

PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE (WHISTLEBLOWING) POLICY

1. About this policy

We are committed to conducting our business with honesty and integrity and we expect all staff to maintain these high standards. Any suspected wrongdoing should be reported as soon as possible.

This policy covers all employees, students, officers, consultants, contractors, volunteers, interns, casual workers and agency workers.

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

2. 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 staff member or a student who becomes aware of serious malpractice should be able to report their concerns about wrongdoing or corruption safely. The whistleblower should be seen as a witness and not a complainant, and be protected from any detrimental treatment that could arise from a good-faith disclosure.

3. How to raise a concern

In the normal course of events, staff are encouraged to raise concerns through the normal channels, via your line manager or another senior member of staff. Students are encouraged to raise concerns through a senior member of staff or through a students' union representatives.

However, if you prefer not to raise it with your manager for any reason, or if you do not know who you should speak to, you should contact the University Solicitor or the University Secretary.

In either case, we will arrange a meeting with you as soon as possible to discuss your concern. Staff may bring a colleague or union representative to any meetings under this policy. Students may have a representative of the University of Chichester Students' Union present. Your companion must respect the confidentiality of your disclosure and any subsequent investigation.

4. Confidentiality

We hope that staff and students will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy. Completely anonymous disclosures are extremely difficult to investigate. If you want to raise your concern confidentially, we will make every effort to keep your identity secret and only reveal it where necessary to those involved in investigating your concern.

5. Protection and support for whistleblowers

We aim 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 you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should inform the University Solicitor or the University Secretary immediately. If the matter is not remedied you should raise it formally using our Grievance Procedure.

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

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

6. Investigation

Allegations made under this procedure shall be the subject of a prompt assessment by the University Solicitor. Where a full investigation is warranted, the University Solicitor will appoint an investigating officer, who will review the allegation and produce a report. The Vice-Chancellor or (where delegated) a member of the Vice-Chancellor's Group will consider the investigation report and decide on what action should be taken. The Vice-Chancellor's decision will be confirmed in writing to the person who made the allegation and the person against whom the allegation was made.

7. Senior Managers

In exceptional circumstances, where an allegation is made against a member of the Vice-Chancellor's Group or other senior management staff, the initial report may be made directly to the Vice-Chancellor or, if more appropriate, to the Chair of Governors.

Allegations against the Vice-Chancellor or a Governor should be reported to the Chair of Governors or the Chair of the Audit Committee.

8. Governance

The University Secretary will report all allegations and the action taken to members of the Governors' Audit Committee.

Approved by the Vice-Chancellor's Group: 27 March 2018