

Complaints and Appeals Management Policy and Procedure

1. PURPOSE:

GATES group views training and development as an essential pillar of its vision, mission, and strategic goals. It strives to develop and deliver various courses that meet individual and organizational training needs in this modern competitive environment. The purpose of this policy is to:

- Define the actions to be taken if a complaint or appeal is received from candidates, certified persons, and other parties with regard to the training process, as well as for the overall Management operations.
- Provide a process for addressing participants' complaints that is accessible for all participants and enables resolution of the complaint at the local level where possible.
- Provide a process that considers complaints as an opportunity to address participants' concerns and to receive valuable feedback that allows it to continuously improve its services and processes.

2. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

- The 'policy and procedure' document is applicable to all training programs that are presented and/or managed by GATES Group.
- This P&P covers two different scopes and types of complaints (as defined by Gates) outlined as in the following:
 - The complaints and appeals addressed to Gates about a certified person, i.e., for breaching the Code of Ethics, or to the certification process, i.e., activities by which Gates determines that a person fulfills certification requirements, including the application, assessment, decision on certification, recertification and use of certificates, and the role of the Students' Affairs Committee in reaching a conclusive settlement on account of an appeal. These

types of complaints are hereinafter referred to as “Certification Complaint.”

- The complaints addressed to Gates about the overall operations of Training and Development Department, i.e., expression of dissatisfaction made to Gates, related to its products or services, procedures, policies, support, technology, representatives (including Trainers, or employees), overall operations, or the complaint handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected. These types of complaints are hereinafter referred to as “Operations Complaint.”

3. DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

- TDM: Training and Development Manager
- TDF: Training and Development Facilitator
- PED: Professional Education Director

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1. The Training and Development Manager, the Professional Education Director and the Student’s Affairs Committee are responsible for proper implementation of the process.

5. POLICY

- 5.1. Gates shall ensure that the complaint resolution process is carried out with procedural fairness, transparency and consistency and implemented in a timely and responsive manner.
- 5.2. Complaints shall be assessed and managed in a manner that is appropriate to the nature of the complaint and in accordance with the principles of justice.
- 5.3. The TDM shall respond to complaints in a timely manner and shall aim to finalize outcomes as soon as is practicable.

- 5.4. The students' affairs committee shall respect confidentiality and information privacy of the complaints process.
- 5.5. The participant making a complaint has the right to withdraw the complaint in writing at any stage. However, the Students' Affairs Committee reserves the right to continue its investigation about the withdrawn complaint, and to act in response to the outcome of investigations, if it considers it appropriate to do so in accordance with its wider duty of care and responsibilities.
- 5.6. The submission, investigation, and decision on certification complaints and Appeals shall not result in any discriminatory actions against the complainant and appellant.
- 5.7. Gates shall make publicly available policies and procedures related to the participants' complaints and appeals resolution process.

6. Procedures:

6.1. Certification Complaints:

- 6.1.1. All complaints related to a certified person, or the certification process are filled in through the Certification Complaint form and are reviewed by the TDM. The TDM raises an initial decision regarding each complaint and sends it to the complainant by email.
- 6.1.2. If the individuals filing the Certification Complaint are not

- 6.1.3. satisfied with the review and the decision made by the TDM upon the complaint, they may consider filing an Appeal.
- 6.1.4. Subsequently, the TDM contacts the Students' Affairs Committee which is in charge of the appeal process and is accountable for safeguarding the impartiality with regard to the appeal (The TDM should not be part of the staff involved in the assessment against which the Appeal is being raised).
- 6.1.5. The Students' Affairs Committee is composed of at least three members with a majority of members being independent of the TPD personnel. Upon the request of the Students' Affairs Committee, the management will provide them with all the necessary information, including the reasons for all significant decisions and actions to ensure proper and impartial decision.
- 6.1.6. In case some candidates disagree with an evaluation result (exam, project or assignment grade) sent by the TDM, they must declare in writing the reasons for this disagreement, and ask for a re-evaluation, via email, within 5 days from receiving the assessment evaluation result. Re-evaluation requests received after 10 days will not be processed. Re-evaluation requests are not considered complaints.
- 6.1.7. If these candidates still do not agree with the re-evaluated decision from the TDM, they should then submit a Certification Complaint no later than 5 days after receiving the re-evaluated decision. Certification Complaints received after 10 days will not be processed.
- 6.1.8. Certification Complaints about a certified person can be raised anytime.
- 6.1.9. Certification complaints related to the re-evaluated results will be reviewed by the Professional Education Manager (PED). The PED should consider the complainant's explanation and provide a written response, which includes A clear explanation, or a repeated explanation of the assessment decision following a re-evaluation of the evidence.

- 6.1.10. The PED should reply within 15 calendar days after receiving a complaint. The complainant will receive an answer on the decision reached in writing (via email).
- 6.1.11. If the complainant agrees with the outcome at this stage, the certification complaint does not proceed to further stages.
- 6.1.12. If complainants are not satisfied with the outcome, then they may file an appeal, within 10 days from receiving the reply from the PED.
- 6.1.13. If necessary, Gates top management will take appropriate correction and corrective/preventive actions.
- 6.1.14. The Certification Complaint Template, other than the personal information (full name and other contact details) of the complainant, should include the complainant's opinion about the assessment, the reasons for disapproval of the decision reached during the initial decision and re-evaluation, as well as the settlement being sought. A notice of acknowledgment will be sent by Gates within 24 hours following the certification complaint reception. The reception of the complaint triggers its initial assessment.
- 6.1.15. All Certification Complaints, including actions taken, will be tracked and recorded by the TDM in the Complaints and Appeals Log.
- 6.2. **Appeal Process**
- 6.2.1. Where complainants disagree with the certification decisions of the re-evaluation stage and the Certification Complaint, they then may proceed to the appeal stage, explaining the reasons for disagreement.
- 6.2.2. Steps to be followed by the appellant:
- The appeal should be submitted after receiving the Certification Complaint decision and no later than 10 days after receiving the complaint decision.
 - The appeal should be submitted in writing via the Microsoft forms.
 - The appeal, besides the personal information (full name, address, and other contact details) of the appellant, should include the opinion about the assessment and why the appellant is not satisfied

with the first decision, re-evaluation, and PED's review done after the complaint.

- 6.2.3. Gates appoints a Students' Affairs Committee which is in charge of the appeal process and is accountable for safeguarding impartiality with regard to the appeal.
- 6.2.4. The Students' Affairs Committee will respond to an appellant in writing (via email) within 20 calendar days after receiving the appeal. It should be noted that this decision is absolute and final.
- 6.2.5. All appeals, including actions taken, will be tracked, and recorded by Gates TDM using the Complaints and Appeals Log.

6.3. **Operations Complaints**

- 6.3.1. Operations Complaints and all their relevant information will be recorded upon their reception. The person wishing to make Operations Complaints can do so directly through submitting an email to the TDM or mentioning it using the program evaluation template. Only written Operations Complaints will be recorded. Verbal Operations Complaints will have to be converted into written form.
- 6.3.2. In order for the operations complaints to be handled effectively, the complaint record must contain all the information necessary, including the complainant's full name, and staff member involved in the complaint, the description of the complaint, and the date. Once recorded, the operations complaints are to be tracked through the whole complaint handling process until the final decision.
- 6.3.3. A notice of acknowledgment is sent by the TDM within 24 hours following the complaint reception. An initial assessment is conducted between 24 and 48 hours following the complaint reception.
- 6.3.4. Operations Complaint – Level 1
All operations complaints initiated are considered Level 1 and will be investigated and handled by the TDM. The TDM will investigate the complaint and offer a response to the complainant within 5 calendar days.

6.3.5. Operations Complaint – Level 2

- If the complainant is not satisfied with the response of Level 1 investigation, the complainant has the right to file for a Level 2 operations complaint. The complaint is assigned to the PED (Professional Education Director) to be investigated independently.
- During Level 2 support, the PED will assess the operations complaints. Based on the assessment, they will offer a response to the complainant within 10 calendar days. The response will be communicated in writing along with all evidence reviewed (if applicable).
- Once the response of the Level 2 investigation is received by the complainant, it is considered a final response from Gates, and at this stage, the complainant can only agree or disagree with the final response, but in either case, the process ends. In case there is a conflict of interest, real or implied, with the Level 2 support, e.g., between the TDM or PED and the complainant, an independent and external investigator will be appointed to conduct the Level 2 investigation.