirements** The following two part structure covering 120 hours of integrated mediation training will be used for accrediting training courses:

- Part I: Initial Core Module (60 hours)
- Part II: Inservice Specialist Training (60 hours)

The duration of training from beginning to end should not be less than one academic year.

### Part I: Initial Core Module

**2.4** A minimum of 60 hours of education of which not less than 40 hours of integrated training shall be spent in a structured course approved by MII.

**2.5** This basic training will not involve direct work with the client but will focus on skill development in training workshops through observation, role play and structured experiences. It is seen as an introductory course to mediation which could be applied in different arenas such as family, commercial, community, environmental and public policy mediation. This core mediation training to consist of different modules:

#### 1. Knowledge

- alternative dispute resolution systems
- conflict analysis and escalation theory
- negotiation and mediation dynamics
- process knowledge (interventions, strategies, tactics)
- substantive knowledge (psychology, sociology)
- legal context and procedural rules

**2. Skills:**

the actions and intellectual processes which mediators use from pre-mediation through to settlement including analytical skills, communication skills, organisational skills and planning skills

**3. Attitudes:**

the values and professionalism exhibited by the mediator in relationship to personal values and established codes of professional conduct.

**4. Mediation role play:**

no less than 10 hours of direct role play experience.

2.6 These criteria are not seen as immutable by MII and can be changed over the years to support good professional practice. Experienced professionals may be exempted from certain modules where they have acquired competence in that area.

2.7 On successful completion of Part I training, a certificate of completion for accreditation purposes can be offered to trainees by the training agency for a course approved by MII.

**Part II: Inservice Specialist Training**

2.8 **Code of ethics** The trainee mediator must have demonstrated an understanding of a recognised code of ethics and professional practice before commencing to mediate with clients. MII will develop its own code relevant to the Irish situation and culture. In the meantime, the Code Of Practice of the Academy of Family Mediators, or any other code that may be approved by the Accreditation Board, may be used.

2.9 **Practice placements** Undertaken in a specific field of mediation (family mediation, commercial, public policy, etc), this training will have concurrent co-mediated practice and supervised direct mediation experience. In other words, the initial few cases will be co-mediated with the supervisor while the other cases will be under supervision with the mentor chosen by the student under contract.

2.10 **Accreditation booklet** The MII will provide an accreditation booklet which will clearly set out the skills and competencies that each mediator must demonstrate in case work. The booklet will be completed as the trainee progresses through Part II by a process of joint evaluation between the supervisor and the student mediator. MII

requires that this booklet will not be completed in less than 16 hours interface between the supervisor and the trainee. All of this would be certified by an approved fieldwork supervisor. A supervisor must be an accredited mediator and must provide supervision of at least 12 cases with an accompanying 15 hours supervision.

2.11 The supervisor will make a contract with each trainee and supply the Accreditation Booklet. The MII intend to run a workshop for supervisors to introduce and to develop the booklet with the assistance of an external consultant.

2.12 **Alternative to Accreditation booklet** A supervisor may propose to the Accreditation Board alternative arrangements to the accreditation booklet provided that the same standard and criteria in terms of skills and competencies as set out in the booklet are met.

2.13 **Specific requirements** Overall, Part II involves at least 60 hours mediation experience and supervision embracing the following elements:

1. Co-mediation and/or direct supervision for the initial cases for a minimum of 15 hours
2. Practical experience of at least 12 real cases with clients
3. Joint preparation of the accreditation booklet normally with the same supervisor involving at least 16 hours
4. Focused readings in the knowledge base of the specific field
5. Attendance at advanced workshops dealing with specialist topics.
6. Preparation of 6 written agreements from cases undertaken solo by the trainee.

**3. APPLYING FOR ACCREDITATION**

3.1 **Application process** On successful completion of Part I and Part II training courses, the mediator seeking accreditation will present all the necessary documentation to the MII Accreditation Board (that is, the accreditation booklet signed by the supervisor, six completed agreements and the supervisor's recommendation for accreditation). Applications will need to be sent in a confidential envelope to the Chairperson of the Accreditation Board and all documentation to be certified as the trainee's sole work. A covering letter should include the applicant's personal details (name and address)

which should not appear elsewhere on the documentation so as not to identify the applicant to the assessors. Applications may be received at any time.

3.2 An administration fee will be charged to mediators applying for MII accreditation.

3.3 **Board decision** Following examination by the Board, a YES decision or a NO decision on competency will be given. Where there is a NO decision the Board will indicate the areas where competency has not been achieved. The applicant has the option of resubmitting their application following on further development of those competencies indicated by the assessors.

3.4 **Qualification** The successful applicant mediator will then become a Practitioner Member of the Mediators Institute Ireland (PMMII). The MII will continue to explore how the integrated education and training credits obtained through Parts I and II can be linked to a recognised third level qualification such as a Diploma in Mediation.

3.5 **Existing practitioners** Between the meeting of Mediators Institute Ireland that approves this document and the 1995 AGM, the interim Accreditation Board (as nominated at the special General Meeting on 6th December 1994) will accept applications with supporting documentation from experienced practitioner mediators prior to the new arrangements being introduced. Two application routes will operate:

- a) **Existing certified senior or practitioner members** of the Academy of Family Mediation may submit a photocopy of their AFM certificate together with a statement of the number of hours practised since being certified and a list of workshops attended over the past two years.
- b) **Non AFM members** with over 200 hours case work experience or 30 cases and who were trained by approved trainers/consultants recognised by the Accreditation Board in a structured course may submit a statement setting out their case work experience and the training courses and/or workshops attended together with the documents specified at sub-paragraph 6 of paragraph 2.13. For those who may not be in a position to complete all of 200 hours or 30 cases by the deadline of the June 1995 AGM, they may submit an application in writing requesting an extension of time. This time extension may be given at the discretion of the Accreditation Board.

3.6 **Continuing accreditation** Every two years, a certified practitioner shall reapply for their practising certificate. Each practitioner must show how they have continued to use their skills and to update their professional competence by compiling a short report to the Accreditation Board. A practising certificate will be issued for a period of two years.

3.7 **Register** An up to date register of all certified practitioner members will be kept by the Institute.

## 4. THE ACCREDITATION BOARD

4.1 An Accreditation Board to approve applications from practitioners will be elected at the Annual General Meeting held in 1995 and at subsequent annual meetings. The Accreditation Board will be appointed directly by the members at the AGM from names submitted by the MII Executive Committee and from nominations proposed and seconded by members in advance of the meeting. At and after the 1995 AGM, no person except MII practitioner members and the external member(s) mentioned in 4.2 shall be eligible for membership of the Accreditation Board.

4.2 <sup>a</sup>**Purpose** The task of the Accreditation Board is to receive applications from trainee mediators and others for admission to Practitioner Membership and to decide whether they meet the criteria set down by the Mediators Institute Ireland. The Board will present an annual report to the AGM of the Mediators Institute Ireland and may comment on any aspect of professional standards, code of practice or practitioner training.

4.2. <sup>b</sup>**Membership of the Board** The Board will initially consist of ~~five~~ Practitioner Members representing the private, voluntary and state sectors. In addition, at least one member external to the field of mediation but with related professional experience will be nominated by the Executive Committee. As applications are made from other fields of mediation, the Board membership will be expanded accordingly. This may lead eventually to a situation where the Board may consist of ten members. The Board may also appoint an external consultant to assist the development of its work.

4.3. **Rotation system of appointment** The first Board will serve for two years. Thereafter, a rotation system will operate to preserve continuity from year to year with two members retiring from the Board each year. Retiring Board members may stand again for re-appointment

after a time period of one year.

**4.4. Chairperson** The Board will appoint a Chairperson from amongst its members who will handle all correspondence relating to applications.

**4.5 Assessment panel** The Chairperson will select three assessors from the Board to form a panel to review each application. For example, if an applicant is practicing in the area of family mediation, then the Board in this instance could be formed from two members with expertise in family mediation and one drawn from some other specialist mediation field. This would allow for professional recognition from practitioners across the various fields of mediation. If one of the panel members was closely involved with an applicant as an employer/manager or in some other conflict of interest, then the Chairperson could draw on another member of the Board.

**4.6** When all three panel members have considered an application, two YES votes will be deemed sufficient by the Board Chairperson to admit to Practitioner Membership, provided that he/she is satisfied that the criteria is met. The Board Chairperson will communicate the decision to the applicant. All correspondence will be dealt with by the Chairperson.

## 5. ACCREDITATION OF TRAINING COURSES

**5.1** Trainers and supervisors wishing to have their course accredited by MII for Parts I and II should present the training content and methodology to the Accreditation Board. In addition, an outline of the context and conditions in which the training practice will be provided together with a personal resume of their own training and experience should be included. Trainers and supervisors should have a minimum of three years practical mediation experience and be accredited members of MII (or equivalent) before they apply. Information should include:

- a) all essential topics that are being covered
- b) the minimum number of hours set out for each topic
- c) a timetable of how a training day is structured.
- d) the ratio of trainees to accredited trainers
- e) a copy of the evaluation form used or to be used by the trainer.

**5.2** Where a training manual is being used, a copy shall be available for inspection by the Accreditation Board. Where there is no training manual, a portfolio of documentation used shall be provided. In all instances, copyright must be protected by the Board.

**5.3 Evaluation of training courses** The Board may withdraw accreditation from trainers and supervisors if, in the opinion of the Board, such persons have not reached or are not maintaining acceptable standards in their training or supervision or both.

**5.4** Trainers and supervisors will be required to ask trainees to complete a written evaluation at the end of both Parts I and II on a form laid down or approved by the Board. These evaluation sheets shall be stored in safe keeping by the trainer for inspection by the Board. Each trainer or supervisor shall submit to the Accreditation Board annually the originals of each trainee evaluation s/he has received in the preceding twelve months. The Board's Chairperson shall in the first place assess those forms and, if the Chairperson is in doubt about continuing the accreditation of that trainer or supervisor, s/he shall circulate copies to the other members of the Board for their consideration.

### Summary of Proposals

#### ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

- 1a. Formal degree: a primary degree or third level qualification with professional experience
- 1b. Without third level education: personal portfolio of experiences
2. Not less than 25 years of age
3. Essential personal attributes

#### STRUCTURE OF TRAINING COURSES

##### Part I: Initial Core Module (60 hours)

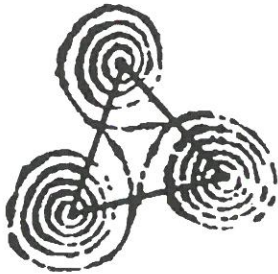
1. Knowledge
2. Skills
3. Attitudes
4. Mediation role play: no less than 10 hours

##### Part II: Inservice Specialist Training (60 hours)

1. Co-mediation and/or direct supervision for initial cases (15 hours)
2. Practical experience of 12 real cases
3. Joint preparation of accreditation booklet with supervisor (16 hours)
4. Focused readings
5. Attendance at advanced workshops
6. Preparation of 6 written agreements

#### APPLYING FOR ACCREDITATION

1. Accreditation booklet signed by the supervisor
2. Six completed agreements
3. Certificates of degree or formal education
4. Certification of mediation courses attended



# Mediators Institute Ireland

is a professional association of mediators in Ireland. The Institute was formed in 1992 following a working party report drawn up by practitioners, some of whom were involved in an informal network since 1984.

Members are involved in a number of specialist areas of mediation:

- Family mediation
- Community mediation
- Environmental and Public Policy mediation
- Business and Commercial mediation
- Labour Relations conciliation
- Mediation within organisations
- Schools and Student mediation

The Institute provides a network for all practising mediators and all interested in developing the process of mediation in Ireland. Services include:

- Training workshops
- Conferences
- Newsletter
- Support Groups
- Register of practitioner members
- Accreditation and professional standards

If you are interested in becoming a member of Mediators Institute Ireland, send your request in writing with a membership subscription of \$20 to:

Barbara Wood

13 Royal Terrace West

Dun Laoghaire

Co Dublin

Phone: (01) 2845277

FAX 01-2800259

Name	Agency	Contact Phone
Grace Thomas	Central Sydney Area Health Service	9736-7053
Janette Reed	Royal Prince Alfred Hosp.	9575 7731
Chris Patchett	Central Sydney Area Health	9515 8985
Victoria Pisani	ADRA	9789 3899
DAVID ROBINSON	CJC/RELATIONSHIPS (AUST)	92288380
PETER IRVING	FAMILY MED. CENTRE / ADRA	2614077
Michelle Blonder	UNIFAM " "	93614077
Joy Mann	CJC	9665-4329
Rita Trett	CJC	9692-0513
GEOFF PRICE	GEOFF PRICE ASSOCIATES	9427 9128.
GWEN EDWARDS	CJC (PENRITH)	047 513361 (WIS 047 216108)
STEPHANIE MARCINOW	REL. AUST.	9363 4029
BASIL EVANGELINIDIS	R/A ICJC	9489 1724
NOVA HUPPERT	Australian College of Applied Psychology	(02) 91813918
PATRINA DUFFY	Relationships Australia (NSW)	9630 3710
PETER BATES	CJC / ADRA.	99593471
JOHN POLLARD	THORNTONS (SOLICITORS)	
& PAUL LEWIS	307 PITT ST SYDNEY	92642573.
Jon <del>Atkin</del> Graham	RA (NSW) Mediation	93271222
Fran De Biasi	Med. (student) 50 Edward St Nth Sydney NSW 2060	(H) 9957 4935 (W) 9901 8263
MARINA BOURNAZOS	CENTACARE	(02) 9913 3888

Paul Zeattie Northern Beaches Family Mediation Service 9913-3888.  
Melody Smythe " " " " " "  
Ane Seillafe " " " " " "  
Barbara Jernakoff Co F.M.S.  
59 WYOMEE AVE. W. PYMBLE (02) 9449 4810

GEOFF PRICE GEOFF PRICE ASSOCIATES (02) 9427 9128  
20 UPPER CLIFF RD  
NORTHWOOD NSW 2066

GWYN EDWARDS COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTRE 047 216108 WK.  
LEVEL 1 047 513361 HM,  
311 HIGH STREET, PENRITH

STEPHANIE MARCINOW 1/105a Darling Pt Rd 02-93634029.  
Darling Point, NSW 2027

BASIL EVANGELINIDIS 8 TRENTINO RD. 02-9489 1724  
TURRAMURRA - NSW 2074

# Attendee's at Barbara Wood's talk

Name	Address	Phone
Yolande Schilt	Centacare Suite 2, Level 1 8 Jacobs St BANKSTOWN	Ph: 97937522 Fax: 97096637
Nefley Takacs	44 Bungalow Rd Roselands.	97597937
Pat Frater	16 Summit Ave Lee Why	99710735
Iben Hensen	72 Myrna Rd Strathfield	96421840
Glynn O'Neill	62 <del>Bell</del> Kambala Rd Bellerue Hill	93272251
Khilia Renouf	3/275 Edgely Rd Woolakur	93281837
Nora Huppert	29/72 St. George cat. 2047	91813918
Pete Bates	Unit 1, 1 Clark Rd North Sydney 2060	99593471
RAYMOND BRAZIL	CENTACARE 33 WARE ST FAIRFIELD 2165	7256800
Dianna ROOGH	Centacare: 8 Jacobs St. Bankstown.	97937522
ALEN GERARDIS	Pd Box 1583 BONDI JUNCTION 2021	93892872
LIONEL SHOOLMAN	45 DARNLEY ST GORDON	94992431
Michelle Brenner	5/19 Ramsgate Ave Bonnet Beach	93650661
Frank Artill	22 Osborne Rd Manly	99774065
Catherine Johnson	10 Weaver St, RYDE 2112 8/233 Macquarie St, SYDNEY, 2000	98171177 92332440