

Policy/Procedure

Number: POL008

Name: Supervisor Complaints Policy and Procedure

Purpose

The *Supervisor Complaints Policy and Procedure* has been developed to provide a mechanism for addressing complaints raised by Supervisors concerning the operation or conduct of JCU GP Training in the delivery of the Australian General Practice Training (AGPT) Program.

Scope

This policy and procedure applies to any Complaint:

- (a) raised by a Supervisor (other than a Supervisor who holds an interest in a Training Post); and
- (b) concerning the operation or conduct of the AGPT Program as delivered by JCU GP Training in so far as it impacts upon the Supervisor; and
- (c) for which a specific and achievable outcome is requested by the Supervisor.

This policy and procedure does not apply to complaints from Training Posts or Registrars. Training Posts should refer to their current Training Post Agreement with James Cook University, while Registrars should refer to the *Registrar Complaints Policy and Procedure*.

Supervisors who would like to provide JCU GP Training with general Feedback on operations or conduct are encouraged to do so directly to their local office staff, via the annual supervisor feedback survey, or via our online Feedback Form. All Feedback received in this manner will be treated confidentially.

In-practice employment matters

This policy and procedure does not apply to in-practice employment matters. Issues in relation to employment of Registrars should be managed in the context of the employer/employee relationship between the Registrar and the Training Post.

Definitions

Australian General Practice Training Program or AGPT Program The program of formal vocational training funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health and undertaken by Registrars seeking to achieve recognition as general practitioners.

Business Day A day which is not a Saturday, a Sunday, a public holiday or a day on which the James Cook University, Douglas Campus is closed.

Complaint Expression of dissatisfaction about the operation or conduct of the AGPT Program as delivered by JCU GP Training in so far as it impacts upon a Supervisor.

Feedback Opinions, comments and expressions of interest or concern about JCU GP Training or its services

Formal Complaint	A Complaint that is submitted in writing to JCU GP Training in accordance with clauses 3 and 4 of the Procedures in this policy and procedure. A Formal Complaint cannot be made anonymously.
JCU GP Training	JCU's training program in the medical specialty of general practice, delivered under a contract between JCU and the Commonwealth Department of Health.
Personal Information	Information or an opinion, including information or an opinion forming part of a database, whether true or not, and whether recorded in a material form or not, about an individual whose identity is apparent, or can reasonably be ascertained, from the information or opinion.
Registrar	A medical practitioner undertaking formal training through the AGPT Program.
Responsible Officer	A Team Leader, Manager, Lead Medical Educator, or Principal Medical Educator, within the JCU College of Medicine and Dentistry.
Supervisor	A vocationally registered general practitioner employed or engaged by a Training Post and accredited by JCU GP Training to deliver training according to the training standards of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and/or the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine.
Training Post	A health provider engaged by JCU GP Training to provide on-site vocational training in general practice (according to the training standards of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and/or the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine) to Registrars.

Policy

1. JCU GP Training is committed to an effective system of complaints management that responds to issues raised by Supervisors in a positive way and contributes to the continuous improvement of the JCU GP training program.
2. JCU GP Training requires Supervisors to make all reasonable efforts to resolve their Complaints informally, prior to lodging a Formal Complaint.
3. JCU GP training will not accept a Formal Complaint submitted more than 40 Business Days after the event or incident that is the subject of the Formal Complaint, other than in exceptional circumstances as determined by the Head of Operations, General Practice Training (henceforth 'Head of Operations') in their absolute discretion.
4. The Formal Complaints management process will be conducted in accordance with the principles of natural justice:
 - (a) the right to be heard;
 - (b) the right to be treated without bias;
 - (c) a decision based on evidence.
5. In managing any Complaint or Formal Complaint, JCU GP Training is bound by the provisions of the *Information Privacy Act 2009* (Qld) with respect to the collection, use, disclosure and storage of any Personal Information.

Procedure

1. In the first instance, Supervisors are required to make all reasonable efforts to resolve their Complaints informally through the appropriate JCU GP Training staff member.
2. JCU GP Training encourages, but does not mandate, that Supervisors discuss their concerns with a [Senior Fellow](#) or the [Practice Support Advisor](#) before making a Formal Complaint
3. Where an informal resolution is not possible, appropriate, or satisfactory, the Supervisor may submit a Formal Complaint to JCU GP Training by emailing jcugp.complaints@jcu.edu.au.
4. The Formal Complaint must include, where relevant, the following details:
 - the name of the person/s about whom the Formal Complaint is made;
 - a description of the events that have occurred;
 - the basis for the Formal Complaint;
 - evidence that the Supervisor has made all reasonable efforts to resolve the Complaint informally at the local level;
 - the name and contact details of any witness or supporting party;
 - the outcome the Supervisor seeks; and
 - any relevant documentary evidence attached to and referenced within the Formal Complaint.
5. The Head of Operations will promptly acknowledge receipt of the Formal Complaint. If the Head of Operations determines that a Formal Complaint is not made in accordance with clause 4 above, it will be referred back to the Supervisor.
6. The Head of Operations may make an assessment:
 - (a) that a Formal Complaint is frivolous, trivial or vexatious; or
 - (b) that a Supervisor has not made all reasonable efforts to resolve the Complaint informally, and dismiss the Formal Complaint and notify the Supervisor. The decision of the Head of Operations is final and not subject to further review within James Cook University. This does not preclude a Supervisor from seeking review by an appropriate external body.
7. The Head of Operations will assign the Formal Complaint to a Responsible Officer and will notify the Supervisor in writing of the identity of the Responsible Officer.
8. The Responsible Officer will determine a dispute resolution process for the Formal Complaint. This may include:
 - (a) nominating an appropriate staff member to assist;
 - (b) meeting with the parties (with their respective support person), together or separately;
 - (c) providing for mediation or conciliation; and/or
 - (d) investigation of the Formal Complaint by the Responsible Officer or an appropriately trained and independent person.
9. The Responsible Officer shall ensure all parties are afforded natural justice.
10. The Responsible Officer will consider whether or not the Formal Complaint is substantiated and the appropriate response.
11. The Responsible Officer will report in writing on the complaint resolution process and their determination concerning the Formal Complaint (“the Responsible Officer’s Report”) to the Supervisor

and the Head of Operations within not more than 20 Business Days of receipt of the Formal Complaint, other than where the Head of Operations has approved an extension (see clauses 14 and 15).

12. The Responsible Officer's Report will:

- (a) Document the process used in the complaint resolution process and findings relevant to the Formal Complaint;
- (b) Note if an agreement has been reached by the parties and, if so, the terms of that agreement;
- (c) If no agreement is reached by the parties, state the determination and provide reasons in support of it;
- (d) Where the Responsible Officer has authority to do so, state any actions (including remedies if appropriate) which, as a result of the determination, have been undertaken or are to be undertaken under the Responsible Officer's direction; and
- (e) Recommend actions (including remedies if appropriate) which are not within the Responsible Officer's authority but which the Responsible Officer considers are required as a result of the determination.

13. For record-keeping purposes, the Responsible Officer will also provide the Head of Operations and JCU Corporate Records with a copy of all documentation relevant to the Formal Complaint.

14. Where the Head of Operations makes the assessment that, due to the nature of the Formal Complaint, the Responsible Officer will require more than 20 Business Days to reach a determination, the Head of Operations when referring the Formal Complaint to the Responsible Officer may nominate a longer timeframe for the Responsible Officer to provide a report.

15. Where a determination has not been able to be reached by the due date, the Responsible Officer may seek an extension from the Head of Operations of the time required to provide a report. If an extension is granted, the Head of Operations will advise the Supervisor of the new timeframe anticipated for response.

16. There is no further right for an internal review of, or appeal from, a decision made under this policy or procedure.

Reporting and evaluation

All Formal Complaints will be recorded on a register held by the Director. Formal Complaints will be de-identified and reported to the Strategic Management Group on a monthly basis. The Strategic Management Group will review the register, monitor trends, and evaluate outcomes in collaboration with the JCU GP Training Evaluation Team.

Related policy instruments

- [General Practice Training Governance Policy](#)

Schedules/Appendices

Not applicable

Administration

NOTE: Printed copies of this procedure are uncontrolled, and currency can only be assured at the time of printing.

Approval Details

Policy Sponsor	Vice Chancellor
Version no	19-1
Date for next Major Review	1 February 2021

Revision History

Version	Approval date	Implementation date	Details	Author
19-1	20 June 2019	24 June 2019	Minor amendments to title of program (from Generalist Medical Training program to JCU General Practice Training program)	Policy Officer, JCU GP Training
18-1	6 April 2018	1 June 2018	Procedure established	Head of Operations, GMT

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