

DISPUTE RESOLUTION POLICY

1. POLICY STATEMENT

SBC is committed to resolving student concerns in a manner that is respectful, confidential, and impartial. Students are encouraged to raise concerns in a timely manner so that they may be addressed constructively. All disputes will be handled without bias and retaliation.

2. PURPOSE

This policy establishes a fair, transparent, and timely process for resolving student concerns and disputes. It supports a respectful learning environment and ensures concerns are addressed consistently and in accordance with applicable legislation and regulatory requirements.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all students enrolled in SBC Programs and governs the resolution of concerns, complaints, and appeals related to their learning experience.

Student concerns generally fall into one (or more) of the following categories:

- **Academic Matters:** grades, evaluations, progression decisions, assessment conditions, or decisions related to course completion requirements.
- **Non-Academic Complaints:** faculty, student, class conduct, professionalism concerns, communication issues, learning environment concerns, or other matters affecting a student's participation in the program.
- **Financial/Administrative Disputes:** tuition, fees, refunds, administrative errors, or registration-related issues.

4. DEFINITIONS

Dispute: Any concern, complaint, or disagreement raised by a student regarding their educational experience that falls within the scope of this policy.

Formal Complaint: A written submission outlining a student concern that requires review through the formal dispute resolution process.

5. OBJECTIVES

This policy is guided by the following objectives:

- **Respect and Confidentiality:** All parties involved in a dispute are treated fairly and respectfully. Information is handled confidentially to the extent possible.
- **Timeliness:** Concerns are addressed as promptly as possible within defined timelines.
- **Fairness:** Decisions are based on a balanced and objective review of information.
- **Non-Retaliation:** Students raising concerns in good faith will not face retaliation or academic penalty.

6. DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS

Step 1 – Informal Resolution (Recommended)

Students are encouraged to resolve concerns directly with the individual(s) involved, where appropriate. Informal resolution often allows concerns to be addressed quickly and collaboratively.

If informal resolution is not successful or is not appropriate, the student may proceed to a Formal Complaint.

Step 2 – Formal Complaint Submission

A student may submit a formal written complaint to the Education Manager within thirty (30) calendar days of the incident or issue. The Education Manager may, at their discretion, accept a complaint submitted after this timeframe where extenuating circumstances prevented the student from submitting the complaint earlier.

The Formal Complaint must include:

- Student's full name and contact information
- Description of the issue or concern and any relevant documentation
- Relevant dates and parties involved
- Steps taken to resolve the issue, if any
- Desired or preferred resolution

Complaint Review Process

The Education Manager will review the complaint, gather relevant information, and, if necessary, meet with the student and other parties involved. Students may be accompanied or represented throughout the dispute resolution process by a lawyer, agent, friend, family member, advocate, or another person of their choosing.

Step 3 – Investigation and Response

- The Education Manager will acknowledge receipt of the Formal Complaint within five (5) business days.
- An impartial investigation will be conducted, which may include but is not limited to interviews of staff, review of documentation, and consultation with faculty.
- The Education Manager will conduct an impartial review of all relevant information before making a determination.
- A written decision, including the reasons for the determination, will be provided to the student within ten (10) business days of receipt of the Formal Complaint.

Step 4 – Escalation Process

If the student is not satisfied with the outcome, they may submit a written appeal within five (5) business days of receiving the decision to the VP Academics.

The written appeal must include:

- The reason(s) for the appeal.
- If applicable, any new or additional information relevant to the case.

A final written decision, including the reasons for the decision, will be issued within five (5) business days. This decision is final within the institution.

7. EXTERNAL REVIEW

If a student is not satisfied with the outcome of the College's internal dispute resolution process, they may submit a complaint to the Private Training Institutions Regulatory Unit (PTIRU) (www.privatetraininginstitutions.gov.bc.ca) within one year of the date they complete, are dismissed from, or withdraw from the program.

8. POLICY COMPLIANCE AND INTERPRETATION

Students and staff must comply with this policy. Questions regarding interpretation or application should be directed to the Education Leadership.