

The School for F.M. Alexander Studies
Trainees' Complaints, Grievances and Appeals
Version 3.4 April 12, 2007

The school has in place a well established series of avenues for trainees to give feedback on any unsatisfactory aspects of the training (see our "Continuous Improvement and Risk Management" document). So far this process has dealt adequately with any complaints or grievances that have arisen.

We do however have in place a procedure for dealing with issues that this process may be unable to handle – there are a number of steps in this process which will be followed if the previous one does not deliver a satisfactory outcome.

1. Should a trainee wish to make a formal complaint or appeal it should be reported in writing to the director and the trainee will be given the opportunity to formally put their case to the director and assistant director. The trainee may invite a third party to assist them in putting their case if they so desire.
2. Within seven working days the school will provide the trainee with written documentation of all actions and outcomes, which arise in response to the grievance including full reasons for any decision the school may make.
3. Should a trainee be dissatisfied with the school's response to a complaint, the Director and trainee will attempt to use the human resources available within the school to come to a resolution.
4. Should The School be unable to resolve the issue internally we can organize a 'Round Table Conference' between the student and SOFMAS at **Australian Council of Private Education and Training's** (ACPET) office. SOFMAS is a member of the ACPET. The college should contact ACPET within 24 hours of receiving the request from the student to arrange a 'Round Table Conference'. ACPET will organise the 'Round Table Conference' within 10 working days. Options will be discussed and the desirable result is resolution of the complaint through conciliation. The outcome of Step 4 - the 'Round Table Conference' will be agreed to at the completion of the 'Round Table Conference'. ACPET's role is not to decide on the outcome but to facilitate the meeting to ensure both parties are able to present their views. If the complaint remains unresolved then the student can proceed to Step 5
5. **Formal Resolution - External Professional Mediator appointed**
 - 1) Formal Dispute Resolution may be requested after all appropriate forms of informal resolution have been sought. Student can request mediation in writing. SOFMAS can request ACPET to organize an accredited independent professional Mediator. Mediation will be organised within 14 working days and the outcome of this mediation will be known at the end of the mediation session.
 - 2) In consultation with the Mediator all costs associated with mediation are to be agreed to by both parties.
 - 3) The Mediation can be held at ACPET's office. ACPET's role in the mediation is limited to organizing the Mediator and a room for the mediation.
 - 4) ACPET will not take part in the formal Mediation.
 - 5) Both parties will commit to resolving the complaint.
 - 6) The Mediator will document all outcomes of mediation.
 - 7) At completion of the Mediation, both parties must sign an *Agreement* agreeing to the outcomes.

At any point in this process students may nominate a support person to assist them in the process.

All members of the training course will agree, by signing the contract of training, to abide by a process based at the last resort on mediation or arbitration.

ASSESSMENT

One area in which difficulties can arise is in the area of assessment. The three-year period for training mandated by AUSTAT is ultimately an arbitrary one. It is important that the teachers and director give the student some criteria for self-assessment. The student should realistically be able to monitor their own progress and readiness for teaching and should have the opportunity to compare these with the teachers.

It should not be assumed that all students will be ready for AUSTAT accreditation at the end of three years, or the Advanced Diploma in Alexander Technique Teaching at the end of four years and the completion of three or four years training does not imply a right to such accreditation. If a student is required to do further time and disagrees with this assessment of Alexander technique units the director may ask the Training Course Standing Committee to appoint two teaching members of AUSTAT, with not less than 10 years teaching experience, to do an independent assessment of the student's readiness to graduate.

In such a case the trainee will agree to pay the reasonable costs of such assessment should the decision of the assessors agree with the school.

LITIGATION AND THREAT OF LITIGATION

The school is committed to dealing with any problems arising outside of the adversarial legal system. It should be realized that if a situation comes to this point, the teacher - student relationship will have irrevocably broken down and the learning situation will be compromised. It would be unrealistic to expect a teacher and trainee to be able to engage in the close one on one hands-on work, requiring the large measure of trust and mutual respect that such work requires should litigation or the threat of litigation be initiated. In such a circumstance the trainee would need to take leave from the school until such time that the situation was resolved in a manner that a useful teaching relationship could be restored.