

AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF SPORTS THERAPY

STUDENT GRIEVANCE HANDLING POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR COMPLAINTS RELATING TO *NON-ACADEMIC MATTERS AND ACADEMIC MATTERS*

1 POLICY

The Australian College of Sports Therapy (“the College”) is committed to developing and maintaining an effective, timely, fair and equitable grievance handling system which is easily accessible and offered to complainants at no charge.

The College aims to:

- Develop a culture that views grievances as an opportunity to improve the organisation and how it works;
- Set in place a grievance handling system that is client focussed and helps the College to prevent grievances from recurring;
- Ensure that any grievances are resolved promptly, objectively and with sensitivity and in complete confidentiality;
- Ensure that the views of each complainant and respondent are respected and that any party to a grievance is not discriminated against nor victimised;
- Ensure that there is a consistent response to grievances.

A grievance can be defined as a student’s expression of dissatisfaction with any aspect of the College’s services and activities, *academic and non-academic* such as:

- the enrolment, induction/orientation process;
- the quality of education provided;
- academic matters, including student progress, assessment, curriculum and awards in a VET course of study;
- handling of personal information and access to personal records;
- the way someone has been treated.

This *Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure* is designed to ensure that the College responds effectively to individual cases of dissatisfaction.

This Policy and Procedure will be made available to students regardless of the location of the campus at which the grievance has arisen, the mode in which they study or their place of residence.

2 BEFORE AN ISSUE BECOMES A FORMAL GRIEVANCE

Students (or persons seeking to enrol with the College) are encouraged, wherever possible, to resolve concerns or difficulties directly with the person(s) concerned. There are lecturers, student services staff and administration staff available to assist students to resolve their issues at this level.

3 PROCEDURE

This procedure can be utilised by students, including potential students, enrolled, or seeking to enrol, in a course with the College to submit a grievance of an academic or non-academic nature. Grievances of an academic nature include matters related to student progress, assessment, curriculum and awards in a VET course of study. Grievances of a non-academic nature cover all other matters including complaints in relation to personal information that the College holds in relation to the student.

During all stages of this procedure the College will take all steps to ensure that the complainant and the respondent will not be victimised or discriminated against.

At all stages of this procedure a full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken as part of the process will be provided if so requested by the complainant or the respondent.

There is no cost to the complainant for utilising this grievance and appeals process.

3.1 Stage one – formal grievance

Formal grievances must be submitted in writing to the College Administrator. Receipt of the grievance will be acknowledged within five working days.

The College Administrator, or their nominee, will then, if necessary, seek to clarify the outcome that the complainant hopes to achieve.

Such clarification may be sought by written or verbal request or by a face-to-face interview with the complainant. When such clarification occurs in a face-to-face interview the complainant or respondent may ask another person to accompany them.

The College Administrator, or their nominee, will then endeavour to resolve the grievance and provide a written report to the complainant on the steps taken to address the grievance within ten working days.

3.2 Stage two – internal appeal

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint they may lodge an appeal with College Director (who is senior to the original decision maker). An appropriate person or committee will be appointed to consult with the complainant and other relevant parties within ten working days.

Where possible such consultations should take the form of face-to-face interviews. The complainant or the respondent may ask another person to accompany them to these interviews.

Following the consultation, the College Director, or their nominee, will provide a written report to the complainant advising the further steps taken to address the grievance within ten working days.

3.3 Stage three – external appeal

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their appeal, they may make a written request to the College Director that they wish the matter be dealt with through an external dispute resolution process facilitated by the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET).

The College will then advise ACPET in writing of the request within five working days. ACPET will arrange for a Round Table Discussion (RTD) to be held between the College and the complainant within ten working days of the written notification from the College. ACPET do not charge a fee for this service.

Contact Details for ACPET:

Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET)

PO Box Q1076, QVB Post Office, Sydney NSW 1230

Ph: 1800 657 644 Fax: 02 9264 4550

Email: acpet@acpet.edu.au

If the matter remains unresolved after the RTD then ACPET will appoint an independent mediator within 14 working days of the RTD. ACPET plays no role in the actual mediation. It is then up to the mediator, the complainant and the College to resolve the grievance. The College will bear any costs associated with the mediation.

The complainant or the respondent may ask another person to accompany them to meetings with ACPET or the mediator.

The mediator will report to the College Director, or their nominee, the outcome of the mediation, including any recommendations arising, within 14 days of the completion of the review. Once the College Director, or their nominee, receives the report of the outcomes from the RTD or independent mediation, they will provide a written report to the complainant within 10 working days on the recommended actions to resolve the grievance.

The College agrees to be bound by the independent mediator's recommendations and the College Director, or their nominee, will ensure that any recommendations made are implemented within 30 days of receipt of the mediator's report.

If a grievance still remains unresolved after the external appeal, the complainant may decide to refer the matter to the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) or the National Training Complaints Hotline on 1800 000 674.

4 RECORD KEEPING & CONFIDENTIALITY

Records of all grievances handled under this procedure and their outcomes shall be maintained for a period of at least five years to allow all parties to the grievance appropriate access to these records, upon written request to the College Administrator. These records will be maintained at Level 6, 341 Queen Street Melbourne Victoria 3000.

All records relating to complaints will be treated as confidential and will be covered by the College's *Privacy and Personal Information Procedures*.

5 PUBLICATION

The Policy and Procedure was approved by the College Director (who is the sole director of the legal entity) on 8th August 2008.

This Policy and Procedure will be disseminated by publication in the Student Handbook and on the College's website www.sportstherapy.edu.au.

For the purposes of communicating to and training staff, this Policy and Procedure will form part of the induction process and will be included in the Staff Handbook.

6 VERSION CONTROL

Document: Student Grievance Handling Policy & Procedure		
Approved by: College Director	Version #: 1	Date: 8 August 2008