



## COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

### *Policy Statement*

QCIDD attempts to provide a high quality of service in its clinical and educational activities and undertakes to conduct its research projects in an ethical manner consistent with high scientific standards and with particular attention to the vulnerability of its research participants. QCIDD will consider all complaints seriously and will act promptly in order to rectify any difficulties which have been encountered. We will attempt to use any complaints or critical feedback in order to improve our overall performance. Constructive feedback and suggestions will be treated seriously but will not be regarded as complaints for the purposes of this policy.

### *Rationale*

We recognise that despite our intentions to meet a high standard of quality in all our endeavours that we will at times fail to provide a service which meets these standards or the reasonable expectations of our clients and stakeholders. As part of our commitment to those who benefit from QCIDD's work, we want to provide opportunities to our clients and stakeholders to offer us critical feedback in order to improve the quality of our clinical, research and training/education services. We want to ensure that those who make complaints feel that their complaint has been taken seriously and we want to redress any hurt or negative consequences which have arisen.

### *Procedure*

#### Complaints about Clinical Services

If a person is unsatisfied with any element of QCIDD's clinical services, they should try to tell us about their concern as soon as possible. They can:

1. Talk to the person who has made the mistake or provided the poor service, if they feel comfortable doing so.
2. If the complaint is more serious or the person doesn't feel comfortable talking with the individual concerned, direct the complaint to QCIDD's director, Assoc. Prof. Nick Lennox. The complaint can be made in person, by phone, or in writing by mail, fax or email. Contact details are available on our complaints brochure and our website. Other helpful information about how to make a complaint is provided on our website or on request.
3. All complaints can also be referred to the Head of the Southern Clinical School of Medicine, University of Queensland if the person does not feel comfortable approaching QCIDD directly.

The complaint will be acknowledged as soon as possible and the person will be informed of the steps which we will take to assess and try to resolve the complaint. We will advise the complainant if the complaint is to be referred to relevant supervisors within the University, for mediation or to an external agency.

QCIDD's Director will respond to every complaint confidentially and in writing within one month of receipt of the complaint. Prior to making a formal response he/she will:

- Investigate the issue by speaking directly to the person making the complaint, the staff member involved and any other person directly involved in the issue which is subject to complaint
- Attempt to negotiate a solution which is satisfactory to both parties
- If appropriate, seek the assistance of an independent mediator such as the Queensland Dispute Resolution Centre.
- If a mutual resolution cannot be reached, determine the course of action which is consistent with QCIDD's policies and good clinical practice.

In informing the complainant in writing, QCIDD or the Head of the Southern Clinical School of Medicine, University of Queensland will advise of further avenues if the resolution is not satisfactory. These include:

- Referring the matter to the Executive Dean of Health Sciences, University of Queensland. 4072. **OR** The Secretary and Registrar, University of Queensland Brisbane 4072
- Referral to the Health Quality and Complaints Commission or to the State Ombudsman for an independent review. Health Quality and Complaints Commission: Phone 3234 0272 or toll-free 1800 077 308 State Ombudsman. (Tel: 3005 7000, toll-free 1800 068 908, email [ombudsman@ombudsman.qld.gov.au](mailto:ombudsman@ombudsman.qld.gov.au))

### Complaints about Training/Educational Services

For issues involving courses offered by the University of Queensland, complaints will be dealt with according to section 3.40.10 of the Handbook of University Policies and Procedures.

For other training activities, complaints will be managed using the same process as outlined above, except that external recourse to the Health Quality and Complaints Commission is not available.

### Complaints about Research

QCIDD's research activities are governed by the University's Code of Ethics for research, as set out in Section 4.20.1 of the Handbook. Grievances about research will be handled according to Paragraph 13 of this Code.

d) The Participant Information Sheet to include a statement:

"This study has been cleared in accordance with the ethical review guidelines and processes of the University of Queensland. these guidelines are endorsed by the University's principal human ethics committee, the Human Experimentation Ethical Review Committee, and registered with the Australian Health Ethics Committee as complying with the National Statement. You are free to discuss your participation in this study with project staff (contactable on .....). If you would like to speak to an officer of the University not involved in the study, you may contact the Chair of the Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee, School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences through the Secretary on 61 (07) 336 57123.

### Records of Complaints

- QCIDD will keep records of all complaints received, including the nature of the complaint, the process followed and the final resolution or determination of the complaint.
- Details of individual complaints will be kept on a confidential file and be securely stored.
- Non-identifying information about complaints will be analysed from time to time as a means of improving service delivery.

## Attachment 1

### QCIDD Complaints Register

Formal written complaints and *significant* issues/concerns raised informally are entered in this register. Any actions taken to resolve the complaint which include a change in QCIDD's policies or practices will also be entered in the QCIDD Continuous Quality Improvement Register.

Complainant's name	Contact Details	Date complaint received	Issue/concern raised	Action taken	Date action taken	Date of resolution / closure	Date of feedback