**CoARC Policy 10.0**

1. It is the policy of the CoARC to review all complaints against an accredited program received from any source, including students, (a) provided that the complainant identifies himself or herself by name and contact information and (b) provided further that the complaint is related to programmatic compliance with the CoARC’s *Standards*, Policies, and Procedures. The CoARC will endeavor to resolve complaints in a fair and timely manner. Furthermore, it is the policy of the CoARC to retain all documentation associated with any complaint for a period of not less than one accreditation cycle (typically ten years). For those complaints not based on programmatic compliance with CoARC *Standards,* Policies, or Procedures, the retention will be for at least five (5) years. (Policy 10.01)

**2.** The CoARC will not become involved unless the complaint meets the requirements in 10.01. The CoARC will not intervene on behalf of individuals or become involved on behalf of faculty members or students in matters of admission, grades, appointment, promotion, or dismissal. The CoARC cannot assume authority for enforcing the policies of programs or institutions regarding faculty, professional staff, or student rights. The CoARC’s role is to ensure that institutional/program policies and procedures governing complaints are implemented fairly and as written or, if policies are not present, to require the program to develop and implement such policies and procedures.

Should a complainant invoke the aid of a court or other entity to adjudicate or mediate his/her allegation(s), the CoARC will await the outcome of these processes before determining whether to take action. If this process concludes that the program has acted appropriately, the CoARC will not second guess that judgment and will consider the complaint closed; no further action will be taken. If the process results in findings (a) that there have been violations of program, institutional, or CoARC policies or (b) that the program has engaged in conduct that would violate such policies, the CoARC will take these findings into account in its review of the complaint. Copies of the CoARC *Standards,* Policies and Procedures may be obtained through the CoARC Web site ([www.coarc.com](http://www.coarc.com)) or by contacting the CoARC Executive Office. (Policy 10.02)

3. Before submitting a complaint related to program compliance with CoARC *Standards,* Policies or Procedures, the complainant should attempt to resolve the complaint directly with program/ institution by following the applicable grievance procedures provided by the program/institution. However, if the complainant believes that attempting to resolve the complaint with the program/ institution would either be unavailing or otherwise not appropriate, the complainant may submit the allegations of non-compliance to the CoARC. In submitting a complaint to the CoARC, the complainant should either (a) state that attempts to resolve the complaint with the program/institution were unavailing or (b) briefly describe why attempting to resolve the complaint in that matter would have been unavailing or otherwise not appropriate. (Policy 10.03)

1. To receive formal consideration, all complaints must be submitted in writing to the CoARC Executive Office using the Complaints Reporting Form. The formal complaint must: (Policy 10.04)

a. describe the allegation in detail and cite the CoARC *Standards*, Policies or Procedures pertaining to the complaint;

b. document that the complainant has made reasonable efforts to resolve the complaint, or alternatively that such efforts would either be unavailing or otherwise not appropriate;

c. be signed and dated by the complainant; and

d. include the complainant’s postal address, email, and phone number.

The complaint documents should be either submitted electronically, or mailed to the CoARC at the following address:

Chief Executive Officer

Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care

264 Precision Blvd, Telford, TN 37690

Ph: (817) 283-2835 Fax: (817) 354-8519

E-mail: tom@coarc.com

1. If the complaint describes circumstances which, if substantiated, would denote noncompliance with CoARC *Standards,* Policies, or Procedures, the Chief Executive Officer will contact the complainant to obtain additional documentation or corroboration, as needed. If the complainant does not comply with such a request, the file may be closed and no further action may be taken. (Policy 10.05)
2. To the extent possible, the CoARC shall attempt to maintain the confidentiality of complaints and any corroborating material. However, the CoARC cannot guarantee confidentiality. The complainant will be required to sign an authorization that will allow the CoARC, once it has determined that the complaint meets its requirements, to forward the written complaint and corroborating materials to the program sponsor – without including the name or contact information of the complainant unless authorized by the complainant to provide such information. The CoARC will also make the complaint and corroborating materials available to CoARC staff and Commission members, their respective attorneys, and appropriate outside parties, as required by law or as necessary to fully investigate the complaint. (Policy 10.06)

7. The CoARC will not accept complaints that are submitted anonymously. It will take whatever action it deems appropriate regarding complaints in which the complainant has not given consent to being identified. Receipt of all written complaints in which the name and contact information of the complainant are identified will be acknowledged within ten (10) business days. (Policy 10.07)

8. If the CoARC Chief Executive Officer determines that the complaint relates to CoARC Standards, Policies, or Procedures, the CEO will notify the complainant in writing that a copy of the complaint, with identification of the complainant deleted to the extent practical, is being forwarded to the program director and the chief executive officer of the program/institution for a response. The complainant will be notified only whether or not an investigation will be undertaken. The complainant will not be informed of the result of any such investigation. (Policy 10.08)

**Name of Complainant:**

 **Address:**

**City: State: Zip Code:

Phone:**

**Email:**

**Name of the program:**

 **Name of the Institution sponsoring the program:**

**City: State: Zip Code:**

**The following materials must be submitted:**

1. Describe your relationship (if any) to the program or the institution sponsoring the program.
2. As stated in Policy 10.04a, describe the allegation in detail and cite the CoARC *Standards*, Policies or Procedures pertaining to the complaint.
3. Provide a narrative and supporting documentation (e.g., copy of complaint submitted to the program/ institution and their response) that the complainant has made reasonable efforts to resolve the complaint. If you have not made reasonable efforts to resolve the complaint because you feel that such efforts would be unavailing, please provide a detailed rationale. (Policy 10.04b)

1. If you have filed a complaint about this same matter to any other agency, indicate the name of the agency and the contact person to whom it was submitted the approximate date(s), and the status/ outcome of the complaint.

1. Attach either a copy of the program’s publication that includes the due process or grievance procedure or the web link (URL) where the publication is located.

1. Attach any other documentation that you think would help CoARC in its assessment of this complaint. *Do not include confidential documents such as patient or employment records.*

I, attest that the statements/information
 (PRINT FULL NAME)

provided above are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and that I have made reasonable efforts to resolve the complaint*.* I grant CoARC permission to send a copy of this complaint to the sponsor’s Chief Executive Officer and Program Director, members and staff of the CoARC, their respective attorneys, and other persons authorized by the sponsor, required by law or necessity, at the discretion of the CoARC, to fully investigate the complaint. (Policy 10.05)

**Signature:**

**Date:**

If you have any questions regarding the use of this form or the CoARC complaint process, please contact the Executive Office at 1-817-283-2835 ext. 101.