

POLICY: CONFLICT RESOLUTION

DATE REVIEWED:

RATIFIED BY THE BOARD ON:

PURPOSE: To address internal complaints, conflict and disputes. Gulf FM recognises that resolving internal complaints, conflicts and disputes is essential to the welfare of its volunteers.

INTERNAL COMPLAINTS:

In managing internal complaints from station members, Gulf FM will pursue the following commitments:

1. A fair, transparent and impartial investigation process.
2. Make all reasonable effort to resolve the internal complaint within 90 days.
3. Provide all parties involved with reasonable notice of any meetings.
4. Provide access to some form of independent mediation process where resolution is not easily achieved.
5. Provide access to appeals process.
6. Respect all individuals' rights to privacy and to fair and equal treatment.

PROCEDURE:

1. Parties to a dispute or complaint should attempt to resolve the issue by informal discussion with each other.
2. Should an "informal" process fail to reach a resolution, a written complaint must be submitted to the Board detailing the names of all parties concerned and the nature of the complaint.
3. **Note:** Certain complaints such as sexual harassment, victimisation or discrimination are covered by State Legislation which takes precedence over GulfFM procedures and may require alternate actions to those described herein.

STAGE 1: INVESTIGATION:

Gulf FM will investigate complaints with all parties concerned by a nominated officer with the authority to represent GulfFM (eg Chairperson, Station Manager) or a Complaints and Dispute Resolution Committee comprising representatives of the Board or other impartial members appointed to that Committee.

The Investigation Process will generally follow these steps:

1. Establish if there has been any breach of Station Policy, Broadcasting Law or other legal requirements.
2. Recommend appropriate action in relation to programmers/volunteers/staff if a breach has occurred.
3. Negotiate for dispute resolution by managing discussions between disputants, which is aimed to bring about agreement or a settlement of opposing demands or attitudes.
4. Recommend appropriate legal response if legal action is likely, or is taking place.

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5. Recommend appropriate response to the complainant/s after taking legal advice if necessary.
6. Recommend appropriate action/s needed to avoid further breaches.
7. Write to all parties involved in the investigation outlining the outcomes of the investigation and informing them that they have a right to lodge a letter of appeal regarding the determination made by the investigating party to the full Board of GulfFM at their next meeting.

STAGE 2: MEDIATION

Where complaints are not resolved through the findings of the investigation process –

1. Consider independent mediation or arbitration if a reasonable outcome for all parties cannot be achieved.
2. Consider impartial legal or other expert advice if required.

STAGE 3: REPORTING AND RECORD-KEEPING:

To keep a record of material relating to complaints, including logging tapes or audio copies of broadcast material, and written documentation for one (1) year, including –

1. The date and time the complaint was received
 2. The name and address of the complainant
 3. The substance of the complaint
 4. The substance and date of Gulf FM's response.
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COMPLAINTS & DISPUTE RESOLUTION COMMITTEE

ROLE:

To Investigate & Resolve:

- ✓ any complaints or disputes between GulfFM members/volunteers.
- ✓ any complaints by listeners to GulfFM
- ✓ any complaints by sponsors of GulfFM
- ✓ any other complaints referred to the Committee by the Board of GulfFM

The person alleging the complaint or dispute must submit all complaints and/or disputes in writing.

In the first instance the Board of GulfFM shall assess and may choose to try and resolve the complaint itself as it will be the first party to review the complaint document.

Where a complaint is against one or more members of the Board of GulfFM, those persons shall be excluded from the complaint investigation process to the extent that they could unfairly affect the outcome of that investigation. A complaint

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against the Board of GulfFM as a whole shall be referred to an appointed Complaints and Dispute Resolution Committee which shall comprise a majority of non-GulfFM Board members.

The Board of GulfFM shall investigate the complaint fully and determine actions to be taken, including removal of responsibility, suspension of Membership and/or air-time. Where the matter has been referred to an “external committee”, that committee shall make recommendations to the Board of GulfFM as to the actions required.

COMPOSITION OF THE EXTERNAL COMMITTEE:

The Complaints and Dispute Resolution Committee shall comprise of a Chairperson and two other persons. They need not be members of GulfFM and shall not be an office-bearer of GulfFM, and, if they are a member of the GulfFM Board it would be desirable that they have no other area of responsibility within the GulfFM Board.

In the event of any possible conflict of interest, the member should not take part in the investigation.

Selection of Complaints and Dispute Resolution Committee:

The following persons may be selected as members of the Complaints and Dispute Resolution Committee:

Any Police Officer, Justice of the Peace, Medical Officer, Respected business person, other as determined by the Board of GulfFM
