



2017 Spring School: Using Mediation Skills as a Professional

Course Participant Biographies



Catherine Brennan, Assistant General Counsel, AECOM

Catherine Brennan is an in-house solicitor for AECOM, a construction company. Catherine is part of the global litigation team in AECOM and is responsible for claims in the UK and Ireland. Catherine trained as a solicitor in London, moving to Dublin on qualification to work for the construction law team in McCann FitzGerald. She then moved to DWF where her role involved advising insurers and insureds on professional indemnity claims. Catherine lives in Dublin with her husband, 3 kids and a cat.



Douglas Campbell, Head of Corporate Support, Clydesdale Bank PLC

Douglas has worked in central and local government, the NHS, and financial services. His career began in local government, mainly in communications, before moving into policy and strategic planning roles. He became Director of Health Policy for an NHS Board in 2001 and was appointed as a Special Adviser to the First Minister of Scotland the following year. Douglas is now Head of Corporate Support at Clydesdale Bank and has recently focussed all of his time on resolving some of the Bank's most complex customer disputes. Douglas lives in Ayrshire and is married with a teenage daughter.



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Gillian Carmichael Lemaire, Director, Carmichael Lemaire Limited

Gillian Carmichael Lemaire is a lawyer, arbitrator and mediator focusing on risk and disputes arising from international construction and infrastructure projects and commercial contracts. She is qualified as a solicitor in Scotland (1984) and an avocat in France (1994) and recently set up her own practice in London after spending most of her career in Paris. Gillian is accredited for mediation by the Institut d'Expertise d'Arbitrage et de Médiation (IEAM) and the Paris Bar, and is keen to expand her mediation knowledge and skills at Core's Spring School.



Rory Christie, Owner, Dourie Farming Co Ltd & MSA (Milk Supplier Association)

42 years of age, married with 2 daughters, working and living in S.W. Scotland. Rory and his brother are joint owners of Dourie Farming Company Limited which specialises in Dairy and Pig production. They have constantly adapted, rationalised and invested to remain competitive and to facilitate succession, their goal being to continue growing the business and providing profits to sustain future generations of their family. He has specialised in providing improved negotiation and representation of UK Dairy farmers via NFUS and the Milk Supplier Association of which he is the founding chairman. Out-with business he is a keen endurance cyclist.



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Jérémie Girod, Director, Terraxis Commodities SA

Jérémie Girod is the director of Terraxis Commodities SA, an agricultural commodity advisory firm based in Geneva with objective to support importer in their procurement activities. Jérémie has more than 10 years experience as a physical and derivative trader within leading firms in the commodities industry (Noble Resources & the US Farm cooperative CHS). In his early career, Jérémie was a risk manager and subsequently became an option market maker on Swiss Index Stocks. Jérémie has a Masters in Economics from Paris II Panthéon (1995) and is a currently qualifying to become a GAFTA arbitrator.



James Johnston, Director/Owner, Transcend Change Ltd:

James served in the RAF for 26 years enjoying roles from pilot through Main Operating Base Commander to working at the highest level of Government. With extensive operational and combat experience James appreciates the importance of people, culture, effective communication, rapport and skills, and was put to the test on many occasions when negotiating between both allies and aggressors. Recognized for his transformational change leadership work with people, teams and organisations, James continues to develop his understanding of relationships, including the environment. He is currently Chair of the Regional Strategic Business Forum and Chair of The Malt Whisky Trail®.



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Fiona Larg, Chief Operating Officer and Secretary, University of the Highlands and Islands

Fiona has undertaken a variety of roles within the University of the Highlands and Islands since June 2007. She initially fulfilled the role of Assistant Secretary, prior to her appointment as Deputy Secretary in September that same year. She was appointed to the role of Secretary in October 2009. In January 2013 Fiona's title was changed to Chief Operating Officer and Secretary to reflect the breadth of her role. Prior to working with the university, she was a general manager with Vertex Data Science Ltd (part of the United Utilities Group) and with Cap Gemini. She previously held the post of Chief Executive of Inverness and Nairn Local Enterprise Company, part of the Highlands and Islands Enterprise network.



Dr Donna MacKinnon, Head of Local Government and Analytical Services Division, Scottish Government

Dr Donna MacKinnon is currently a Deputy Director and the Head of Local Government at the Scottish Government. Previous posts include Head of Strategy and Improvement (Active Scotland Division), Head of Physical Activity (Commonwealth Games and Sport Directorate), Head of Reducing Violence and Crime (Justice), Head of Alcohol Misuse Services (Health) and the Head of the Drug Misuse Analytical Team (Justice). Prior to joining the Scottish Government 10 years ago Donna was employed as a Public Health Advisor. She began her career in academia lecturing in history and social policy after gaining her doctorate from the University of Glasgow.



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Alastair Mitchell, Head of Aquaculture, Marine Scotland, Scottish Government

Alastair is a Scottish Government Deputy Director looking after performance (including European fisheries grants), aquaculture and recreational fisheries within Marine Scotland.



Chris Nicholson, Private Secretary to the Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs, Scottish Government

A Strathclyde graduate, Chris joined the Government Legal Service for Scotland as a trainee solicitor in 2005. In 2007 he was seconded to the Civil Recovery Unit at Crown Office to recover the proceeds of crime in the civil courts. In 2010 he took up post as Deputy Legal Secretary to the Lord President. He took up his current posting in 2015. From 2009 to 2013 Chris was also a member of the Civil Service Stabilisation Cadre which aims to support fragile states and countries emerging from conflict.



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Michael Peart, Head Coach, GB Paralympic Archery Team

Michael Peart is the Head Coach for Great Britain's Paralympic archery team based at Lilleshall National Sports Centre in Shropshire. Michael has been in post for 4 years and has taken the team from a steady decline to topping the medal table at the Rio Games. For the twenty years prior to that he was an international archer himself. The highlight of those 20 years was being World No.2 in 2001. Before this Michael studied and worked in the area of mechanical engineering. In his spare time Michael enjoys walks in the countryside with his girlfriend and their dog.



Adam Reid, Head of Policy, Employability Programme, Scottish Government

Adam joined the Scottish Government's Employability Programme in August 2016 as head of policy and integration. Previously he was head of the social justice strategy unit at the Scottish Government and has worked on welfare reform policy. Prior to that, Adam worked for DWP in Whitehall on labour market policy. He has also worked at the Cabinet Office, at the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and for a housing and regeneration non-department public body.



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Lydia Rohmer, Principal & Chief Executive, West Highland College UHI and UHI Vice Principal Tertiary Education (dual role)

Lydia Rohmer assumed the post of Principal and Chief Executive of West Highland College UHI at the end of February 2012. Educated at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich, Glasgow and Oxford Universities, Lydia worked for over 25 years in further and higher education sectors in both teaching and academic management roles. She has worked in senior management roles since 2005 in the three Glasgow city centre colleges which formed City of Glasgow College in 2010. In March 2017, Lydia was appointed as Vice Principal Tertiary Education at the University of the Highlands and Islands, a position she holds as a dual role alongside her Principal and CEO post at West Highland College UHI.



Joanne Rosie, Head of Employee Relations, Royal Bank of Scotland

Joanne joined RBS in 2014 in their Personal & Business Banking franchise. Her role involves managing employment litigation & complex cases, restructuring activity and the relationships with their Trade Unions; Unite & Financial Services Union in Ireland. She was previously with Balfour Beatty Workplace for 13 years latterly as their Head of HR Operations, working across several business sectors, covering NHS, Local Authorities, DWP, EDF, BBC, London Met Police & Further Education. As a Facilities Management company the role involved a lot of TUPE transfers particularly within the Private Finance Initiative area. Her career started in the NHS and was involved in the closing of the old Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, City & Princess Margaret Rose Hospitals and the opening of the new hospital at Little France. She is married to James and they have a son, Matthew, who is 10.



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Sarah-Jane Stearstree, Head of Investigations, Ombudsman Services

Sarah Stearstree lives just outside Wigan with her husband and two children. She started working for Ombudsman Services in 2008. She currently holds the position of Head of Investigations.

Ombudsman Services is a national private sector ombudsman scheme providing alternative dispute resolution across a range of sectors including energy, telecommunications and property. Ombudsman Services are also approved by the Chartered Trading Standards Institute to provide redress in non-regulated sectors such as retail and home improvement.

As Head of Investigations, Sarah is responsible for driving the performance and commercial success of the investigations department, focusing on practical outcomes, business strategy and the core values and culture of the business.



Iain Strachan, Chief Governance Officer, Stirling Council

Iain is Stirling Council's Chief Governance Officer, responsible for managing their committee services, internal audit, legal and licensing teams. A qualified lawyer, Iain previously worked as a lawyer for City of Edinburgh Council and before that in two large commercial law firms, where he specialised in commercial property work.

Iain is married, with three children, and lives in Edinburgh. In his spare time Iain enjoys running, both alone and after children.