

**GROUP TRAINING  
ASSOCIATION  
OF  
VICTORIA**

**CODE OF CONDUCT FOR  
GTA Vic and MEMBER COMPANIES**

OCTOBER 2007

# **The Code of Conduct (the Code)**

## **The Aim of the Code**

The aim of the Code of Conduct is to engender professional unity and pride in the work of the Association and its members by having some common agreed standards of professionalism. It is a statement of the high standards of behaviour, which should apply to all members of the Association, standards, which are rightly demanded of companies by the community.

The agreement to abide by these standards enhances the image of the industry while providing members of GTA Vic with a public standard to consider their own actions, and those of their peers.

The Code reflects the vision of GTA Vic and its members “To be the leading network of employment and training providers in the VET sector”. It acts as an effective demonstration of the values of the Association and its members which are embodied in the Principals of the Code.

## **The Principles of the Code**

The Code of Conduct sets out the Principles considered essential to the delivery of the highest standards of ethical and professional performance by GTA Vic Members in their daily business and employment practices. The Principles are:

1. **Honesty and Integrity**  
GTA VIC Members will observe the highest standards of honesty, integrity and fairness.
2. **Skill, Care and Diligence**  
GTA VIC Members will act with due skill, care, and diligence.
3. **Business Practice**  
GTA VIC Members will observe the highest standards of business practice in their day to day operations.
4. **Customer Relations**  
GTA VIC Members will aspire to place the interests of their customers at the centre of their activities.
5. **Conflicts of Interest**  
GTA VIC Members will take all reasonable measures to minimise the occurrence of conflicts of interest. When a conflict of interest is unavoidable, members will identify and deal with that conflict in a fully transparent manner to those parties affected by the conflict of interest.

## **Who is the Code of Conduct for?**

The code of conduct is for all parties who are involved in providing Group Training services. Primarily the Group Training Association of Victoria, its members and staff, Group Training Companies, their Managers, Board Members and staff.

## **Application of the Code**

The Code is a statement of accepted standards of behaviour and is binding on all Association Members.

The Code is a policy of the Board of the Group Training Association of Victoria and will be subject to review by the Board. The Code should not be seen to be unalterable. Members are encouraged to keep the Association informed of their views as to changes, which might be made.

The Association will be bound by the Code of Conduct as will its members. The Association will be responsible for administering the Code in accordance with the Rules of the Association and any policies relevant to and/or established under this Code.

The administering of the Code will include educating the members, the community and stakeholders on the principles of the code and its operation.

While it is not intended that it be used as an instrument of disciplinary action failure to observe the Code could lead to a disciplinary charge or complaint being made against the member by either another member of the Association or by any other person or client.

Should a member be deemed to have breached the Code the Board will take action to address the issue. Should the complaint be upheld, one or more of a range of sanctions may be invoked. In all matters relating to the Code of Conduct the principles of natural justice will be applied.

## **Use of the Code of Conduct**

### **In conducting their activities with integrity and accountability under the Code Group Training Organisations will:**

Discharge allotted and accepted responsibilities at all times with integrity and in accordance with good management practice.

Establish policies, pursue objectives and fulfil obligations in a manner consistent with the Code.

Strive to promote, implement and monitor the training programs relevant to industry and the community.

Implement relevant policy objectives as determined by the Association.

Observe the conduct and management practices contained in the Code.

Conduct themselves in such a manner as will not damage the business operation nor injure the standing and reputation of the Group Training Association of Victoria and its member companies.

Refer to the Association all matters that have the potential to impact on other member companies.

Promote the role of Group Training Companies to the community and the business sector.

Appoint, train and develop employees, seeking to integrate their aspirations with the requirements of the company.

Create an equitable, friendly safe, healthy and satisfying work environment.

Provide fair and equitable treatment and remuneration of employees.

Exclude all corrupt practices.

**In conducting their activities with integrity and accountability under the Code Group Training Organisations will ensure employees:**

Demonstrate integrity and avoid discriminatory practices.

Have regard for the professional reputation and business of others.

Not use authority, office or position for personal gain.

Respect the confidentiality of information which comes to them in the course of their duty.

Fully disclose any personal interest and refrain from activities which conflict with the interests of the company and the association.

Balance the interests of their employer with their own responsibilities and commitments.

Engage in continued learning to improve professional competence and pursue new ideas and advances in technology.

Accept only such work as they believe they are competent to perform and

obtain expert advice where necessary.

Give objective opinions when called upon to do so.

Ensure that all communications are inclusive, informative, true and not misleading.

## **Related Documents**

- Ethical Employment Statement (GTA Vic)
- National Standards for Group Training

GTO's are required to meet a range of state and federal legal obligations which are presumed in this Code. It is the responsibility of each organization to ensure they are meeting these legal obligations. These obligations may include corporations law, rules of incorporation of associations, privacy legislation, equal opportunity principals, occupational Health and Safety legislation, financial and accounting standards, anti discrimination legislation and other codes of ethics.

However meeting minimum legal requirements and standards does not necessarily fulfill the obligations of a GTO under this Code.

## **Breach of the Code and/or complaints process**

Complaints referred to the Board in connection with the Code will be heard firstly and finally by the Board and no appeals will be considered. Should a matter be before some other jurisdiction the Board will not proceed with the matter until it is fully heard in that other jurisdiction.

While the primary area of concern of GTA Vic is to issues arising in Victoria the actions of a member in a state other than Victoria could give rise to a complaint which might be referred to the Board.

Should new evidence become available which, in the opinion of the Executive Director, is material to the Board's decision that evidence will be referred to the Board for their consideration.

The following elements will guide the Board and the Executive Director in respect of matters concerning the Code.

1. (Application) - Identification of where and to whom the Code applies.
2. (Complaints) - By whom and how complaints can be made.
3. (Procedures) - Procedures for handling complaints.
4. (Sanctions) - Sanctions/warnings/notices which might be used.

## Potential Complaints

A complainant might be a:

- member of the public,
- employer,
- stakeholder,
- government department,
- apprentice, parent, teacher, school, RTO, GTO
- a GTO staff member,
- another Association Member, or
- another person or organisation.

Complaints address to the Association will be required to:

- be provided in writing;
- identify the complainant and the issue to be addressed;
- where possible contain substantiating information;
- be addressed to the Executive Director of the Association.

The Complaints Process is provided at Attachment 1

## Sanctions

Where a breach of the Code or a complaint against a member is upheld the Board may take any of the following actions.

**Warning:** The Board will contact the member concerned warning them of the deemed inappropriate action/s and provide offers of assistance to improve the problem practice.

**Improvement:** As above the Board will contact the member concerning the issue of complaint, offer assistance but also require that evidence of improvement be provided in a set timeframe.

**Suspension:** Where a member fails to act to rectify or improve their practice the Board may suspend the member for a period – suspension would involve loss of all membership entitlements (which might include group purchasing arrangements).

**Expulsion & Naming:** Where the breach of the Code is deemed sufficiently serious the Board may contact the member concerned informing them that as of a certain date they are no longer a member of the Association and that the GTA Vic website and publications will note that they are no longer a member of GTA Vic.

# **ATTACHMENT 1**

## **Complaints Process**

In every case the complainant will be given written confirmation of receipt of a properly documented complaint.

On receipt of a complaint the Executive Director will assess the merits of the matter and prepare a report for the next meeting of the Board recommending that the complaint be addressed, investigated or dismissed. Where a matter is deemed critical the Executive Director may call an extraordinary meeting of the Board.

Following advice from the Board the Executive Director will continue with an investigation and/or write to the complainant outlining the Board's decision.

The Executive Director may be directed to further investigate a matter which could involve interviewing the parties, taking statements from witnesses and conducting enquiries necessary to provide facts for the Board's consideration.

The materials collected will be presented to the Board for consideration. Members against whom complaints are made will be provided with copies of the complaint and invited to address the Board to present their case and answer any questions the Board may have.

The Board may direct the Executive Director to engage an independent third party with the requisite expertise (particularly in the area of disputes and complaints settlement) to guide and assist the Board.