

VANCOUVER COLLEGE OF MASSAGE THERAPY STUDENT COMPLAINT/DISPUTE RESOLUTION POLICY

1. Introduction

Vancouver College of Massage Therapy (VCMT) values the feedback provided by its students related to their educational experience at VCMT. When students encounter behaviours or environments that run counter to the values of VCMT, they need to be able to effectively communicate their experience(s) to VCMT administration through an accessible, transparent process.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide students with guidelines for registering a complaint and an avenue through which they can bring their concerns directly to the VCMT Administration team.

3. Scope

This policy applies to VCMT students who wish to lodge a complaint and/or resolve an issue related to their educational experience at VCMT. It may concern the conduct of a VCMT community member (staff or student), the instructional delivery of the program, the organizational structure of College or other items of concern that impact the student's learning experience while at VCMT. This policy is constrained by other policies, agreements and pieces of legislation (such as the Personal Information Protection Act) which may limit the type of response VCMT can provide to a complaint/complainant.

4. Definitions

4.1. Complaint

An expression of dissatisfaction or concern made by a student where there is an expectation of a response or resolution by VCMT Administration.

4.2. Complainant

The individual(s) lodging a complaint.

4.3. Sr. Administrator

References to the Sr. Administrator include any administrative designate who might take oversight of the complaint process should the Sr. Administrator be unavailable or be a party to the complaint itself.

5. Policy

When a student encounters an incident that they feel runs counter to the values of VCMT, they should seek to resolve the issue informally by speaking directly to the other party(s) involved. In cases where the student feels the matter should be brought to the attention of VCMT Administration, they should communicate the concern to the Sr. Administrator in person or by email (dneufeld@vcmt.ca). In consultation with the Sr. Administrator, the complainant will determine whether they wish to pursue an informal resolution to the issue or whether they intend to initiate a formal investigative process.

5.1. Informal Complaint:

If the complainant agrees to an informal resolution, the Sr. Administrator (or administrative designate) will work alongside the complainant to promote a satisfactory resolution. The process may require the Sr. Administrator to:

- speak informally to individuals involved in the incident
- act as mediator in an informal meeting with the concerned parties
- initiate a change in practice
- commence a more formal investigation should it be warranted.

5.2. Formal Complaint:

The complainant will submit a written account of the issue, providing the following information:

- Names of individuals centrally involved in the issue
- Dates and times of the incident or observed behaviours
- A description of what occurred including details of objectionable actions/behaviours
- Names of other individuals who witnessed the behaviours
- An expected response for resolution of the issue

If the Sr. Administrator determines that there is reason to proceed, a formal inquiry into the allegations will be initiated.

5.3. Formal Inquiry

The Sr. Administrator will meet with persons who have knowledge of the issue and gather data considered relevant to the complaint, providing all reasonable opportunity for pertinent information to be included in the investigation. Students are entitled to be accompanied to any investigative meetings by a person of their choosing. This person's role will be limited to that of observer.

Upon completion of the formal inquiry, the Sr. Administrator will determine an appropriate course of action in response to the complaint, consistent with the values and policies of the school and the best interests of VCMT students.

Any incidents which are perceived by VCMT administration to be of a civic or criminal matter will be referred to the proper authorities.

5.4. Procedural Fairness

VCMT will deal with allegations of student misconduct in a procedurally fair, unbiased and timely manner. Complainants and respondents will be advised of the options available to them. Involved parties will be provided opportunities to support or defend their own positions.

To ensure that there is a timely response, complaints should be submitted within 90 days of the date of the last alleged incident. The Senior Administrator may waive this requirement if the complainant submits reasonable evidence in support of an extension.

A student who makes or is otherwise involved in a complaint will not be subject to any form of sanctions or retaliation by VCMT at any time.

5.5. Confidentiality

The complainant's confidentiality will be maintained at their request unless, in consultation with the complainant, it is established that the investigation requires disclosure of the complainant's identity for a satisfactory conclusion to be reached.

Confidentiality may not be maintained if legal requirements necessitate the identification of the complainant.

5.6. Notification of Decision

The complainant will receive notification of the Sr. Administrator's decision within 10 working days of the completion of an investigation. Results of an Informal Complaint can be communicated verbally or in writing. The results of a formal inquiry will be communicated in writing either on paper or by email. The degree of detail provided will be constrained by the



complainant's need to know, their level of satisfaction at the outcome, and matters of confidentiality.

5.7. Interim Relief

VCMT Administration may take whatever interim measures they deem necessary to protect the College community, pending the completion of an investigation into acts of misconduct. Such measures may include, but are not limited to:

- No-contact between the Complainant, Respondent, Witnesses or other parties
- Ordering the Complainant, Respondent, Witnesses or other parties to cease and desist from engaging in a particular type of behaviour
- Restricting access to the VCMT campus or specific areas of campus
- Suspending involved parties from the College pending investigation

Specific conditions to be imposed in the interim will be dependent upon the circumstances of each case and the level of risk to the VCMT community.

5.8. Appeal of Decision

The complainant(s) and respondent(s) have the right to appeal the decision in keeping with VCMT's Appeal Process Policy. If the student is dissatisfied with the determination, and has been misled by the institution regarding any significant aspect of that program, the student may file a complaint with the Private Training Institutions Branch (PTIB) (www.privatetraininginstitutions.gov.bc.ca). Complaints must be filed with PTIB within one year of the date a student completes, is dismissed from, or withdraws from the program.

Signature of Sr. Administrator: _____

Date: _____