The Melton Foundation Communication Code

1  PREAMBLE

The Melton Foundation promotes and enables global citizenship as a way for individuals and organizations to work together across boundaries of place and identity to develop collaborative solutions to the challenges of today's interconnected world. To achieve this, we offer a fellowship to young change agents to develop their potential and grow their spheres of influence in order to become effective and ethical leaders, equipped to act locally, with a global context in mind. The Fellowship is currently available to students at our partner universities.

Designed around three core aspects of Global Citizenship Awareness – Responsibility – Action, a two and a half year experiential learning program equips Melton Fellows with the necessary skills and tools to collaborate with others in order to develop shared solutions to challenges of today's interconnected world. Fellows acquire skills in areas such as design thinking, intercultural communications, teamwork, project management, impact measurement, ethical leadership and systems thinking. They develop these competencies together in diverse global locations through workshops, conferences, and through local and global project work. After graduation from the learning program, Fellows form part of a supported network to model, promote and enact global citizenship in their growing spheres of influence.

Since its founding in 1991, the Melton Foundation has built a network of over 500 Melton Fellows. It carries out its programs in collaboration with experienced Senior Fellows and myriad partner organizations worldwide.

Our Core Values

The Melton Foundation and its Fellows are guided by a set of core values that define who we aspire to be and how we project ourselves in the world.

Global Citizenship
We have a duty to mobilize the Foundation and its network to promote the practice of global citizenship through local and global action.

Respect
We acknowledge and appreciate cultural differences, and actively nurture in ourselves and in others the ability to understand the world from multiple perspectives.

Curiosity
Our passion for learning about different fields, issues, and ideas empowers Fellows to be interdisciplinary thinkers and doers.

Trust, Responsibility, and Reciprocity
We practice open communication and personal accountability among each other as the basis of a global network of support, learning experiences, and lifelong personal and professional relationships.

1 The Board of Directors ratified this Communication Code (ComCode) on 18 January 2018. As binding communication agreement, it replaces the initial ComCode from 2012 and shall be implemented henceforth.
As a network that promotes and enables global citizenship, we embrace freedom of thought and are conscious of its inherent responsibilities. Our primary tool for fruitful collaboration is open communication in confidence that we learn from each other and collaboratively promote global problem solving. We therefore encourage the free expression of ideas and yet discourage intolerance and insensitivity in the expression of those ideas.

2 COMMUNICATION CODE

In order to ensure an atmosphere of mutual respect and constructive collaboration, the Melton Foundation has updated its Communication Code (ComCode) to reflect the Foundation's current needs.

This ComCode is an agreement to be upheld at all times for all forms of interaction while engaging in any Melton Foundation activity. The agreement expressed in this ComCode is based on trust and delegates responsibilities in confidence that the members of the Melton Foundation can rely on the honesty and integrity of those to whom these responsibilities have been entrusted.

2.1 Unacceptable Conduct and Communication

The Melton Foundation considers the following behavior unacceptable and a breach of responsibility to the Foundation:

1. All forms of physical aggression and the commission of any crime
2. Expression of insults, disregard, disdain, or disrespect of other cultures, customs and habits, perspectives and perceptions
3. Racism and openly racist statements
4. Sexism and openly sexist statements
5. Expression of aggression, sarcasm, ridicule, or disregard for the dignity or worth of individuals or groups
6. Efforts to seriously undermine and erode the reputation of the Melton Foundation in a public forum
7. Manipulation and intrigue designed to degrade single individuals, groups, partner organizations and collaborators
8. Carrying out of personal conflicts in an open forum within the Foundation
9. Exposure of sensitive and personal information about any of its members
10. Abusive, aggressive, or offensive language or behavior toward an individual or group
11. Conscious misrepresentation of a group’s, individual's, or partner institution's opinions or views when acting on their behalf
12. Intentionally revealing internal information clearly marked and recognizable as confidential or using such information for any purpose other than for its originally intended use.

Engaging in the above-listed conduct may lead to dismissal from the Foundation².

2.2 Dealing with Unacceptable Conduct and Communication

All members of the Melton Foundation have the responsibility to:

² See section 2.3 Consequences of Unacceptable Conduct and Communication for details.
1. Practice and promote constructive and mutually respectful communication
2. Help deter unacceptable conduct and communication
3. Help de-escalate conflict

Many conflicts can be resolved on an informal basis at the individual or group level. Resolving a conflict at an early stage prevents it from escalating, and therefore is a goal to be pursued.

The following review process has been established to deal with conduct and communication that is considered unacceptable within the Foundation:

**Step 1) Mediation**

The Melton Foundation **Program Director** serves as designated go-to person for anyone observing or experiencing unacceptable conduct and communication, including in the case of ensuing tension between individuals or groups. Should the Program Director be directly or indirectly involved in the situation, the Executive Director shall serve as initial contact point. If necessary, the Program Director can appoint additional members of the Melton Foundation for the purpose of helping to defuse conflict and ensure an atmosphere of mutual respect and constructive collaboration.

**Process**

The mediation process may vary from case to case.

1. After receiving a complaint or observing unacceptable conduct or communication in any Melton Foundation activity or forum, the Program Director and/or appointed mediators review the situation, investigate the context, and - if possible - seek conversation with the respective parties involved in order to resolve the issue.
2. Should the party(ies) involved be unable or unwilling to engage directly in a constructive and mutually respectful manner, they can suggest a spokesperson of their choice in order to communicate through that person.
3. *If the matter is satisfactorily resolved*, the Program Director files a report indicating the context and measures that have been taken.
4. *If the matter cannot be satisfactorily resolved*, it will require a Formal Review. The party(ies) involved or an appointed mediator involved in the process, including the Program Director, can refer a case to be formally reviewed.

**Step 2) Formal Review**

Formal Review falls under the responsibility of the Melton Foundation’s Board of Directors. The Board's ComCode chair serves as designated contact point for that matter. Should s/he be directly or indirectly involved in the situation, the Board Chair shall serve as initial contact point.

Formal Review involves an ad-hoc committee of at least three and no more than six reviewers from the wider MF community, including faculty members and staff. Reviewers must be impartial, knowledgeable of the ComCode, and ideally resemble the diversity of the MF community. The **Review Committee** is chaired by the BOD's designated contact point and its members commit to the utmost of confidentiality during or following the review process, unless otherwise decided by the committee.

**Process**

1. When a case is being referred for Formal Review, the Program Director or appointed mediators shall file a report indicating context and measures that have been taken to help
resolve the situation.

2. Unless the designated BOD member sees benefit in further mediation efforts, (a) s/he assembles an ad-hoc review committee (see above) and (b) informs all parties involved in the conflict about the initiation of Formal Review. The notification should be sent individually and shall not reveal greater details or personal information of the dispute itself.

3. The process of formal review may vary from case to case and process rules must be adequately articulated by the Review Committee. Unless justified, the review process should not extend the period of one months.

4. The review committee shall make two separate determinations.
   (1) It shall determine whether the ComCode has been violated.
   (2) If so, it shall determine whether sanction shall be imposed and on whom.
   In order to reach a fair and informed decision, the committee may consider all evidence at hand and hear witnesses who can provide further context and/or information. The committee shall keep records of any information relevant to its decision in the case.

5. At the end of the Formal Review process, the committee files a report Including (1) the facts of the case, (2) process rules established, (3) procedural history of the case (incl. evidence reviewed), (4) conclusions drawn and precise sanction imposed (incl. the reasoning supporting its judgment).
   The committee is free to decide whether to announce its verdict within the Foundation.

2.3 Consequences of Unacceptable Conduct and Communication

In addition to aiming to mitigate the situation or settle the conflict, the Review Committee may impose sanctions on any person or group that violated the ComCode. It may respond to a violation with one or more of the following measures:

   1. Issuing a warning to the individual / group
   2. Requiring the individual / group to apologize to all parties involved and/or affected
   3. Barring the individual / group from attending Global Citizenship Conference(s)
   4. Disqualifying the fellow from receiving Melton Foundation Grants\(^3\) for a period of time
   5. Removing the individual / group from any official responsibility held, such as lead fellow, outreach fellow, project team coordinator, grant committee member, project team mentor, etc. on a temporary or permanent basis
   6. Suspending the individual / group from the Melton Foundation for a period of time
   7. Dismissal of the individual / group from the Melton Foundation on a permanent basis.

2.4 Adoption

In adopting this revised ComCode, the Board of Directors assigns all of its rights regarding (1) the determination of any violation of the Code, and (2) the appropriate sanctioning in case of violation to the respective parties identified above. The decisions of the review committee are final and the Board of Directors and Executive Office are bound to take action in accordance with the review committee's decision and to enforce that decision.