

Mediation Skills

Background

The United Nations plays a major role in the management and resolution of international conflicts. It is a unique actor in the field of international conflict management which successfully negotiates and implements many of the settlements that have ended some of the most protracted conflicts in the world. Mediation is deployed in the context of international conflicts and intra-state conflicts to advance peacemaking, and requires individuals who have the necessary experience, professionalism and judgement to effectively resolve disputes. By improving one's mediation skills and developing an understanding of the UN's role in the mediation process, diplomats will be better equipped to prevent and manage international disputes. This e-Learning course will enable participants to enhance their knowledge, strategies and skills in mediation processes.

Event objectives

This e-Learning course aims to improve the practical skills of diplomats in international mediation and in understanding the role of the UN in resolving conflicts. The course will offer insights into the mediation process. The course will also assess the process of gaining entry into a mediation initiative and examine the early and later stages of mediation. In particular, it will touch upon the importance of re-framing, active listening and communication when trying to generate options and crafting an agreement that is acceptable to all the parties.

Learning objectives

By the end of this e-course, participants should be able to:

- Define mediation and the role of the mediator in preparing, strategizing and prioritizing effective interventions;
- Describe the different phases involved in the mediation process;
- Explain the UN's role in international mediation;
- Develop mediation skills which can be utilised in international diplomacy;
- Analyze the political, diplomatic and cultural dimensions of mediation.

Content and structure

The course will include four modules:

1. Introduction to mediation in international diplomacy and the role of a mediator;
2. Pre-mediation, gaining entry and the early stages of mediation;
3. The role of proximity talks, re-framing, active listening and communication in generating interest-based options to craft an agreement;
4. Case studies.

Methodology

e-Learning: The course is internet-based, moderated by senior international experts, asynchronous, and places emphasis on online discussions and self-paced learning. The participants will be primarily responsible for their own learning over the four-week span of the course. The course will consist of the following components:

Compulsory and optional reading material, intended to teach the basic concepts and principles of the lesson's subject-matter;

External links to additional books, articles, documents, and websites related to the lessons;

Quizzes and case studies at the end of each module. To be eligible for the course certificate, a passing grade of 80% on both quizzes and case studies is required;

A Community Discussion Board will be available for participants to post questions or comments visible to the instructor and other participants. This discussion board will be moderated by the course director and UNITAR.