

Training Committee

**Standard Operating Procedures for**

**Trainer Complaints**

**Background**

In the course of their training activities, ACBS peer reviewed trainers may occasionally attract complaints from people who have received their services. This policy sets out some guidance for trainers on handling such complaints, as well as setting out a mechanism for people wishing to make such a complaint more formally and a set of standard operating procedures (SOP’S) for an ACBS organisational response to such complaints. This is not a disciplinary policy and its purpose is in ensuring the on-going quality of the training provided by members of the ACT training community.

**Standard Operating Procedures for Trainers**

Members of the community of ACT trainers (hereafter trainers) should take steps to evaluate the impact of their training as a matter of routine. This should be at a minimum verbally requesting feedback during training, though would be more robustly supported by anonomised written feedback. Such feedback might include ratings on specific dimensions and also space for qualitative comments from training participants. It is in the spirit of ACT trainings to welcome feedback and to invite anyone who is dissatisfied or wishes to tell the trainer how their experience could be improved to do so informally and directly to the trainer. Hopefully with such a procedure, dissatisfactions may be more directly and swiftly resolved and trainers can benefit from the feedback, responding to the complaint in a way that addresses the complainant’s concerns and helps to maintain or improve on the quality of the trainer’s training work.

**Mechanism for Formal Complaints to ACBS Training Committee**

Individuals who have tried the direct approach described above and who still wish to make a more formal complaint about the quality of a training experience should contact the Chair of the Training Committee by email. The Chair’s contact details are available on the ACBS website under Training Committee pages. The complaint should detail:

The complainant

The trainer

The specific event being referred to

The nature of the complaint

The Chair of the Training Committee or their delegate from within the Training Committee will review the complaint and determine the nature of the response required. This may involve direct further discussion with the complainant, discussion with the trainer or review by the training committee. This may be done anonymously when this serves the best interests of the community, trainer and complainant. If more than one complaint about the same individual arises (particularly over time) it may serve these interests better for the trainer and / or the complainant to be named. If the complainant wishes to make a complaint about the Chair of the Training Committee, this overseeing function will be transferred to the President of ACBS or their delegate for that particular complaint.

Having reviewed the complaint and potentially gathered further information as described, the Chair of the Training Committee may decide that:

1. The complaint is spurious or malicious and no further action is required, other than to inform the complainant that no further action is being taken.
2. The complaint is genuine and requires a response from the trainer directly to the complainant and / or for the trainer to undertake some course of improvement. Under these circumstances the complaint will be forwarded to the trainer and the Chair will make themselves available to discuss the trainer’s possible responses, and to support the trainer in using the feedback that is inherent in the complaint to their best advantage.
3. The complaint is genuine and suggests a response is required from the community of trainers, such as the trainer needs some form of formal support, mentorship or period of further training. This may be particularly indicated if multiple complaints are received.
4. In exceptional circumstances, complaints may be so serious as to question the trainer’s ‘good character’ or training competence. Under such circumstances the training committee may decide that the trainer be removed from the list of ACT trainers and be required to apply again, after a period of time determined by the training committee. Under such circumstances the applicant would need to demonstrate unequivocally how they had addressed the criterion of good character and / or training competence through remedial activity, as well as demonstrating all other required criteria.
5. If such a complaint reveals evidence that suggests gross misconduct or unlawful activity, the complainant would be encouraged to contact the regulatory authority and / or professional body for the trainer’s country and sphere of work and then follow the standards advised by that professional body. In extreme circumstances where the complaint reveals possible criminal activity, the Chair of the Training Committee may have a duty of care to undertake such action independent of the complainant. In this exceptional circumstance the Chair will seek consultation from other training committee members, the ACBS Board, the ACBS board past president and board liaison to the Training Committee as soon as possible.

**Support for Trainers**

The Training Committee Chair and the trainer may identify a need for further support or mentorship. These procedures set out an expectation that within reason the community of trainers responds openly and flexibly to any of our members who seek support or mentorship in such a way. These relationships may be relatively informal in the case of scenario 2 above. Under scenario 3, the Training Committee would find it useful to receive periodic updates for a specified period of time on how the trainer’s mentorship is progressing.

In addition, the Community of Trainers will undertake to compile a ‘trainers only’ resource on a private section of the ACBS website that describes anonymised complaints and how these were handled, in order to give trainers some sense of the kinds of complaints that have been encountered and possibly useful responses. This will also help trainers to avoid potential pitfalls in their own training work.

**Liability**

The primary function of these SOP’s is to ensure that the community of ACT trainers continues to represent high quality, high fidelity ACT training and to provide a mechanism for identification and remediation of sub optimal training performance. ACBS is not responsible for the actions of any peer reviewed ACT trainers and no legal or financial liability is implied, even under circumstances where a complaint has been found to be genuine. Financial or legal liability for ACT training remains entirely the responsibility of the individual ACT trainer.

On behalf of the ACBS Training Committee and the Community of Peer Reviewed ACT Trainers

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David Gillanders

Chair of ACBS Training Committee

14th November 2012