

Whistleblowing Policy

Approved by:	Board of Trustees
Date of approval:	8 October 2019
Implementation date:	8 October 2019
Review date (no later than):	8 October 2022
Responsible for implementation:	Chief Executive
Responsible for interpretation:	Whistleblowing Officer

City, University of London Students' Union is a registered charity (charity number 1173858). It is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (company number 10834450), whose registered office is at Cx118 (Tait Building), Northampton Square, Islington, London, EC1V 0HB.

Whistleblowing Policy

1.0 Policy statement

- 1.1 The Union will commit to conducting its business with honesty and integrity. Union staff will uphold this commitment in the day-to-day completion of their duties. The Union will accept the risk of honest, unforeseeable, or otherwise non-systemic mistakes, or of unknowingly engaging in or perpetuating, systemically or otherwise, illegal or unethical conduct. The Union will support a culture of openness and accountability in order to pre-emptively guard against such risk and prevent the occurrence of illegal or morally condemnable events or to address them when they do occur and ameliorate their effects.
- 1.2 This policy will:
 - (a) 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 right to confidentiality will be respected.
 - (b) Provide staff with guidance as to how to raise any concerns they may have.
 - (c) Reassure staff that they will be able to raise genuine concerns without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken.
- 1.3 This policy will not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended at any time.

2.0 Who is covered by this policy?

- 2.1 This policy will apply to all individuals working at all levels of the Union, including senior managers, officers, trustees, employees, consultants, contractors, trainees, home-workers, part-time and fixed-term workers, casual and agency staff and volunteers (collectively referred to as "staff" in this policy).

3.0 What is whistleblowing?

- 3.1 "Whistleblowing" will be the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work, which may include:
 - (a) Criminal activity;
 - (b) Miscarriages of justice;
 - (c) Dangers to health and safety;
 - (d) Damage to the environment;
 - (e) Failure to comply with any legal [or professional] obligation or regulatory requirements;
 - (f) Bribery;
 - (g) Financial fraud or mismanagement;
 - (h) Negligence;
 - (i) Breach of internal policies and procedures;
 - (j) Conduct likely to damage our reputation;
 - (k) Unauthorised disclosure of confidential information;
 - (l) The deliberate concealment of any of the above matters.
- 3.2 A "whistleblower" will be a person who raises a genuine concern relating to any of the above. An individual with genuine concerns related to suspected wrongdoing or

danger affecting Union activities (a “whistleblowing concern”) will report such concern under this policy.

- 3.3 This policy will not apply to complaints relating to any individual’s personal circumstances, such as the way a staff member may have been treated at work. Such complaints will be considered under Union Bye-law 13: Complaints and Disciplinary Procedure.

4.0 Raising a whistleblowing concern

- 4.1 A staff member with a genuine concern may report such concern to:

- (a) Their line manager;
- (b) The whistleblowing officer;
- (c) The Chief Executive;
- (d) The independent whistleblowing charity, Public Concern at Work;

Details of contacts will be provided at the end of this policy.

- 4.2 The Union will expect concerns to be resolved through line managers in the first instance. Where a concerned member of staff does not, for any reason, feel that their concern will be resolved this way, the further channels for escalation will be available.
- 4.3 In any event, the Whistleblowing Officer or Chief Executive will arrange a meeting with concerned staff as soon as possible. Staff will be entitled to invite a colleague or trade union representative to any meeting referred to in this policy. Such invited individuals will be expected to maintain the confidentiality of any disclosure, investigation, or subsequent proceedings to which they may become privy.
- 4.4 A written summary of the concern, the proposed course of action, and expected outcomes will be made and distributed to the concerned staff following the completion of any meeting.

5.0 Confidentiality

- 5.1 The Union will do its utmost to ensure that concerned staff who wish to remain anonymous will do so. In the case that the investigation of a concern necessitates the staff member’s identity being disclosed to the investigators, staff will be consulted before any disclosure takes place.
- 5.2 The Union anticipates that anonymous whistleblowing concerns will be difficult to adequately investigate if further information cannot be obtained from the concerned staff and will accordingly discourage anonymous whistleblowing. A whistleblower concerned about possible reprisals in the case of the discovery of their identity may consult confidentially with the Whistleblowing officer and measures will be put in place to protect their identity. Staff who seek external consultation may contact Public Concern at Work, an independent whistleblowing charity who offer a confidential helpline supplied at the end of this document.

6.0 External disclosures

- 6.1 The Union will not expect external consultation to be necessary in most cases of whistleblowing. The Union acknowledges that there may be occasions where wrongdoing cannot be remedied, staff may feel uncomfortable, or other

circumstances may arise which make the internal resolution of a concern untenable. The Union will therefore consider it appropriate to make provision for external disclosures to be made.

- 6.2 By law, a whistleblowing concern may be reported to an external body such as a regulator. The Union will not consider an approach to the media an appropriate course of action for the resolution of a whistleblowing concern. The Union will encourage concerned staff to approach bodies such as the independent whistleblowing charity; Public Concern at Work, for advice on concerns through their confidential helpline. Public Concern at Work also provide a list of prescribed regulators for reporting certain types of concern. Their contact details will be given at the end of this policy.
- 6.3 Whistleblowing concerns will be expected to typically relate to the conduct of Union staff, but they may sometimes relate to the actions of a third party, such as a customer, supplier or service provider. There will be circumstances in which the law protects individuals raising whistleblowing concerns with such third parties directly. The Union encourages individuals to follow internal procedures or to contact their line managers or one of the other individuals set out in Paragraph 4 for guidance prior to pursuing concerns directly with third parties.

7.0 Investigation and outcome

- 7.1 When a concern is raised, an initial assessment will determine the scope of further investigations. The whistleblower will be informed of the outcome of any initial assessment and may be asked to attend meetings to provide further information.
- 7.2 In the case that an investigation is to be taken forwards, an investigator or a team of investigators will be appointed to include staff with relevant experience and specialist knowledge appropriate to the matter under investigation. Investigators may recommend changes for the Union to minimise the risk of future wrongdoing and remedy current malpractice.
- 7.3 The Union will inform whistleblowers of the progress of any ongoing investigations and the expected timescales for their completion. There may be occasions where the Union is unable to inform whistleblowers of the full details of an investigation for the preservation of individuals' rights to confidentiality. Any information given to a whistleblower will be treated as confidential.
- 7.4 In the case that a whistleblower's allegations are determined to be deliberate falsehoods, malicious, or for personal gain, disciplinary action will be taken against them.

8.0 Unsatisfactory Investigations

- 8.1 The Union will acknowledge that a whistleblower's expectations may not always be met by the outcome of an investigation.
- 8.2 A dissatisfied whistleblower may raise their further concerns with one of the key contacts detailed in Paragraph 4.

9.0 Protection and support for whistleblowers

- 9.1 The Union will operate on a principle of supporting all staff who raise genuine concerns, even if those concerns turn out to be mistaken. The Union will protect staff raising genuine concerns from any personal repercussions they may reasonably express a fear of.
- 9.2 The Union will protect its staff raising genuine concerns from unfair dismissal, disciplinary action, threats, or other prejudicial treatment which may stem from the concern(s), substantiated or otherwise. An individual subject to such treatment will inform the whistleblowing officer without delay in order to receive the protection of the relevant procedures.
- 9.3 Any staff members of the Union threatening or retaliating against whistleblowers will be subject to disciplinary proceedings.

10.0 Responsibility for the success of this policy

- 10.1 The Senior Management staff will be responsible for this policy, and for reviewing the effectiveness of actions taken in response to concerns raised under this policy.
- 10.2 The Whistleblowing Officer will have day-to-day operational responsibility for this policy, and will ensure that all managers and other staff who may deal with concerns or investigations under this policy receive regular and appropriate training.
- 10.3 The Whistleblowing Officer, in conjunction with the Senior Management and the Board of Trustees will review this policy from a legal and operational perspective at least once annually.
- 10.4 All staff will be responsible for the success of this policy and will use it to disclose any suspected danger or wrongdoing. Staff will be invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved. Comments, suggestions and queries will be addressed to the Whistleblowing Officer.
- 10.5 The Senior Management staff and whistleblowing officer will retain records of all whistleblowing proceedings for the purposes of reviewing best practice. Such records will be subject to data protection and confidentiality policies.

11.0 Contacts

Whistleblowing Officer	Angelo Weekes 0207 040 5605 Angelo.WEEKES.2@city.ac.uk
Public Concern at Work (Independent whistleblowing charity)	Helpline: (020) 7404 6609 E-mail: whistle@pcaw.co.uk Website: www.pcau.co.uk