

Trustee Decision on Student Complaint

Institution: 208 – Vancouver Career College

1. Introduction

The Complainant was enrolled in the Professional Counsellor Program [**Program**] and filed a complaint against the Institution on August 19, 2025 [**Complaint**] after having completed the Program on or around September 27, 2024.

The Complainant exhausted the Institution’s dispute resolution process [**DRP**] prior to filing this Complaint.

The Complainant is seeking a full tuition refund and other monetary compensation.

The principal matters at issue relate to the qualifications of instructors and the Institution’s representations, including those in respect of the Complainant’s eligibility for registration with the Association of Cooperative Counselling Therapists of Canada (ACCT).

For the reasons outlined below I find the Institution did not mislead the Complainant regarding a significant aspect of the Program and, accordingly, deny the claim.

2. Statutory Scheme

Section 23(1) of the *Private Training Act* [**PTA**] provides that, a student may file a claim against the Student Tuition Protection Fund [**Fund**] on the ground that a certified institution misled the student regarding any significant aspect of an approved program of instruction in which that student was enrolled. Claims are filed with the Trustee, being the minister or the person to whom the minister has delegated the relevant powers or duties.

Claims must be filed no later than one year after the student completed or was dismissed or withdrew from the program and only after the student has exhausted the institution’s dispute resolution process.

Following receipt of the complaint, the process is as follows:

Claim the student was misled		
Who	What	When
Trustee	Gives a copy of the claim to the institution	As soon as practicable
Institution	May respond to the claim [Response]	Within 15 days of receiving a copy of the claim from the Trustee
Trustee	Gives the Response from the institution, if any, to the student	Within 15 days of receiving the Response from the institution
Student	May reply to the Response from the institution [Reply]	Within 15 days of receiving the Response from the Trustee
Trustee	Must give the Reply from the student, if any, to the institution	Within 15 days of receiving the Reply from the student
Trustee	Adjudicates the claim to determine whether any refund should be issued, and provides written reasons to the student, the institution, and the registrar.	

If a claim is approved, the Trustee may authorize payment from the Fund of all or a portion of the tuition paid to the institution by or on behalf of the student. Section 25(4) of the *Fees and Student Tuition Protection Fund Regulation* requires that payments from the Fund be directed first to the government if all or a portion of the tuition was paid using funds from a provincial or federal student assistance program, and then to the claimant.

3. Program Information

Program:	Professional Counsellor
Start date:	August 28, 2023
End date:	September 27, 2024
Graduation date:	September 27, 2024
Total charged:	\$ 21,256
Tuition:	\$ 19,000
Application Fee:	\$ 150
Assessment and Administration Fees:	\$ 325
E-Resource and Material Fee:	\$ 1,781
Graduation Scholarship:	\$ 4,000
Amount paid to date by Complainant:	\$ 21,256
Amount of tuition paid to date by Complainant:	\$ 19,000

4. Issues

The following issues arise for consideration: Was the Complainant misled in respect of instructor qualifications and representations by the Institution, including representations related to eligibility for registration with ACCT?

5. Chronology

August 28, 2023	Program start date
March or April 2024	Lead instructor no longer employed by institution
April 2024	Email exchanges between parties re: Complainant's dissatisfaction with process to replace instructor
April 23, 2024	Complainant submits Student Concern Outline Report
October 2024	Complainant submits complaint to Institution
October 17, 2024	Complainant submits Student Concern Outline Report
October 2024	Institution issues decision [Decision 1]
November 2024	Complainant appeals Decision 1
November 4, 2024	Institution issues decision [Decision 2]
January 9, 2025	Complainant's email to Institution re: missing hours to meet ACCT requirement
August 19, 2025	Complainant files Complaint
September 19-25, 2025	Institution's email to Complainant's cohort offering graduates to complete direct client contact (DCC) hours with a third party and confirming cost (\$750)

6. Analysis

The Complainant makes the overarching allegation that the Institution "...failed to provide the education, supervision, and recognition it promised".

I have broken down and summarized the issues complained about:

Instructor qualifications

The Complainant found the lead instructor was exceptionally qualified and experienced. Unfortunately, the instructor left in March 2024. The Institution hired a temporary replacement [**Instructor 1**] before hiring a permanent instructor [**Instructor 2**] in April 2024. The Complainant was dissatisfied with both replacement instructors.

The Complainant alleges Instructor 1 lacked both qualifications and practical experience and submits as follows in respect of Instructor 2:

This replacement instructor had recently completed her own education overseas and had no significant teaching experience or qualifications to effectively lead the program. Our numerous attempts to receive clear, honest information from [Institution's director] were met with empty reassurances, forcing us to self-study much of the material to prepare for exams. This placed an unfair and undue burden on the students.

The Complainant also questions the Institution's transparency in its communications and says he "...found inconsistencies in your reasons for [instructor]'s departure".

In its Response, the Institution confirmed the Complainant was taught by a total of seven instructors, including practicum supervisors, and all instructors met the minimum instructor qualifications set out in section 21 of the *Private Training Regulation* [**PTR**].

Representations related to requirement for registration with ACCT

One of the requirements for registration with ACCT is the completion of 50 DCC hours in addition to 25 DCC hours with a qualified supervisor [**DCC Requirement**].

The Complainant submits the Institution represented the practicum, which is part of the Program, met the DCC Requirement. The Complainant explains:

I was strongly led to believe that the school would arrange for my supervision, and that the fees I paid would cover this. I specifically asked, "Will I have everything I need when I leave the program?" and [Institution representative] emphatically assured me that I would. Now, learning that I will need to pay additional costs over a period of 8-10 months for supervision during the internship has left me feeling misled and extremely anxious.

The Institution acknowledges the Program does not provide DCC hours to meet the DCC Requirement and denies making any representation to that effect. The Institution adds there is no requirement to be registered with ACCT, or any other organization, to work as a counsellor in BC.

The Program Outline provided with the Complainant's submissions includes the following statement:

The program is currently undergoing a review to become an associate member of the Association of Cooperative Counselling Therapists of Canada (ACCT). Upon approval, graduates will be eligible to apply for a membership to become an ACCT-registered professional counsellor.

As part of the DRP, the Institution offered to pay for the DCC hours required for ACCT registration, subject to its ability to identify a third party willing to offer the DCC hours and the Complainant signing a release. I understand, at that time, either the Complainant did not accept the offer, or the Institution did not secure an agreement with a third party.

In their January 15, 2025 email to the Institution, the Complainant explained they were interning with a third party and were short 15 hours of DCC to meet the DCC Requirement: "What I need from you is assistance in finding someone qualified to sign off on the remaining hours I've completed — specifically, all but the final 15 hours. Whether this involves reaching out to former faculty, calling in a favor, or making other arrangements, I leave that to your discretion". The Institution did not agree to this request.

The Institution says it made efforts to support students and, in September 2025, offered graduates of the Program to complete the required DCC hours with a third party for an additional \$750.

Other representations

The Complainant submits the Institution also made the following misleading representations:

- *The Complainant's cohort was the first to complete the Program, when in fact it was the second cohort*

The Institution confirms the Complainant's cohort was the first cohort to complete the Program.

- *All instructors hold a master's degree*

The Institution confirmed seven instructors taught the Complainant and, of these, three instructors did not meet the instructor qualifications set by the Institution: Master's degrees in psychology and counselling, over five years of practical experience in the field, and Registered Clinical Counsellor (RCC). The Institution adds the three instructors taught less than 10% of the total instructional hours. The registrar confirmed all instructors met the minimum instructor qualifications set out in PTR 21 (2)(b).

- *Graduates of the Program will not have any problem finding employment*

The Institution responds this is the first cohort to graduate from the Program and it has no data related to the employment of graduates.

The Complainant also submits the Institution made false representations in respect of its Tuition Refund Policy. Following the departure of their instructor, the Complainant asked to be refunded for three modules, which the Institution denied based on the application of its Tuition Refund Policy.

Finally, the Complainant has issues with the way the Institution handled the DRP. This is not a matter that relates to this decision. My only duty is to confirm the DRP was exhausted before the Complaint was filed.

This decision does not address issues that fall outside my jurisdiction.

7. Decision

For the reasons outlined below, I find the Institution did not mislead the Complainant in respect of a significant aspect of the Program and, on this basis, deny the claim.

I have carefully reviewed the evidence submitted in support of the claim the Institution represented the Program meets the requirements for ACCT registration. Specifically, the statement included in the Program Outline confirms the Institution is “undergoing a review to become an associate member of the Association of Cooperative Counselling Therapists of Canada (ACCT)”. While the Complainant may have expected the Institution would have become a member of ACCT by the time they graduated, I find the Institution, in the Program Outline or otherwise, did not represent it was or would become a member by graduation or that it would provide the requisite DCC hours for registration with ACCT.

I find the Institution did not mislead the Complainant in respect of instructor qualifications. The Institution acknowledges specific instructors did not meet its own minimum qualifications and I accept its submission that those instructors did not teach a significant portion of the Program. I note that all instructors met the minimum qualifications set out in the PTR.

I find the Institution did not have to provide any explanation to the Complainant for the reasons an instructor was no longer employed.

In respect of the other representations complained about, I am not persuaded by the Complainant’s submissions the representations amounted to misleading within the meaning of PTA 23(2)(b).

Finally, I find the Institution’s Tuition Refund Policy complies with PTR. The Institution was entitled to apply its Tuition Refund Policy and the Institution’s conduct in this regard was not misleading.

This decision is final. The Trustee does not have authority to re-open or reconsider the decision and there is no appeal under the PTA. Parties may wish to seek legal advice regarding a judicial review by the BC Supreme Court.

12 June 2026



Joanna White

Trustee, Student Tuition Protection Fund