

## **GCC Policy and Procedure for Handling Concerns about Approved Chiropractic Programmes**

### **1. Policy Statement**

This policy sets out how the General Chiropractic Council (GCC) deals with concerns raised about institutions that deliver GCC and Privy Council approved chiropractic degree programmes which lead to registration as a professional chiropractor.

The GCC has a responsibility to ensure that education providers meet the specified Education Standards through its initial approval and ongoing quality assurance processes. These standards align with the published Code of Professional Practice for chiropractic.

Concerns may be those raised by students, chiropractors, patients or other members of the public and may lead to an investigation. The GCC can only withdraw the approval of programmes where there is sufficient evidence that the Education Standards are no longer being met by the education institution and would usually be actioned following extensive monitoring against conditions set by the GCC.

### **2. Concerns that will be considered**

The GCC will consider concerns from students, staff, patients, carers or any other interested party where it relates to the delivery of chiropractic Education Standards.

Concerns should relate to ongoing or widespread issues within the institution's systems or procedures that could affect the overall academic quality of the chiropractic programme, or its ability to prepare students for safe and effective professional practice.

It is expected that, prior to a concern being considered by the GCC, the person raising the concern will have exhausted local routes to resolve the issue, which includes the education provider's own complaints procedures. Only if there is evidence that concerns have been raised locally but that actions taken have been insufficient or are still causing concerns with respect to meeting education standards would the GCC ask the institution for a response and may seek more information from both them and the person raising the concern.

If the concern relates to the practice of an individual chiropractor and has significant implications for patient safety, this would be considered by the education institution in the first instance and then, if necessary, under the Fitness to Practice policy of the GCC. However, it would be expected that concerns of this nature have first been

raised with the education institution as the individual's employer.

### **3. Concerns that will not be considered**

Individual complaints against providers regarding examination results, academic progress, grievances against staff and isolated mistakes or incidents should be raised with the education provider. Please note that once an internal process has concluded we are unable to act to change the decision of the education provider. The GCC does not have the power to compel providers to change examination grades or classifications of awards.

### **4. Process**

Concerns about an approved chiropractic programme not meeting GCC Education Standards should be sent to [education@gcc-uk.org](mailto:education@gcc-uk.org) in the first instance.

Concerns raised regarding education providers will be handled by the Director of Development and the Chair of the Education Committee.

Individuals should provide as much information as possible in writing. For the concern to be processed, the following information is required:

- The name of the education provider involved
- A summary of any incidents, issues or key facts
- Details of any other complaints procedures the concern has gone through as well as any findings
- Permission for the concern to be forwarded to the education or training provider (this can be anonymised on request)

When an individual provides their contact details, the GCC will always acknowledge receipt of the concern raised. Feedback will also be provided on how the concern has been handled and any progress that has been made.

Once sufficient information has been obtained, it will then be decided if the concern is relevant to the delivery of the GCC Education Standards. If it is, the concern will proceed to further investigation and will be shared with the provider for a response. Their response should address the concerns raised as fully as possible and will normally be requested within two weeks, although this will be negotiable depending on the nature of the concern.

If the concern is not considered relevant, the person raising the concern will be advised of the decision and provided with information about the GCC concerns policy.

When an anonymous concern is raised, it may not be possible for any further action to be taken.

Once a response from the provider has been received, additional information may be requested from the person raising the concern, from the education provider, or both. The Director of Development and the Chair of the Education Committee will then determine whether further discussion and possible investigation is warranted by the Education Committee.

If the concern is brought to the Education Committee for discussion, the Committee will decide on one of three possible outcomes:

1. The response from the education provider is sufficient to resolve the matter and no further action is required
2. Evidence shows that the education provider is not failing to meet the standards required. However, further monitoring is seen as being necessary in order to ensure the issues raised continue to be dealt with appropriately. This will take place either through the annual monitoring process or via another agreed method such as conditions being set for the institution to meet, enhanced monitoring or a focused visit
3. Concerns are serious enough to warrant a discussion with the Council, who will decide on further action that may need to be taken.

The concern will be referred to the Council in instances where there is evidence of serious educational failure which has not been addressed sufficiently via an alternative method. It is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of examples for when this might occur, but some examples are:

- A continual lack of appropriate supervision for students
- Students are undertaking tasks for which they are not competent
- A lack of opportunities for students to attain the desired level of competence

The Council reserves the right to withdraw recognition, with the approval of Privy Council, and may take such action in exceptional circumstances. In these rare instances, the Council shall use its best endeavours to secure that any person who is studying for that qualification at the time when recognition is withdrawn is given the opportunity to study at any other place for a qualification that is recognised.