

## **POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE BOARD'S PROCESSES**

### **B 1.0 Introduction**

1.1 The Board has a number of feedback mechanisms by which it aims continually to review and develop its policies and processes. These include:

- Evaluation by teaching institutions (TIs) and the accreditation visit teams at the time of provisional and full accreditation visits and major review
- Observer reports at full accreditation visits
- Annual feedback from TIs and all members of the Accreditation Committee (AC) and the Board on Board processes
- Informal feedback individually to officers at Accreditation Officer (AO) visits, and at Council of Heads of Acupuncture Courses (CHAC) meetings.

1.2 Normally, if a TI is dissatisfied with any aspect of the Board's processes they should make this clear either through the formal feedback processes or to the TIs designated AO, or another AO if the designated AO is the cause of the dissatisfaction.

1.3 This complaints policy is focused on issues that an individual TI or CHAC (as the official body of collective TIs) do not consider have been adequately addressed by the response to the feedback mechanisms listed in 1.1.

### **B 2.0 Scope**

2.1 Complaints may be received from the principal or governors/trustees of an independent college or by the relevant senior staff member of a university of any TI in a formal relationship with the Board, or from CHAC.

2.2 Complaints about accreditation or major review events will not be pursued if the TI has not submitted an evaluation of this event.

2.3 Complaints will be investigated where the TI(s) is dissatisfied with the way in which the Board, the AC or the officers have undertaken any Board process, including responses to TI dissatisfactions expressed through the normal Board processes outlined in 1.1.

### **B 3.0 Process**

#### **Initial steps**

3.1 On receipt in the Board office of a complaint, the Board's Lead Accreditation Officer (LAO) will be informed and normally the initial complaint will be forwarded to the LAO with copies to the Chairs of the AC and the Board. The Board office will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and indicate who is dealing with the complaint and what is the next stage in the process.

3.2 The LAO, or Chair of AC if the complaint directly relates to the LAO, will liaise with the Chair of AC/ Chair of the Board to agree the appointment of an investigating officer (IO) and a member of the Board who, with the IO will review the evidence (see 3.7).

3.3 The IO will be an experienced educationalist who may or may not be an acupuncturist, but who is familiar with the Board's principles and processes and is not involved with the TI concerned.

3.4 The TI or CHAC will be informed of the name of the IO appointed and will have the right to object if they have just cause, giving these reasons in writing to the Chair of the Board within one week of notification of the name.

### **Investigation: gathering evidence**

3.5 The Investigating Officer will require from the **TI or CHAC** if this has not already been received:

- a statement by the TI or CHAC as to the nature of the complaint about the Board (including its committees and officers)
- evidence of the initial contact with the Board about the issue in question e.g accreditation visit evaluation, account of phone conversation, email correspondence
- evidence of response from the Board, its officers or the AC
- a statement by the TI or CHAC of why they consider that the issue was not properly handled by the Board.

This should be received within two weeks of request for this information.

3.6 The IO will then gather evidence from the **Board, its officers or committees** including:

- any relevant minutes of meetings
- relevant AO letters or reports, including accreditation and major review reports and evaluations
- a statement from the relevant officer (Chair, AO or LAO) directly responding to the complaint

### **Review of the evidence**

3.7 This evidence will be reviewed by the IO and the designated Board member who will communicate with each other by email and phone, convening a meeting if this is indicated.

3.8 Further evidence may be requested from either the teaching institution or Board officers.

### **Outcome of the review**

3.9 These two persons will decide the outcome, write a report, with a conclusion and recommendations and send this to the TI for comment on accuracy and for confidential circulation to the AC and the Board.

3.10 The outcome will be that of review team but may be one of the following:

- that the Board, its committees or officers responded to the initial issue appropriately and no further action is warranted
- that although there were some deficiencies in the way in which the initial issue was handled, the concerns are amenable to further discussion and resolution informally
- that there appear to be significant deficiencies in the processes or in the fairness of the outcome that have not been appropriately identified or handled which need following up.

### **Board Adjudication and Decision**

3.11 The Board will consider the report at their next meeting and

- make decisions about actions they expect of the Board officers or amendments to Board policies or processes
- identify any other actions that arise from the investigation.

3.12 The Chair of the Board will write both to the TI/CHAC and the LAO indicating their decision.

3.13 The TI has the right of appeal (see Appeals procedure Section A of this appendix).

3.14 Should the need arise any officer of the Board implicated has the right to seek support from whomsoever they wish, including the Board's Advisor, and may wish to make further representation to the Board in a manner similar to that of a TI appeal.

Approved by the Board March 2010