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Civil and Commercial Professional Mediation Foundation Training Course

Assessment Policy

Course: IMI CMTP – Civil & Commercial Mediation

Purpose and Scope

This Assessment Policy outlines the principles, procedures, and quality assurance systems governing learner assessment on the Veritas Mediation Academy (VMA) IMI Civil & Commercial Mediation Professional Training Course (CMTP).

The policy ensures that all assessment methods:

- accurately evaluate learner competence against the Competency Framework
- demonstrate learners' knowledge, understanding, and practical mediation skills
- maintain fairness, validity, reliability and transparency
- reflect authentic, real-world Civil & Commercial mediation practice

This policy applies to all assessments within the CMTP, including:

Assessment 1 – Practical Skills Demonstration and Reflection

Assessment 2 – Knowledge Essay: Conflict and Negotiation Theory

Assessment 3 – Knowledge Essay: Adapting Practice for In-Person Mediation

All assessors, moderators, tutors, and learners must follow this policy.

Assessment Principles

VMA's assessment approach is grounded in evidence-based educational and assessment science. The following principles guide all assessment design and practice:

Validity

Assessments measure the intended IMI-aligned competencies and reflect authentic Civil & Commercial mediation practice.

Reliability

Assessments produce consistent outcomes across learners, assessors, and time, using rubrics, dual-marking, and standardisation.

Fairness and Equity

Assessment processes are free from bias and accessible to all learners, with reasonable adjustments where appropriate.

Authenticity

Assessment tasks simulate real-world mediation contexts, including role-play, reflective analysis, and case-based knowledge evaluation.

Transparency

Learners receive all marking criteria, rubrics, guidance and expectations in advance.

Constructive Alignment

Learning outcomes, learning activities, and assessment criteria are explicitly aligned, ensuring coherence across the programme.

Reflective and Experiential Learning

Assessment is used as a tool not only to evaluate competency but to strengthen reflective practice, consistent with Kolb, Schön, and Ericsson's deliberate practice principles.

Overview of Assessment Methods

VMA uses a three-part assessment model, with each assessment sampling a different dimension of mediator competence:

Assessment	Purpose	Core Competencies
Assessment 1 – Skills Demonstration & Reflection	Evaluate practical mediator competence through a 60-minute role-play + written reflection	IMI behavioural competencies, communication, process, neutrality, self-reflection
Assessment 2 – Knowledge Essay: Conflict & Negotiation Theory (2,000 words)	Assess theoretical knowledge and ability to apply conflict/negotiation theory to mediation practice	IMI knowledge competencies; conflict theory; negotiation dynamics; reflective insight
Assessment 3 – Knowledge Essay: In-Person Practice (2,000 words)	Assess understanding of in-person mediation environment, rapport-building, accessibility, and process adaptation	IMI process, rapport, inclusivity, environment, comparative practice

All assessments require learners to demonstrate Advanced Beginner (Satisfactory) competency across every rubric criterion.

Practical Skills Assessment (Assessment 1)

Assessment 1 consists of: a 60-minute recorded role-play in which the learner mediates a Civil & Commercial dispute and a written structured reflection, referencing times in the video

Rubrics evaluate:

- communication (listening, summarising, reframing)
- impartiality and neutrality
- managing conflict and emotion
- process management and structure
- ethical and professional conduct
- reflective insight

Assessment 1 uses a formal template as scaffolding for professional reflective practice.

To pass, learners must demonstrate Satisfactory (3) in every assessment criterion.

Knowledge Assessment (Assessment 2)

“From Theory to Practice: A Mediator’s Reflection on Conflict and Negotiation Models”

Learners complete a 2,000-word structured academic essay demonstrating:

Knowledge of theory: Learners must select two theories from the core set (e.g., Interest-Based Negotiation, Attribution Theory, Cognitive Biases, BATNA/WATNA, TKI, Circle of Conflict) and explain:

- origins of theory
- core principles
- relevance to mediation
- how theory explains conflict dynamics and negotiation behaviour

Application to mediation practice: Learners must show how theory informs mediator communication and questioning, process decisions and neutrality and facilitation. They must

also apply theory to the management of emotion, bias and assumptions and show how theory informs option generation and reality-testing. Examples from role-play are mandatory.

Reflective development: Learners reflect on what they have learned, how theory shapes their mediator identity and identify areas for further development

Academic competence: Learners must demonstrate a clear structure, academic tone and the use of Harvard referencing in their written work.

Learners must reach Satisfactory (3) in all assessment criteria.

Knowledge Assessment (Assessment 3)

“From Screen to Scene: Adapting Mediation Practice for In-Person Engagement”

Learners complete a 2,000-word structured essay demonstrating knowledge of:

Practical requirements of in-person mediation: including venue setup, room allocation, privacy and confidentiality, layout, neutrality and accessibility and equipment and environment management.

Rapport building: including non-verbal communication, psychological safety, tension reduction techniques and trust-building strategies.

Comparison between online and in-person mediation: including communication differences, atmosphere and dynamics, mediator adaptations and process management differences.

Inclusive practice: including identifying needs, making reasonable adjustments and supporting equitable participation.

Reflection: Learners reflect on how this knowledge shapes their mediator professionalism.

Learners must achieve Satisfactory (3) in every criterion.

Rubric-Based Competency Assessment

All assessments use criterion-referenced rubrics with a 5-point scale: 5 = Excellent, 4 = Good, 3 = Satisfactory (Advanced Beginner – minimum passing standard), 2 = Needs Improvement, 1 = Poor

Rubrics maintain consistency, fairness, and alignment with IMI competencies:

Assessment 1: Skills Demonstration and Reflection

Type: Skills Demonstration and Reflection

Format: Video Role-Play (60 mins) + Written Reflection 1,000 Words (+/-10%)

Assessment Weighting: Practical Skills and Self-Review

Level Expected: Advanced Beginner

Competency Standards: IMI Competency Framework

Marking Grid

Criterion	Excellent (5)	Good (4)	Satisfactory (3)	Needs Improvement (2)	Poor (1)
Session Opening	Opens session with clarity and confidence; explains process, sets ground rules, and conveys neutrality effectively.	Clear explanation with minor omissions; neutrality and structure mostly maintained.	Basic opening; explains process and rules with limited clarity or confidence.	Explanation vague or incomplete; neutrality inconsistently communicated.	Fails to explain session structure or establish neutrality.
Use of Mediation Skills	Skillfully integrates summarising, reframing, and questioning; manages tone and pace fluently.	Most core skills demonstrated effectively; some inconsistency in pacing or phrasing.	Core skills evident but uneven; moments of effective use alongside unclear execution.	Basic attempts at skill use; often unclear or mechanically applied.	Core mediation skills not demonstrated or misapplied.
Managing Conflict & Emotions	Responds sensitively and appropriately to emotional cues; uses de-escalation strategies with clear effect.	Attempts conflict management and emotional attunement; mostly effective.	Recognises some emotional cues; limited range of responses.	Rare or inappropriate emotional responses; conflict poorly managed.	Ignores or mishandles emotional content; escalates tension.
Neutrality & Balance	Maintains impartiality throughout; avoids bias and judgemental language even under pressure.	Generally even-handed with minor lapses in neutrality or tone.	Efforts to remain neutral evident; some inconsistencies in phrasing or focus.	Frequent imbalance or subtly partial behaviour noted.	Clearly biased, judgemental, or adversarial in tone.

Reflective Insight	Critically analyses performance using a reflective model; identifies specific strengths and development goals.	Meaningful reflection using a model; insights mostly clear and relevant.	Basic reflection: references model but lacks depth or specificity.	Minimal or general reflection; model referenced superficially.	No meaningful reflection; lacks structure, insight, or self-awareness.
Integration of Learning	Draws clear, evidence-based links between skills, theory, FMC values, and next developmental steps.	Connects practice with theory and values; development plans stated.	Some theoretical and developmental links made; lacks detail.	Limited integration of theory or values; developmental goals vague.	No integration of learning; lacks awareness of theoretical or developmental implications.
Competence in core skills (opening, rapport, reframing, summarising, questioning)	Executes all core skills fluently and accurately; openings set clear ground rules and rapport quickly; reframes and summaries precise and impartial.	Performs core skills competently with minor lapses; rapport generally solid; occasional imprecision in reframes or summaries.	Basic execution of skills; rapport adequate; reframes/summaries sometimes formulaic or partial.	Core skills inconsistently demonstrated; rapport fragile; frequent errors in reframing or summarising.	Core skills largely absent or incorrect; rapport not established; reframing/summaries inaccurate or missing.
Effectiveness of interventions & pacing	Interventions timely and strategic; pacing fluid; transitions smooth; parties remain engaged.	Mostly well-timed interventions; pacing appropriate with minor hesitations; engagement sustained.	Adequate timing; pacing uneven; some disengagement or abrupt transitions.	Interventions often mistimed; pacing disjointed; noticeable disengagement.	Interventions inappropriate or absent; pacing chaotic; session breaks down.
Recognition of limits & areas for development	Explicitly acknowledges uncertainties; seeks supervision appropriately; applies safety checks proactively.	Notices most limits; occasional delay in seeking guidance; safety meetings mostly timely.	Recognises limits only when prompted; supervision sought late; safety checks basic.	Seldom recognises limits; supervision not sought; safety issues overlooked.	Fails to recognise limits; unsafe practice evident.
Quality of written reflection	Deep, critical analysis of performance; links observations to theory; sets specific, measurable goals.	Thoughtful reflection; connects practice to theory; goals clear but may lack specificity.	Descriptive reflection with emerging analysis; goals general.	Minimal reflection; primarily descriptive; goals vague or unrealistic.	No meaningful reflection; lacks insight; goals absent or irrelevant.

Assessor Marking Template - Assessment 2

Assessment Title: "From Theory to Practice: A Mediator's Reflection on Conflict and Negotiation Models"

Format: Structured Essay

Word Count: 2,000 (+/-10%)

Level Expected: Advanced Beginner

Competency Standards: IMI Competency Framework

Marking Grid

Criterion	Excellent (5)	Good (4)	Satisfactory (3)	Needs Improvement (2)	Poor (1)
Understanding of Selected Conflict & Negotiation Theories	Comprehensive, accurate explanation of both theories; origins, principles and relevance clearly articulated; strong integration of academic sources.	Clear, detailed explanation of most key elements; good understanding with some use of sources.	Adequate explanation of theory principles with basic clarity; demonstrates essential understanding.	Limited or incomplete explanation; missing key concepts; lacks clarity or contains inaccuracies.	Minimal or incorrect understanding; major omissions or misunderstandings of theories.
Application of Theory to Mediation Practice	Sophisticated application of both theories to mediation practice; clear insight into conflict dynamics; highly relevant examples from role plays or observed practice.	Clear application with relevant examples; demonstrates good awareness of how theory informs mediator behaviour.	Basic application of theory to practice with adequate examples.	Superficial or generic application; limited examples or limited links made to mediation practice.	No meaningful application to practice; irrelevant or absent examples.
Insight into Mediator Skills and Professional Practice	Insightful analysis of how theory informs communication, process management, neutrality, option development, and managing emotion or assumptions; strong integration into mediator role.	Clear explanation of how theory relates to mediator skills; some reflective insight.	Satisfactory awareness of links between theory and mediator skills.	Limited or underdeveloped insight; weak linkage between theory and mediator skills.	No meaningful understanding of how theory informs mediator skill or behaviour.

<p>Reflective Analysis on Developing Mediator Practice</p>	<p>Insightful, well-developed reflection demonstrating self-awareness, growth, and alignment with professional standards; clear identification of learning and future development areas.</p>	<p>Clear, relevant reflection with some connection to theory and practice.</p>	<p>Basic reflection showing an emerging awareness.</p>	<p>Limited or descriptive reflection; minimal self-awareness.</p>	<p>No reflection or misunderstanding of the mediator's developmental needs.</p>
<p>Structure, Tone, Academic Writing & Referencing</p>	<p>Highly professional academic writing; clear structure; coherent flow; accurate Harvard referencing throughout.</p>	<p>Well-structured and clearly written; minor errors in writing or referencing.</p>	<p>Acceptable clarity and structure; referencing mostly correct with some inconsistencies.</p>	<p>Weak structure or clarity; referencing inconsistent or partially inaccurate.</p>	<p>Poor writing, unclear structure, or missing references.</p>

Assessor Marking Template - Assessment 3

Assessment Title: "From Screen to Scene: Adapting Mediation Practice for In-Person Engagement."

Format: Structured Essay

Word Count: 2,000 (+/-10%)

Level Expected: Advanced Beginner

Competency Standards: IMI Competency Framework

Marking Grid

Criterion	Excellent (5)	Good (4)	Satisfactory (3)	Needs Improvement (2)	Poor (1)
Understanding the Practical Elements of an In-Person Mediation Venue	Comprehensive, accurate understanding of rooms, privacy, accessibility, layout, equipment, and professional environment; theory clearly integrated.	Clear, detailed explanation of most practical aspects with some theory.	Adequate description covering main elements with basic rationale.	Some key aspects missing or insufficiently explained; limited rationale.	Minimal or incorrect understanding; major omissions.
Rapport-Building in In-Person Mediation	Insightful explanation of rapport-building strategies with strong theoretical and reflective insight.	Good explanation with some theory and practical examples.	Adequate description of rapport-building; some awareness of impact.	Limited or generic understanding; weak reflective element.	No meaningful understanding; inaccurate or irrelevant content.
Comparison of In-Person and Online Mediation	Sophisticated comparison with clear insight into communication, atmosphere, and process; strong justification for adaptations.	Clear, well-organised comparison with relevant examples; some rationale.	Basic comparison with adequate understanding of key differences.	Superficial comparison; significant gaps; limited understanding of adaptations.	No meaningful comparison; inaccurate statements or misunderstanding.
Inclusive Practice & Adjustments for Need	Sensitive, accurate understanding of needs exploration and adjustments; clear insight into impact on	Good understanding of how to explore needs and make adjustments.	Adequate awareness of accessibility and reasonable adjustments.	Limited understanding; missing practical steps or sensitivity.	No awareness of needs or adjustments; incorrect or inappropriate content.

	process and fairness.				
Reflection on Mediator's Role	Insightful, well-developed reflection linking practice, standards, and mediator responsibilities.	Clear reflection with some linkage to standards or practice.	Adequate reflection showing basic self-awareness.	Limited or descriptive reflection; minimal insight into mediator role.	No reflection or misunderstanding of mediator responsibilities.
Structure, Tone, Academic Writing & Referencing	Highly professional academic writing; clear structure; accurate Harvard referencing.	Well-structured and clear; minor referencing or writing errors.	Acceptable clarity and structure; referencing mostly correct.	Weak structure or clarity; referencing inconsistent.	Very poor writing, unclear structure, or missing references.

Marking and Feedback

All assessments are marked using structured, criterion-referenced rubrics aligned with the IMI Competency Framework. Assessors evaluate each criterion against the required Advanced Beginner performance standard and award one of the following overall outcomes:

- **Pass** – The learner demonstrates the required competence at Advanced Beginner level in *every* criterion.
- **Needs Revision** – One or more criteria have not yet reached the required standard; detailed feedback is provided to support resubmission.

Learners receive comprehensive written feedback that is explicitly aligned with the marking rubric. This feedback includes:

- strengths demonstrated in the assessment
- areas requiring improvement
- specific suggestions for future development
- clear reference to the relevant IMI competencies

Feedback is designed to support reflective practice and meaningful developmental progress toward professional mediator competence.

Academic Integrity

All assessments must be the learner's own original work. Plagiarism, AI-generated submissions, or collaborative writing (no group activity is formally assessed) are not permitted. Sanctions include resubmission, reassessment, or disqualification.

A signed **Statement of Authenticity** will be submitted by every learner prior to any assessment taking place.

Resubmissions

Learners may resubmit once per assessment with clear guidance provided. Further attempts will require approval by the Head of Quality & Learning.

