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## **Complaints Policy**

We are committed to providing a learning and working environment in which complaints are responded to promptly and with minimum distress and maximum protection to all parties. As part of its commitment to creating a supportive and open organisational culture, The Gold Coast Training College is committed to ethical and responsible management, transparency in its decision-making processes, and a visible, accessible and fair complaints process.

The Gold Coast Training College views student complaints as providing an opportunity to review and improve its policies and practices, and also to gain insight into student (Student employer and instructor) levels of satisfaction. It is an integral part of The Gold Coast Training College Continuous Improvement Policy.

### **Responsibilities of Managers, Staff and Students**

Managers and other designated staff at The Gold Coast Training College are responsible for responding appropriately to complaints.

A designated manager is responsible for coordinating the resolution process in keeping with The Gold Coast Training College complaint handling principles, relevant policies and procedures. The designated manager is also responsible for ensuring that staff and complainants involved in the complaint resolution process understand their rights and responsibilities in relation to this policy.

All students and staff have a responsibility to contribute to the achievement of a productive, safe and equitable study and work environment at The Gold Coast Training College. In particular, students and staff have a responsibility to:

- Participate in the complaint resolution process in good faith
- Co-operate fully in any investigation process
- Assist the complaint handler in reaching satisfactory resolution wherever possible
- Avoid complaining about the same matter to several different units or individuals at the same time
- Avoid making complaints or counter-complaints with a mischievous or malicious intent.
- This policy applies to all aspects of training at The Gold Coast Training College.
- The actions/performance of people involved in the delivery and management of training.
- The quality, content and relevance of training programs.
- The support services provided by The Gold Coast Training College.
- Students may make a complaint about any matter, which relates to their program of study at The Gold Coast Training College, even if the incident, which is the basis of the complaint, did not occur on a course.

### **Accountability for Student Complaints**

A key principle in The Gold Coast Training College complaint resolution process is that complaints are resolved wherever possible at the lowest appropriate level of management. Students are encouraged to raise their complaint in the first instance directly with the person concerned. This is appropriate in matters where the student feels comfortable with making a direct approach, or where the complaint does not relate to allegations of unlawful behaviour (e.g. assault, illegal discrimination or harassment, corruption).

Where it is not appropriate for the student to raise the issue directly with the other person/s, they can make a complaint to the Manager or other person in authority at The Gold Coast Training College. .

The Manager of The Gold Coast Training College is responsible for receiving and investigating complaints from students.

All students have the option of making a formal written complaint to the Manager. The Manager will gather information and seek advice from all parties before responding to the complaint

### **Assistance for Students in Making a Complaint**

Students may wish to seek advice and assistance in lodging a complaint from one of the instructors at The Gold Coast Training College.

### **How to Raise a Complaint**

A complaint to a person in authority can be in writing on the complaints form, and due to the requirements of procedural fairness the complainant will have to be identified unless the facts of the matter are not in dispute.

Often the complainant may not wish to complete a customer complaint form and so makes the complaint verbally to a member of staff. It is the duty of the member of staff to document this complaint.

- If the complaint is about a staff member, the complaint should be made to the Manager.
- If the complaint is about another The Gold Coast Training College student, the complaint should be made to the Instructor and/or the Manager, and the complaint will then be reviewed and resolved.
- If the complaint relates to behaviour by a person external to The Gold Coast Training College who the student is interacting with in the course ie the assessor or a training instructor, the complaint should be made to the Manager who will then follow the policy and take appropriate action.

### **Complaints - principles for handling a complaint**

The Gold Coast Training College procedures for handling student complaints are based on confidentiality, impartiality, procedural fairness and prompt resolution.

- Where appropriate, complaints will be resolved at the lowest possible level of management or in accordance with the hierarchy above. However, all complaints will be recorded in The Gold Coast Training College complaints register so that all levels of management are aware of complaints made. The Manager will monitor progress, engage all relevant levels of management and ensure that action is taken in each case.
- Procedural fairness will be observed in all aspects of handling a complaint. In practice, this means that all parties to a complaint will be informed of the complaint, the specific allegations being made, and all parties will be given the opportunity to respond to any allegations made. Procedural fairness usually requires that the complainant must be willing to be identified, unless the facts of the matter are not in dispute, or where the matter involves allegations of corruption, misadministration or serious waste.
- Management will ensure that they have no conflict of interest or bias in relation to any party to the complaint, and that there is no perception by the parties that they have a conflict of interest or bias. If the person in authority does not believe they can handle the complaint in an impartial way, they will exclude themselves from the process, and refer

the matter to their supervisor. In the case of a conflict of interest or an inability to resolve the complaint, the complaint should be referred to the relevant governing/regulatory body for mediation.

- Confidentiality will be respected wherever possible within the constraints of the need to fully investigate the complaint, and matters pertaining to the complaint will not be discussed beyond the parties to the complaint and staff involved in resolving the complaint. In some cases resolution of the complaint may also involve appropriate bodies external to The Gold Coast Training College, e.g. trade unions or statutory bodies.
- Resolution of the complaint will usually take into account the preferred process of resolution of the person who made the complaint. However, there may be instances where a complaint is of such a serious nature that formal action is required that is beyond the wishes of the complainant, e.g. when a complaint raises or relates to allegations of unlawful behaviour or corruption or when The Gold Coast Training College duty of care to staff or students may be compromised if no action is taken. All complaints will be dealt with in accordance with The Gold Coast Training College Policy and procedures.
- Management have a responsibility to respond to complaints within a reasonable timeframe. Complaints will be responded to as quickly as possible in the circumstances, and complainants will be advised of the proposed timeframe for resolution. Unless a complaint is unusually complex or involves allegations of misconduct, The Gold Coast Training College will achieve resolution of a complaint within 4 weeks of the complaint being lodged with the appropriate person in authority. If it is not possible to achieve resolution within this timeframe the complainant will be advised of this, and will be kept informed of the progress of the matter. Students should be aware that if the matter has been lodged initially at an inappropriate level of authority, it might take longer to respond to the complaint.

Where the Gold Coast Training College considers more than 60 calendar days are required to process and finalise the complaint, the Gold Coast Training College will inform the complainant in writing, including reasons why more than 60 calendar days are required, and will provide regular updates to the complainant on the progress of the matter.

*The Gold Coast Training College will provide for review by an appropriate party independent of the RTO and the complainant, at the request of the individual making the complaint, if RTO process fail to resolve the complaint.*

### **Outcomes of the complaint resolution process**

Complainants will receive a written statement documenting the outcome of their complaint unless resolved at the time the complaint is raised and further correspondence would serve no purpose. The outcome will be in keeping with the seriousness of the incident, which was the basis of the complaint, and outcomes will be applied consistently across The Gold Coast Training College. Some of the possible outcomes of a student complaint include:

- Through the resolution process the student gains a better understanding of the situation so that his/her concerns are addressed.
- A mutually acceptable resolution is reached through conciliation or mediation.
- The complainant receives an apology, and/or the issue or behaviour that was the basis of their complaint is modified.
- In some cases, the complaint cannot be substantiated and no further action will result.
- In more serious cases, The Gold Coast Training College formal disciplinary processes will be invoked.

- Any disciplinary action will be undertaken in accordance with the processes prescribed in relevant industrial agreements (for staff) or The Gold Coast Training College Rules (for students). Formal warnings about inappropriate behaviour are a common outcome in the first instance, unless the behaviour is of a very serious nature (for example, involving repeated incidents of inappropriate behaviour or serious breaches of the code of conduct). Serious staff and instructor breaches will result in immediate dismissal.

All documentation relating to complaints will be kept strictly confidential and will not be accessible to anyone who is not directly involved in handling the complaint. Any material about the outcome of the complaint will be placed on the appropriate student and/or personnel file in accordance with the requirements of the Policy on Employee Records and the Policy on the Privacy of Student Records, and will only be accessible to authorised officers of The Gold Coast Training College and the individual concerned.

Student Feedback Forms are available at the conclusion of all courses to be completed and forwarded to the proprietors.

Lodgement of complaints must be in writing to the Manager of the Gold Coast Training College within 5 working days of course completion.

All concerns will be acknowledged by management within seven days. Any substantiated complaint will be acted upon, with the initiator being advised of the outcome in a timely manner.

Any student wishing to appeal an outcome of complaint may approach the Chief Executive Officer of The Gold Coast Training College to discuss possible solutions or lodge a written appeal within 5 working days of the decision.

Any such appeals will be kept on file for future reference. Any unresolved appeals will be referred to the appropriate authority.

Any student wishing to appeal an outcome of assessment may informally approach the trainer of that course at any time to discuss possible solutions or lodge a written appeal within 5 working days of course completion to The Gold Coast Training College.

Any such appeals will be kept on file for future reference. Any unresolved appeals will be referred to the appropriate authority.

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## Complaint Form

If you have a complaint about the Gold Coast Training College or their staff please raise your concerns with one of our managers this can be done either verbally or supplying details on this form

Please provide details of your complaint here

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