

Student Complaints Policy and Procedure

1. Preamble

GTC Professional Studies, Global College ('GTC') is committed to providing a quality service for our students, and working in an open and accountable way that builds the trust and respect of all our students.

One of the ways in which we can continue to improve our service is by listening and responding to the views of our students, and in particular by responding positively to complaints and putting mistakes right.

We aim to ensure that:

- ✓ making a complaint is as easy as possible;
- ✓ we treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for an immediate response;
- ✓ we deal with a complaint promptly, politely and, when appropriate, confidentially;
- ✓ we respond in the right way e.g. with an explanation or an apology where we have got things wrong, or information on any action taken;
- ✓ we learn from complaints, use them to improve our service, and annually review our complaints policy and procedure.

We aim to treat all concerns brought to our attention in a serious and constructive manner, and every effort will be made to ensure a satisfactory resolution. Please be assured that you can use this procedure without fear of recrimination or retribution.

2. What is a complaint or grievance?

A complaint or grievance is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more students about any programme of study or related facility, or any other service provided by or on behalf of GTC, which has materially and negatively affected your experience as a student at GTC.

A complaint or grievance may be raised individually or collectively, and you should feel assured that you will not encounter any disadvantage having lodged a complaint in good faith. Where complaints are raised collectively, the complaint should include a signed statement from all parties confirming that they have been affected by the issue or incident, and authorising GTC to correspond with a single-named spokesperson.

GTC may decline to deal with complaints which are intended to cause annoyance, or are malicious or frivolous. A complaint may be considered to be as such when it:

- clearly does not have any serious purpose or value;
- may or may not be the latest in a series of requests;
- is designed to cause disruption or annoyance;

- has the effect of harassing GTC and/or its staff;
- can be fairly characterised as obsessive or manifestly unreasonable;
- has the evident intention to do harm or mischief;
- has no clear desire for a sensible or reasonable form of redress, or where no redress is sought and therefore malice may be implied;
- is clearly not serious or sensible in content, attitude or behaviour.

Where there is reason to believe that a complaint falls under these categories, the matter will be referred to the Director of GTC and/or the Managing Director of Global College Ltd ('Global College'), who may decide to reject the complaint. Reasons will be given as to why the complaint is considered to be an abuse of process.

3. Process

Complaints should be raised as early as possible, since any delay may affect our ability to properly investigate the complaint or to provide an appropriate response. It is important that all relevant material pertaining to the complaint should be submitted in reasonable time, with as much detail as possible.

All complaints will be investigated and confidentiality will be maintained during the process so as to safeguard the interests of everyone concerned unless disclosure is necessary to progress the complaint. GTC expects that all parties will respect the confidentiality of the process.

Any individual about whom a complaint is made will have the right to be informed of the fact and nature of the complaint by the Director of GTC and/or the Managing Director of Global College.

GTC will ensure that anyone investigating or deciding on a complaint has had no prior involvement in the complaint. Where a complaint is found to be justified in full or in part, the complainant will be notified of any appropriate remedial action. If a complaint is found to be not justified at any stage, the reasons for the decision will be communicated, together with details of any further recourse that is available.

Any student who lodges a complaint, or against whom a complaint is made, will be entitled to be accompanied by a person of their choosing at any stage in the process. Students who lodge a complaint may not be represented in their absence unless there are exceptional reasons (such as a health condition) which means this is necessary.

4. Complaint stages

Stage 1 Informal Grievance

In the first instance, and where it is felt that a resolution is easily achievable, complaints should be raised with the relevant member of staff, immediately where possible and normally not later than 5 working days after the incident or situation arises.

In most cases, the member of staff will resolve the issue immediately or within a given time frame. However, where this is not possible the member of staff will advise you about the Formal Complaints and Grievance Procedure.

Where the issue is complex and requires detailed investigation (e.g. where a complaint relates to the conduct of a staff member, or covers a number of different incidents), it may be advisable to proceed directly to Stage 2.

Stage 2 Formal Complaint

A complaint or grievance should be made in writing via e-mail to the Director of GTC (harry.charalambous@globalcollege.com.cy) and/or the Managing Director of Global College (general@globalcollege.com.cy), normally within 10 working days of the incident or situation arising, setting out following:

Nature of the complaint

Please state the reason(s) why the complaint is being made, specifying:

- who or what is being complained about;
- the events that took place, in chronological order; and
- the consequences that you believe you have suffered as a result.

An outline of the action(s) you have taken so far

If you have already taken steps to resolve your complaint informally, please outline the following:

- Who did you discuss this with to try and resolve informally?
- Why do you remain dissatisfied with the response to your Stage 1 complaint?

Desired outcome

Please state what action you would like taken and any suggestion of resolution or redress in order to resolve the complaint to your satisfaction.

An investigation will take place and all parties concerned will be interviewed separately by the Director of GTC and/or the Managing Director of Global College. The matter will be considered in the light of all evidence produced, and a decision made. A written report will be compiled, which will include any statements from the complainant, third party or any other witnesses to the incident/series of incidents or situation. You will then be notified of the outcome in writing, within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint.

Stage 3 Formal Complaint Review

Should you feel that the complaint has not been dealt with satisfactorily, you may submit to the Director of GTC and/or the Managing Director of Global College a request for a review of the decision. Requests should be made in writing via e-email, within 10 working days of receipt of the Stage 2 decision.

The purpose of Stage 3 is to review the action(s) and decision(s) taken at the previous stages. A Stage 3 review should be requested only if:

- new evidence or circumstances have become known which you could not have reasonably made known at the time of the Stage 2 complaint;
- Stage 2 of this Student Complaints Policy and Procedure was not conducted fairly and/or in accordance with due process, and this materially affected the outcome;
- the decision and outcome of the Stage 2 complaint were unreasonable in the light of the evidence provided.

The Stage 3 review will be carried out by a panel comprising three members as follows:

- the Director of GTC;
- the Managing Director of Global College; and
- a member of staff who is not associated with the complainant.

The panel will review the case and may request further information from you, and will consider whether the relevant procedures were followed at Stage 2, the outcome was reasonable and a clear rationale was provided for the Stage 2 outcomes. They will also consider valid reasons for the late submission of new evidence.

The decision and outcome of the Stage 3 review will be communicated to you in writing by the Director of GTC, normally within 10 working days of receiving the request for a review.

Stage 4 Independent Review

In the event that you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the Stage 3 review, you have the option to escalate your complaint to ACCA at www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/footer-toolbar/contact-us/make-a-complaint-about-an-acca-member.html.

If you have exhausted both our complaints process and ACCA's, you may escalate to the appropriate regulator, details of which can be found on the ACCA website at www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/footer-toolbar/contact-us/unhappy.html.