



BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT

Whistleblowing Policy – Raising Concerns with BCS

March 2018

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1. Introduction

BCS aims to establish and maintain a culture of openness and we want to encourage our staff, customers, centres and students to raise issues which concern them in relation to the delivery of our qualifications and services.

By knowing about malpractice/poor practice we can take the necessary steps to safeguard the interests of our customers, centres, students and staff. In summary, do not hesitate to get in touch with us and 'speak up' or 'blow the whistle'.

However, we recognise that you may be worried that by reporting such issues you may be subject to some adverse action. Therefore, this policy is designed to provide you with information about the Public Interest Disclosure Act as well as the process by which you may whistle blow. It also explains that there are certain protections in place to protect whistle-blowers.

2. What is Whistleblowing?

Revealing an act, generally illegal, which the person committing the act would not wish to become public knowledge. Officially this is called 'making a disclosure in the public interest'.

Whistleblowing is distinct from complaints, employment disputes, grievance and alleged breaches of the members' Code of Conduct.

- Complaints tend to be an expression of personal dissatisfaction (e.g. with a product or service being received) and should be taken forward with the arrangements outlined in our Complaints Policy
- Employment disputes tend to be where a member of staff has a dispute about his or her own employment position or contract. If you are experiencing such a dispute you should take this up with your employer or another responsible body. We cannot investigate or taken any action over such instances.

3. Scope and Purpose

BCS aims to conduct its business with the highest standards of honesty and integrity and any wrong-doing by employees, officers or accredited partners should be reported. This policy is designed to deal with concerns raised in relation to specific issues of wrong-doing which may be illegal, against the public interest or damaging to the reputation of BCS.

4. How to make a Disclosure

Anyone has the right to whistleblow. Whilst we do not expect absolute proof of wrong-doing that you report, you will need to show the reasons for your concern. You can raise a concern with us under the arrangements outlined in this policy if you have a reasonable belief that malpractice and/or wrongdoing is occurring or is likely to occur. In addition, you should have a reasonable belief that the disclosure is in the public interest.

Staff should normally raise the issue with their Line Manager in the first instance. If after reporting the matter the issue is not resolved, then please contact your Divisional Director. If, under the circumstances you do not feel comfortable about this, then you can raise the issue directly with the Chief Executive. Other people should contact us as specified in Section 12.

5. What we will do

Once a concern has been raised we have a duty to pursue the matter. Please note it will not be possible to prevent the matter being investigated by subsequently withdrawing your allegation.

If you choose to make a whistleblowing disclosure to us and provide contact details, we will send you an initial acknowledgement that we have received your disclosure. We may need to contact you to ask you to provide as much evidence as possible to support your disclosure. We will also look into anonymous whistleblowing disclosures. However, it may not always be possible to investigate or substantiate anonymous disclosures.

We will consider each disclosure of information sensitively and carefully, and decide upon an appropriate response. Depending on the nature of the allegation we will appoint someone to investigate the allegation who has the appropriate level of training and competence and who has not had any previous involvement or personal interest in the matter. Concerns may be either investigated internally or referred to the appropriate external body for investigation such as external auditors or the police. We may share with third party's information received in the disclosure where we consider it necessary to do so.

The person appointed to investigate the matter may contact or meet with the person who made the allegation to ascertain the details of their concern. If you do not wish to make a written statement the investigator will write a brief summary of the concern that has been raised and you will be expected to confirm this is correct. A work colleague, trade union representative or another witness can accompany you to the meeting and any subsequent meetings.

The investigator will then conduct an investigation to establish the facts in accordance with our Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and inform you of the outcome of the investigation. You have the right to raise any concerns about how the investigation has been conducted. We may not disclose all details of the investigation activities and it may not be appropriate for us to disclose full details of the outcomes of the investigation due to confidentiality or legal reasons. While we cannot guarantee that we will disclose all matters in the way that you may wish, we will strive to handle the matter fairly and properly.

6. Outcomes of the Investigation

If the outcome results in a proven case of wrongdoing/malpractice, we will act against the relevant parties. We will inform you that the investigation has been concluded and the outcome of the investigation, where possible.

If the allegation is not proven by the investigation, if you (as the whistle-blower) did not deliberately raise an allegation you knew to be untrue, no action will be taken against you by the BCS. If the allegation was made due to a genuine misunderstanding, the individual(s) who have been the subject of the investigation will be expected to bear no malice or ill feeling towards their accuser and that colleagues should not mistreat a whistle-blower.

If, however, the investigation concludes that you (as the whistle-blower) raised an allegation which you knew not to be true, disciplinary action may be taken against you by your employer.

7. Protecting your Identity

Sometimes the person making an allegation may wish to remain anonymous, Although it is preferable to reveal your identity and provide us with your contact details. However, if you are concerned about possible adverse consequences that may occur should your identity be revealed to another party then please inform us that you do not wish for us to divulge your identity and we will work to ensure your details are not disclosed. We will always endeavour to keep a whistleblower's identity confidential where asked to do so, although we cannot guarantee this and we may need to disclose your identity to, for example:

- the police, fraud prevention agencies or other law enforcement agencies (to investigate or prevent crime, including fraud)
- a court of law
- another person or organisation to whom we are required by law to disclose your identity.

A whistleblower should also recognise that he or she may be identifiable by others due to the nature or circumstances of the disclosure.

8. Protection of Staff

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA) protects employees from dismissal or other disciplinary action when they report wrong-doing by their employers. To be protected by law, a worker must be making a disclosure of information which they reasonably believe is made in the public interest and which they reasonably believe shows one or more of the following examples of wrongdoing has occurred or is likely to occur. A disclosure will not be protected if the worker making it does not do so in the public interest, commits a criminal offence in making it, has received the information in the course of providing legal advice (legal privileged information) or does not make the disclosure in the reasonable belief that the content is substantially true.

9. Examples of Wrongdoing

Examples of wrong-doing include:

- A criminal act
- Financial malpractice
- Bribery or corruption
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation
- A miscarriage of justice
- Health and safety breaches
- Damage to the environment
- Concealment of any of the above
- Actions which endanger the safety of staff or others (e.g. visitors)

10. Seeking Independent Advice

If you are considering making a disclosure to us and you are unsure as to whether you will have the protection of the whistleblowing provisions, before you make any disclosure you should consider:

- Contacting Public Concern at Work which is a registered charity and is the independent authority on public interest whistleblowing:-
Tel: 020 7404 6609
Email: whistle@pcaw.uk
URL: www.pcaw.co.uk
- Getting independent legal advice
- Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS)
<http://www.acas.org.uk>

11. Review Arrangements

We will review this policy annually as part of our self-evaluation arrangements and will revise it as and when necessary in response to external feedback, trends from our internal monitoring arrangements, changes in our practices, actions from the regulatory authorities or external agencies or changes in legislation. If you would like to feed back any views, please contact us via the details below.

12. How to contact us

Who you should contact depends on the person you are telling us about:

About staff members:

Email: whistleblowing@bcs.uk / +44 1793 417424

About Trustees, Officers or Executive Board Members:

Attention of Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee arc@bcs.uk

About Accredited or Approved Centres:

Email: whistleblowing@bcs.uk / +44 1793 417508

Online: <https://forms.bcs.org/whistleblowing>

By Post:

BCS, the Chartered Institute for IT
Block D, North Star House
North Star Avenue
Swindon, SN2 1FA, United Kingdom

Other policies that may be relevant:

[BCS Code of Conduct](#) for members

Other contacts:

www.bcs.org/contactbcs