



Whistleblowing Policy

1. Policy statement

The term 'whistleblowing' has no legal definition within UK law; however, it has been used to describe incidents where a staff member publicly discloses some alleged wrongdoing within an organisation.

The College is committed to the highest standards of honesty and integrity, and expects all staff to maintain high standards of conduct. However, the College faces the risk of things going wrong from time to time. A culture of openness and accountability is essential in order to prevent such situations occurring or to address them when they do occur.

The aims of this policy are:

- To encourage staff to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible, in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated as appropriate, and that their confidentiality will be respected;
- To provide staff with guidance as to how to raise those concerns; and
- To reassure staff that they should be able to raise genuine concerns in good faith without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

2. Who is covered by this policy

This policy applies to all members of staff including employees, workers, those on fixed term contracts, agency workers, contractors or volunteers. These groups are collectively referred to as staff in this policy.

3. Scope of whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work. A "whistleblower" is a person who raises a genuine concern in good faith. The concerns must be in the public interest and specifically where the member of staff has a reasonable belief that one of the following has occurred or is likely to occur:

- A criminal offence.
- Failure to comply with legal obligations.
- Financial or non-financial maladministration or malpractice or impropriety or fraud.
- Academic or professional malpractice.
- A risk to the health or safety of any individual.
- Environmental damage.
- A miscarriage of justice.
- Attempts to suppress or conceal any information relating to any of the above

This policy should not be used for complaints relating to the personal circumstances of a member of staff such as their own treatment at work. Such issues should be addressed through the grievance or bullying and harassment procedures.

4. Whistleblowing procedure

If appropriate, the member of staff should discuss the matter with their Head of Department in the first instance as they may be able to agree a way of resolving the concern quickly and effectively. However, should they prefer (perhaps because the Head of Department is unavailable, or indeed might be the cause of the concern), then the disclosure should be raised with the Assistant Bursar. If the disclosure concerns the Assistant Bursar, the member of staff may raise the concern with the Senior Bursar.

When a concern is raised with the Assistant Bursar (or Senior Bursar) they will arrange to meet the whistleblower as soon as possible to discuss the concern. The whistleblower may bring a colleague or union representative to any meeting under this policy. The companion must respect the confidentiality of the disclosure and any subsequent investigation.

The Assistant Bursar will take down a written summary of the concern and provide a copy after the meeting. The Assistant Bursar will aim to provide an indication of how they propose to deal with the matter.

4.1 Confidentiality

It is hoped that staff will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy. However, should someone wish to raise a concern confidentially, college will make every effort to keep their identity a secret. If it is necessary for anyone investigating the concern to know their identity, this will be discussed with them. College does not encourage staff to make disclosures anonymously. Proper investigation may be more difficult or impossible if further information cannot be obtained. It is also more difficult to establish whether any allegations are credible and have been made in good faith.

Whistleblowers who are concerned about possible reprisals if their identity is revealed should come forward to the Assistant Bursar or the Senior Bursar and appropriate measures can then be taken to preserve confidentiality. If a member of staff is in any doubt they can seek advice from Protect, the independent whistleblowing charity, who offer a confidential helpline. Their contact details are set out at the end of this policy.

4.2 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 staff should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally. The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for staff to report concerns to an external body such as a regulator. Staff are strongly encouraged to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. The independent whistleblowing charity, Protect, operates a confidential helpline. They also have a list of prescribed regulators for reporting certain types of concern.

Whistleblowing concerns may usually relate to the conduct of college staff, but they may sometimes relate to the actions of a third party, such as a supplier or service provider. The law allows staff to raise a concern in good faith with a third party, where it is reasonably believed it relates mainly to their actions or something that is legally their responsibility. However, staff are encouraged to report such concerns internally first. Staff may contact the Assistant Bursar for guidance.

4.3 Investigation and outcome

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

In some cases the Assistant Bursar may appoint an investigator or team of investigators including staff with relevant experience of investigations or specialist knowledge of the subject matter. The investigator(s) may make recommendations for change to enable college to minimise the risk of future wrongdoing. The Assistant Bursar will aim to keep the whistleblower informed of the progress of the investigation and its likely timescale. However, sometimes the need for confidentiality may prevent the provision of specific details of the investigation or any disciplinary action taken as a result. Staff should treat any information about the investigation as confidential.

If it is concluded that a whistleblower has made false allegations maliciously, in bad faith or with a view to personal gain, the whistleblower will be subject to disciplinary action.

4.4 If the whistleblower is not satisfied

Whilst it is not possible guarantee the outcome will be the one the whistleblower is seeking, college will try to deal with the concern fairly and in an appropriate way. By using this policy member of staff can help to achieve this. If a whistleblower is not happy with the way in which the concern has been handled, they can raise it with the Senior Bursar if they have not previously been involved.

4.5 Protection and support for whistleblowers

It is understandable that whistleblowers are sometimes worried about possible repercussions. College aims to encourage openness and will support staff who raise genuine concerns in good faith under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken. Staff must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a concern in good faith. Detrimental treatment includes dismissal, disciplinary action, threats or other unfavorable treatment connected with raising a concern. If a whistleblower believes they have suffered any such treatment, they should inform the Assistant Bursar or Senior Bursar immediately. If the matter is not remedied they should raise it formally using the College's Grievance Procedure.

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

4.6 Contact details

Protect: 020 3117 2520 or [Protect - Speak up stop harm - Whistleblowing Homepage](#)

Assistant Bursar and Senior Bursar contact details contact: hr@magd.cam.ac.uk