SOP Template: Escalation Procedures for Unresolved Issues and Disputes

This SOP details **escalation procedures for unresolved issues and disputes**, outlining the step-by-step process for escalating conflicts that cannot be resolved at the initial level. It includes identifying key personnel responsible for each escalation stage, timelines for response, documentation requirements, and communication protocols to ensure timely and effective resolution. The procedure aims to maintain organizational harmony, minimize disruptions, and ensure fair and consistent handling of disputes.

1. Purpose

To establish a clear, systematic process for escalating and resolving unresolved issues and disputes in a timely and consistent manner.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all employees, managers, and departments within the organization who encounter unresolved issues and disputes.

3. Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Employee	Attempt to resolve the issue at the initial level and escalate as per the process if unresolved.
Immediate Supervisor/Manager	Review and attempt resolution at the first escalation level; ensure timely documentation and communication.
Department Head	Address escalated issues from managers and provide decisions or escalate further if needed.
HR/Conflict Resolution Officer	Facilitate discussion, mediate disputes, and ensure compliance with policy.
Executive/Director	Make the final decision on unresolved issues at the highest escalation level within the organization.

4. Escalation Procedure

1. **Initial Attempt at Resolution**
   - Concerned parties discuss the issue and attempt direct resolution.
   - Timeline: **Within 2 business days** from the occurrence of the issue.

2. **First Level Escalation: Immediate Supervisor/Manager**
   - If unresolved, raise the issue in writing (email or ticket) to immediate supervisor/manager.
   - Supervisor/manager reviews and arranges a discussion with involved parties.
   - Timeline: **Supervisor to respond within 2 business days**.

3. **Second Level Escalation: Department Head**
   - If still unresolved, escalate to department head with all relevant documentation and communication history.
   - Department head investigates and attempts resolution.
   - Timeline: **Department head to respond within 3 business days**.

4. **Third Level Escalation: HR/Conflict Resolution Officer**
   - If unresolved, submit issue to HR/Conflict Resolution Officer.
   - HR reviews the case, facilitates mediation, and recommends a solution.
   - Timeline: **HR to respond within 5 business days**.

5. **Final Escalation: Executive Leader/Director**
   - If no agreement is reached, escalate to the executive leader/director for final decision.
   - Executive reviews all documentation and delivers a binding resolution.
   - Timeline: **Decision rendered within 5 business days**.

5. Documentation Requirements

- Maintain a written record of all communications, discussions, and actions taken at each stage.
- Attach supporting documents (emails, meeting notes, reports) to each escalation step.
- Store all records in a secure, accessible location (shared drive, case management software).

6. Communication Protocols

- Use official communication channels (company email, ticketing system, meeting invites).
- Acknowledge receipt of escalations within the specified timelines.
- Keep all relevant parties informed of progress and decisions at each stage.
- Maintain confidentiality and professionalism throughout the process.

7. Review and Continuous Improvement

- Regularly review escalation logs to identify trends and areas for improvement.
- Update the SOP as necessary to reflect organizational changes and feedback from users.

8. References

- Company Dispute Resolution Policy
- Employee Handbook
- Relevant Laws and Regulations