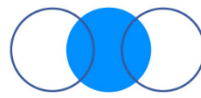


<b>Code</b>	<b>AP.001</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Audit Policy</b>
<b>Status</b>	<b>Active</b>
<b>Prepared by</b>	<b>Stuart Hanson</b>
<b>Approved by</b>	<b>Dorian Roberto Ramirez Sosa</b>
<b>Date Approved</b>	<b>06.05.19</b>
<b>Revision Number</b>	<b>Version 1.0</b>
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<b>Date of next review</b>	<b>05.05.21</b>
<b>Contact Officer</b>	<b>Stuart Hanson</b>
<b>Distribution Status</b>	<b>Controlled</b>



## **1. Introduction**

File audits are a crucial part of Direct Mediation Services' (DMS) strategy to improve the mediation service it delivers to service users. The evaluation of performance against standards or through comparative analysis, with the aim of informing management, is an essential component of a modern mediation firm. It forms part of DMS's governance arrangements helping to ensure safe and effective mediation practices.

File audit is a key mechanism in the process of monitoring compliance with standards, guidelines and mediation outcomes. It is intended that file audits will aid DMS's management to measure the extent to which day to day mediation practices meet agreed standards and to make improvements in performance if required, in order to improve service user outcomes and enhance their quality of their life going forward after a divorce or separation.

## **2. Purpose**

This document sets out the key principles for conducting a file audit within DMS. DMS is committed to improving family mediation provision through improvement initiatives and will actively encourage all mediation staff and those in training to be involved in file audit. This policy should be referred to when organising file audit activity.

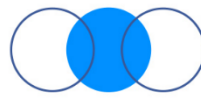
This policy is intended to:

- Make a clear statement of DMS's intentions to imbed file audit throughout all its family mediation activities
- Set rules for those involved in audit activity to manage activity in a consistent manner and in accordance with best practice where ever possible

Key Points of the Policy:

- File audit will be an integral part of the family mediation service delivery and governance
- An annual programme of file audit will be agreed and delivered, developed and monitored by the Legal Aid Supervisor and the Managing Partner

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### **3. Duties**

The person accountable for file audit is the Managing Partner, who is accountable for the monitoring of standards, supported by the Office Manager and Legal Aid Supervisor.

The Managing Partner will:

- Ensure file audits take place in the firm and provide guidance accordingly
- Liaise with DMS Office Manager, LA Supervisor and mediation staff
- Schedule file audits and meetings with staff involved in the audit process
- Conduct audits of the Legal Supervisor's files if she mediates on cases
- Make decision and implement action plans and support staff following audit
- Review and agree any changes re: audit policy and procedure

The Legal Aid Supervisor will:

- Carry out audits and maintain audit records
- Design and update documentation to be used in the audit process
- Will liaise directly with the practice manager concerning audits of files
- Carry out Supervision meetings with family mediators in accordance with Legal Aid requirements
- Work with the Managing Partner to provide feedback and implement any training requirements
- Attend meetings internally and with the Legal Aid Agency
- Carry out work in view of guidance written by the Family Mediation Council and Legal Aid Agency

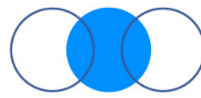
The Office Manager will:

- Create document checklists
- Order and maintain digital mediation files
- Take action to ensure files are complete regarding documentation
- Liaise with family mediators and DMS Managing Partner

### **4. Mediator Training Plans**

DMS holds training and development plans for each member of staff and these reviewed annual by DMS's Managing Partner and DMS Supervisor at a management meeting specifically designated for the review of the staff performance, training and training and development plan. Training and development plans needed to be presented at this meeting. DMS do not request sight of continuing professional development, as this is monitored by Member Organisations (MO) of the Family Mediation Council (FMC). The individual mediator must produce certificates to the MO and sign a declaration which is countersigned by the mediator's PPC. The MO will

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check the declarations and records. When mediators accredit, register and re-register the same process is followed.

The DMS training, development and appraisal this year will be held on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> August 2019.

Each member of staff is reviewed upon an on-going basis and DMS records the concerns, review and discussions. Notes are available of staff where concerns have been raised.

## **5. Family Mediator Competency**

All DMS mediators are accredited, and each accredited mediator must provide a training and development plan to the FMC upon registration, accreditation, reaccreditation. The FMC process thereby ensures that individual training and development plans are in place. Working Towards Accreditation (WTA) mediators have to provide their PPC agreed training and development plans and the FMC for registration.

All mediators that are FMCA are competent to mediate all issues mediation. Work is allocated accordingly. WTA mediators always co mediate with FMCA, having undertaken a briefing session prior to the mediation. The Managing Partner (or delegated representative) reviews MIAMs, as they are completed and if complex cases are identified, these will be discussed with the Practice Supervisor and allocated accordingly. Where issues of competency and capacity have been identified by DMS or the Practice Supervisor, the mediator may be allocated certain categories of work, asked to co-mediate, undertake training or removed from active mediation (temporary or permanent).

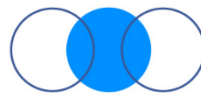
## **6. Supervision Meetings**

To ensure quality and competence, on the 16<sup>th</sup> May 2019, DMS Managing Partner & Practice Supervisor are providing a group supervision for WTA mediators regarding the preparation of documentation, session records, MOU, OFS, parenting plans to ensure the quality of work and documentation. The practice supervision will be delivered by Jan Coulton (Practice Supervisor) and the DMS specific content by Stuart Hanson (Managing Partner).

All supervision sessions are recorded by the Supervisor or PPC and include, date, duration of session, cases, issues and areas discussed. Personal development, training requirements and time scale will be contained in the session record. DMS holds records of all supervision session and these will be reviewed upon an annual basis. The DMS meeting to discuss supervision will be 13<sup>th</sup> August 2019.

The group supervision being held on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2019 will be subject to requirements. The day is a full day, 5 hours and will be regarded as group supervision, 2.5 hours allocated to each individual towards the mandatory 10 hours of working towards accreditation supervision required by the FMC.

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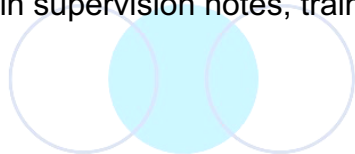
The norm is for one to one supervision. The group supervision is taking place for WTA mediators who may have some future input into Legal Aid work as co mediators with FMAC mediators. All FMCA mediators have engaged in one to one supervision

Admin staff are supervised and there are staff meetings each month at the beginning of the month where issues and concerns are raised. This is chaired by the Practice Manager.

## **7. Audit Sample**

Dates of individual supervision records are maintained by DMS, supervision of administrative matters is 100%. Supervision of mediators is conducted at least one hour per quarter one – to – one supervision. If concerns are identified then additional supervision may be put in place.

The Practice Supervisor has access via 'drop box' to all files and can monitor and review all mediators work. DMS Managing Partner has 100% review of incoming documentation. Concerns as to quality will be raised with the Practice Supervisor. An example of this, is non-use company templates for MIAMs, session records. Supervision needs are identified by the Practice Supervisor during supervision, file review, review of drop box, pre-case briefing, post case brief and discussion with the Managing Partner. Development of skills and knowledge is monitored and recorded in supervision notes, training plans and ultimately at management review.



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