



Glasgow Kelvin College

Equality Impact Assessment

Public Interest Disclosure (“Whistle- Blowing”) Policy and
Procedure

Next Review – November 2025

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Title of Policy, Procedure or Practice:

Public Interest Disclosure (“Whistle- Blowing”) Policy and Procedure

Type of Policy, Procedure or Practice:

New

Existing, Reviewed or Revised

Team Leading Impact Assessment:

Corporate Governance

Lead Person: Annette McKenna

Date of Assessment: November 2024

Aims and Outcomes

What are the intended aims / outcomes of the policy, procedure or practice? Who is the target audience and who is it intended to benefit?

The College is committed to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability, as set out in the principles of Public Life defined by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (the Nolan Committee).

Part of this commitment is the need to have a policy on Public Interest Disclosure (popularly known as “whistle-blowing”). The policy and associated procedures should be available to all employees, and employees should feel confident to use them.

It is implicit in every contract of employment that an employee will not reveal confidential information about the employer’s affairs. However, where an employee discovers information which he or she believes shows malpractice or wrongdoing within the organisation, then the employee should be confident that he or she can “blow the whistle” without fear of reprisal, and, if appropriate, can do so independently of line management.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1999 gives legal protection to employees against being dismissed or penalised by their employers as a result of publicly disclosing their serious concerns. The Act applies only to “workers”, but the College believes it is important that this policy and procedures should apply to everyone officially connected with the College. The term “employees” where it appears in this Policy should therefore be understood as including students, learners, contract workers, partner organisations and members of the Board of Management of the College.

Every employee has a duty and responsibility not to disclose confidential information about their employer’s affairs. Equally, if an employee discovers information which they believe shows malpractice or wrongdoing within the College, there is a duty and

responsibility to disclose this information. In some instances, such as the need to maintain a healthy and safe working environment, there is a legal obligation to do so.

Evidence and Information

What information has been used as the basis for this EIA?

This policy applies to all equally and without bias and due to the nature of this, it does not impact adversely on any individual with protected characteristics.

Protected Characteristics	Potential Impact
Age	<p>Scenario: An employee blows the whistle on ageist comments or practices, such as being passed over for opportunities due to age.</p> <p>Impact: Neutral to Positive</p> <p>Rationale: The policy should support whistle-blowing without age bias. However, older employees might fear not being taken seriously or being perceived as "out of touch."</p> <p>Support Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the policy is well-communicated to all age groups. • Provide targeted awareness raising about age-related issues and the protections available.
Disability	<p>Scenario: An employee with reports inaccessible working conditions or discriminatory treatment based on disability.</p> <p>Impact: Positive</p>

	<p>Rationale: The policy provides a platform for individuals to report discrimination or negligence in accessibility. There may be a concern that the person reporting could face further discrimination for "complaining."</p> <p>Support Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that reporting channels are accessible, including for employees with physical or learning disabilities (e.g., alternative formats for reporting, assistance if needed). • Encourage training on disability rights and encourage managers to support those reporting concerns. • Provide reasonable adjustments for the employee during the reporting process.
<p>Gender Reassignment</p>	<p>Scenario: An employee reports incidents of transphobic behaviour or discrimination by coworkers.</p> <p>Impact: Positive</p> <p>Rationale: The policy ensures that transgender employees can report mistreatment without fear of retaliation. However, concerns may arise about their safety or privacy.</p> <p>Support Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer confidential and anonymous reporting options to ensure privacy. • Ensure that the investigation respects the employee's gender identity and confidentiality. • Provide support resources such as LGBTQ+ advocacy services or peer support network
<p>Marriage and Civil Partnership</p>	<p>Scenario: An employee who is married or in a civil partnership reports favouritism or discriminatory behaviour related to their relationship status (e.g., exclusion from work events).</p> <p>Impact: Neutral</p> <p>Rationale: While marriage or civil partnership status may not be a common area for whistle-blowing, the policy should still protect against discrimination in this area.</p> <p>Support Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the policy includes provisions for reporting relationship-based bias.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness of the importance of fairness and equal treatment in workplace relationships.
<p>Pregnancy and Maternity</p>	<p>Pregnancy and Maternity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scenario: An employee reports discriminatory treatment, such as being sidelined for projects or career progression due to pregnancy or maternity leave. • Impact: Positive • Rationale: The policy provides legal protections, but there may be fears of retaliation or further marginalization. • Support Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide clear communication regarding the protections for pregnant employees and those on maternity leave. ○ Offer support through HR or employee assistance programs to address any concerns of retaliation.
<p>Race</p>	<p>Scenario: An employee blows the whistle on racist comments or discriminatory hiring practices within the College.</p> <p>Impact: Positive</p> <p>Rationale: The policy allows individuals to report racism, but the employee might fear being ignored or experiencing further racial bias.</p> <p>Support Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that reporting mechanisms are accessible and culturally sensitive. • Train staff to recognize and address racial discrimination properly. • Provide support through diversity and inclusion initiatives and ensure that those raising concerns are not further marginalized. • Create an explicit anti-racism policy and ensure all employees are trained on it.

<p>Religion or Belief</p>	<p>Scenario: An employee reports religious discrimination or bias, such as exclusion or stereotyping based on their religion.</p> <p>Impact: Positive</p> <p>Rationale: The policy protects employees against retaliation, but individuals may fear that their religion might be used against them.</p> <p>Support Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure religious accommodations are considered in the whistle-blowing • Provide training on respecting religious diversity and combating religious discrimination. • Provide faith-based support resources or contacts within the College.
<p>Sex</p>	<p>Scenario: A woman blows the whistle on sexual harassment or gender discrimination in pay or promotion.</p> <p>Impact: Positive</p> <p>Rationale: The policy ensures that employees can report sexual harassment or gender-based discrimination safely. However, concerns may arise that the employee could be labelled as "difficult" or "overreacting"</p> <p>Support Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a clear process for handling sexual harassment cases. • Provide clear, accessible information on the policy and reporting mechanisms for sexual harassment and gender discrimination. • Offer support services such as counselling or access to external gender equality advocacy organizations.
<p>Sexual Orientation</p>	<p>Scenario: An employee reports homophobic or biphobia comments, bullying, or exclusion towards colleagues in the workplace.</p> <p>Impact: Positive</p> <p>Rationale: The policy ensures protection against retaliation for reporting discriminatory behaviour based on sexual</p>

	<p>orientation. The employee may fear facing additional discrimination or harassment.</p> <p>Support Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide an inclusive and confidential process for LGBTQ+ employees to report concerns.• Ensure LGBTQ+ sensitivity training is mandatory for all staff.• Promote LGBTQ+ inclusive policies and ensure there are visible allies within the College community.
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Are you able to reduce any potential negative impacts identified? If so, how?

N/A

Compliance with General Equality Duty

Does the policy, procedure or practice comply with the three parts of the general duty?

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the [Equality Act \(2010\)](#)
- Foster good relations between people from different groups - this involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups
- Advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups

Yes No

If no, what arrangements could be implemented to better comply with the duty?

N/A

What is the EIA outcome?

A positive impact is likely A negative impact is not foreseen

A negative impact is likely A negative impact is probable or certain

Are you able to introduce the policy, procedure or practice without changes? Yes No

If no, what changes will you make before implementation?

Action and Monitoring

What action will be taken, by whom and when?

Once implemented how the policy will, procedure or practice be monitored?

Policies are reviewed every 2 years by the policy

Signed: Annette McKenna / Amrit Kaur Bedi

Date: November 2024

NB: Finalisation of central monitoring & identification of compound impact will be undertaken within Equalities Management. Please return to the EDI manager for approval by the EDI Committee

Appendix

Equality Act General Duty requires colleges to have **due regard** to the need to:

1. Eliminate

- a) discrimination,
- b) harassment,
- c) victimization; or
- d) any other prohibited conduct

2. Advance equality of opportunity by

- a) removing or minimising disadvantage
- b) meeting the needs of particular groups that are different from the needs of others
- c) encouraging participation in public life

3. Foster good relations – tackle prejudice, promote understanding

Protected Characteristics:

- 1. Age
- 2. Disability
- 3. Gender Reassignment
- 4. Marriage And Civil Partnership (applies only in relation to (1a) discrimination in *employment*, not to students)
- 5. Pregnancy And Maternity
- 6. Race
- 7. Religion Or Belief
- 8. Sex/ Gender
- 9. Sexual Orientation.