



Whistleblowing Policy

July 2024

Whistleblowing Policy

The College is committed to conducting its business with honesty and integrity and we expect all staff to maintain high standards. Any behaviour or actions that do not meet these standards or any suspected wrongdoing should be reported as soon as possible.

This policy applies to all persons working for the College or on our behalf in any capacity, including staff at all levels, officers, agency workers, seconded workers, volunteers, interns, agents, contractors, external consultants, third-party representatives and business partners, sponsors, or any other person associated with the College, wherever located.

Students at City Lit are also encouraged to raise genuine concerns about suspected wrongdoing by making a complaint to the Whistleblowing Officer.

This policy does not form part of any staff member's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

This policy should be read alongside the Anti-Corruption and Bribery Policy and the Anti-Fraud Policy.

What is whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is the reporting of suspected wrongdoing or dangers in relation to our activities. This includes bribery, fraud or other criminal activity, miscarriages of justice, health and safety risks, damage to the environment and any breach of legal or professional obligations.

A whistleblower is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to any of the above. If a staff member has a genuine concern related to suspected wrongdoing or danger affecting any of the College's activities they should report it under this policy.

This policy should not be used for complaints relating to a staff member's own personal circumstances, such as the way a staff member has been treated at work. In these cases the staff member should use the Grievance Procedure as appropriate.

If a staff member is uncertain whether something is within the scope of this policy they should seek advice from the Whistleblowing Officer. Contact details are at the end of this policy.

How to raise a concern

We hope that in many cases staff will be able to raise any concerns with their line manager. However, where they prefer not to raise it with their manager for any reason, they should contact the Whistleblowing Officer.

When you report your concern please state the background history of the concern (giving relevant dates) and the reason why you are particularly concerned about the situation.

A meeting will be raised as soon as possible with the staff member to discuss their concern/s. The staff member may bring a colleague or union representative to any meetings under this policy. The companion must respect the confidentiality of the disclosure and any subsequent investigation. The college will take down a written summary of the staff member's concern and provide them with a copy after the meeting. The College will also aim to give the staff member an indication of how it proposes to deal with the matter.

Confidentiality

We hope that staff will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy. Completely anonymous disclosures are difficult to investigate. If a staff member wants to raise their concerns confidentially, we will make every effort to keep their identity secret and only reveal it where necessary to ensure a proper investigation is carried out.

The College does not encourage staff to make disclosures anonymously. Proper investigation may be more difficult or impossible if the College cannot obtain further information from the staff member. It is also more difficult to establish whether any allegations are credible. Whistleblowers who are concerned about reprisal if their identity is revealed should come forward to the Whistleblowing Officer and appropriate measures can then be taken. The College will not make efforts to identify staff who make disclosures before, and outside, of the formal investigations process.

All documents created as part of an investigation will be held securely and access restricted to a need to know basis. Documents will be held for as long as necessary. The retention period will be determined by factors such as whether the concern is upheld or not and what recommendations are made.

Investigation and outcome

Once a staff member has raised a concern, the College will carry out an initial assessment to determine the scope of any investigation. The College will inform the staff member of the outcome of its assessment. The staff member may be required to attend additional meetings in order to provide further information.

In some cases the College may appoint an investigator or team of investigators including staff with relevant experience of investigations or specialist knowledge of that subject matter. The investigator(s) may make recommendations for change to enable the College to minimise the risk of future wrongdoing. The College will take all steps within their power to ensure the recommendations are implemented within a reasonable timescale unless there are good reasons for not doing so.

The College will aim to keep the staff member informed of the progress of the investigation and its likely timescale. However, sometimes the need for confidentiality may prevent the College giving the staff member specific details of the investigation or any disciplinary action taken as a result. The staff member should treat any information about the investigation as confidential.

If the College concludes that a whistleblower has made false allegations maliciously or with a view to personal gain, the whistleblower will be subject to disciplinary action.

If the staff member is not satisfied

While the College cannot always guarantee the outcome the staff member is seeking, the College will try to deal with an staff member's concern fairly and in the appropriate way. By using this policy the staff member can help the College to achieve this.

If a staff member is not happy with the way in which their concern has been handled, they can appeal against the outcome by raising the issue with the Principal within one week from the date of the outcome. The Principal or a member of the Executive team not previously involved will make a final decision on action to be taken and notify the staff member who made the disclosure.

If the issue involves the Principal, a staff member can raise their concerns with the Director of Governance. In the event that the issue relates to the Director of Governance, a staff member can raise their concerns with the Chair of the Governing Body.

External disclosures

The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. In most cases a staff member should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally.

The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for a staff member to report their concerns to an external body such as a regulator. We strongly encourage staff to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. Protect (Public Concern at Work) operates a confidential helpline. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.

Safeguards: Protection and support for whistleblowers

The College aims to encourage openness and will support whistleblowers who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

Whistleblowers must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a genuine concern. If staff believe that they have suffered any such treatment, they should inform the Whistleblowing Officer immediately.

Staff must not threaten or retaliate against whistleblowers in any way. Staff who are involved in such conduct may be subject to disciplinary action.

However, if the College conclude that a whistleblower has made false allegations maliciously or with a view to personal gain, the whistleblower may be subject to disciplinary action.

Contacts

Whistleblowing Officer	Graham Jennings Head of Data Compliance & Business Planning Graham.jennings@citylit.ac.uk
Director of Governance (alternate contact independent of management structure)	Katrina O’Sullivan Katrina.O’Sullivan@citylit.ac.uk
Staff can also contact the charity Protect (previously known as Public Concern at Work) for confidential advice on whistleblowing issues	Address The Green House, 244-254 Cambridge Heath Road London E2 9DA https://protect-advice.org.uk/ Protect Advice Line: 020 3117 2520 Protect Advice line: whistle@protect-advice.org.uk

Executive Owner	Chief Finance Officer
Policy Owner	Head of Data Compliance
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Version tracking

Versions	Date	Author	Reason for changes
1.	05/11/19	Graham Jennings	Replacement
1.1	24/01/22	Graham Jennings	General review. Cross reference to Anti-Fraud Policy
1.2	04/06/2024	Graham Jennings	Biennial Review

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Appendix 1: Whistleblowing Process

