



'Speak Up'
(Whistleblowing) Policy



STUDENTS' GUILD

'Speak Up' (Whistleblowing) Policy

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1. Raising an Issue

1.1 It is important when you do raise a concern that the matter is addressed using the correct procedure. The following table outlines which procedure you should use for each type of issue. If you are unsure of which procedure to follow, contact your line manager or a member of the HR Department for advice.

Type of Concern	Relevant policy / procedure
Situations involving working relationships between Officers / Members / Staff	Student-Staff Protocol
Concerns about possible wrongdoing or malpractice within the organisation (e.g. illegal activity or a risk to health and safety)	'Speak Up' (Whistleblowing) Policy
Member complaint about the Guild and/or a member of staff	Complaints Procedure
Employee wishing to raise a concern regarding their employment, work, work environment, working relationships or unacceptable behaviour by colleagues.	Grievance Procedure

2. Purpose

1.2 We want to ensure that you feel confident in telling us about any concerns you have at work as it will help us to ensure that we can maintain high standards of services for our members and a positive working environment for our staff. Our Senior Leaders and the Board of Trustees are committed to creating a climate of trust and openness. We will look into all disclosures and ensure individuals raising concerns have access to the support they need.

1.3 Our 'Speak Up' policy is designed to:

- encourage you to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible, in the knowledge that your concerns will be taken seriously, investigated and that your confidentiality will be respected as far as possible;
- provide a process for raising and discussing concerns in confidence;
- reassure you that you can raise genuine concerns without fear of reprisals, from both the organisation and your colleagues, even if you are found to be mistaken;
- balance the need to protect people who raise concerns against the need to protect the Guild against malicious allegations.

2 Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to anyone that works (or has worked) for the Guild, or for an organisation that provides services for or on our behalf. This includes officers, temporary staff, student staff, volunteers and trustees, consultants, contractors, agency staff, apprentices, interns and freelance workers.

3 Principles

- 3.1 We encourage you to raise concerns internally as soon as you have a reasonable suspicion of wrongdoing or of something you believe may be leading to wrongdoing.
- 3.2 We will conduct an investigation after a concern has been raised, and act on its findings where appropriate.
- 3.3 We will maintain your confidentiality, as far as possible.
- 3.4 No detrimental action will be taken against you for raising a genuine concern.
- 3.5 Disciplinary action will be taken against anyone that is found to victimise individuals for raising concerns, and against those who knowingly provide false information.

4 What is 'Whistleblowing'?

- 4.1 Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work.
- 4.2 This policy should be used to raise concerns about service provision or the conduct of colleagues or others acting on behalf of the Guild that:
- make you feel uncomfortable due to not being in line with our usual standards of behaviour;
 - are not in keeping with our Constitution / Memorandum & Articles of Association and policies; or,
 - fall below established standards of practice or behaviour, including those outlined in our Code of Conduct.
- 4.3 Some examples of this might include (but are not limited to):
- financial wrongdoing (e.g. bribery, inappropriate use of assets or funds, manipulation of records);
 - fraud or corruption;
 - a criminal offence or failure to comply with legal / regulatory obligations or our own policies and procedures;
 - a miscarriage of justice;
 - damage to the environment;
 - anything that might endanger the health, safety or wellbeing of employees and/or the general public, or pose a safeguarding concern to children and/or adults at risk; or
 - a deliberate covering up of information relating to any of the above.
- 4.4 You don't have to wait for proof of your concerns. We would prefer you to raise the matter while it is still a concern. If you happen to be mistaken, you will not be penalised as long as you are genuinely concerned and reasonably suspect wrongdoing.

- 4.5 Disciplinary action will only be taken if you are found to have reported false information knowingly.
- 4.6 This policy shouldn't be used if you have a concern about your employment that affects only you. These types of concerns should be raised under our Grievance Procedure.

5 Feeling safe to Speak Up

- 5.1 If you raise a genuine concern under this policy, you will not be at risk of any detrimental treatment (such as disciplinary action) as a result. The Guild and its senior management will not tolerate the harassment or victimisation of anyone raising a concern, or any attempt to bully individuals into not raising them. Any such behaviour is a breach of our Code of Conduct and can result in disciplinary action.
- 5.2 As long as you are acting honestly, it doesn't matter if you are mistaken.

6 Confidentiality

- 6.1 Our aim is for you to feel comfortable raising concerns openly, but we also appreciate that you may want to raise something confidentially. Therefore, we will protect your anonymity if you wish, as far as is reasonably possible. You can choose to raise your concern anonymously, without giving anyone your name, but that may make it more difficult for us to fully understand your concerns, investigate thoroughly and give you feedback on the outcome.

7 Who should I raise my concern with?

- 7.1 In most circumstances, the quickest and simplest way for your concern to be resolved will be to raise it with your line manager.
- 7.2 If raising it with your line manager does not resolve your concern, or you do not feel able to raise it with them, you can choose another manager to raise it with, or contact one of the following:
- A Senior Manager
 - Chief Executive Officer
 - A Full Time Sabbatical Officer
 - A Trustee
- 7.3 You can raise your concerns with any of the people listed above in person, by phone or in writing (including e-mail).
- 7.4 All of the above will be trained in receiving concerns and will give you information about where you can go for support. They will either help you to resolve your concern or report your concern to the relevant person (for example the Chief Executive, Chair of the Board or an External Trustee) to decide whether or not an investigation is required.
- 7.5 If for any reason you do not feel comfortable raising your concern internally, you may wish to raise your concern with a colleague within the University that you trust.
- 7.6 We understand that in some cases, it may be appropriate for you to report your concerns to an alternative external body such as a regulator, and this policy should not prevent you from choosing to do this.

8 What we will do

- 8.1 If you are unable to resolve the matter through discussion with your line manager, we will carry out an investigation. We are committed to ensuring that investigations are reasonable and fair, impartial and sufficiently documented. We will reach a conclusion within a reasonable timescale and notify you of the outcome.
- 8.2 We may decide that it would be more appropriate to address a concern under another process; for example, our Grievance Policy and Procedure, and will discuss this with you if that is the case.
- 8.3 We will aim to keep you informed throughout the process of the investigation and the likely timescales involved. There may sometimes be a need for confidentiality which means we are unable to provide specific details of the investigation or details of any disciplinary action taken as a result.

9 Advice and Support

- 9.1 Throughout this process:
 - you will be given full support from management
 - your concerns will be taken seriously, and
 - we will do all we can to help you throughout the investigation.
- 9.2 Further information and advice can be obtained from the charity [Protect](#). This charity offers free legal advice in certain circumstances to people concerned about serious malpractice at work.

10 Reporting

- 10.1 A log of all reported concerns raised in line with this policy will be kept and updated by the Senior Management Team and regularly reviewed by the Trustee Board as part of our ongoing commitment to managing and reporting risk.