

Self-assessment Consumer Protection Law

Academic Year 2021 – 2022

Applicable to Higher Education Programmes (undergraduate courses).

This document has been submitted as part of our registration process with the Office for Students (OfS). It outlines the approach that City of London College takes to complying with consumer protection law and the mechanisms we use to monitor and ensure compliance with consumer protection law.

Provider's name: **City of London College**

Provider's UKPRN: **10018361**

Your overall approach to ensuring compliance with consumer protection law

Established in 1979, the College has offered diploma, undergraduate and postgraduate courses in collaboration with a range of UK universities including the London School of Economics & Political Science (University of London), Birmingham City University, and University of Greenwich. These arrangements were successfully concluded and the College then commenced the recruitment strategy to increase home and EU student cohorts.

In recognition of its efforts, the College was awarded the 'Queen's Award for Enterprise 2011' (International Trade).

The College, as an Alternative Provider of Higher Education in the UK, complies with the Consumer Rights Act (2015) and Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) requirements and carries out its statutory duties to protect the rights of students and all stakeholders who benefit from our service. Information made available to students when considering studying at the College is clear, confirming that they familiarise themselves with the terms and conditions before submitting an application.

The College ensures that students are given full and comprehensive information about the educational opportunities on offer including course content, structure and duration, the location of study and the award given on successfully completing the course. Detailed information includes:

- Entry requirements (both academic and non-academic) and an indication of the standard/typical offer level criteria;
- Core modules for the course and an indication of likely optional modules, including whether there are any optional modules that are generally provided each year;
- Information about the composition of the course and how it will be delivered, and the balance between the various elements. This will include the number and type of contact hours expected – for example, lectures, seminars, work placements, and feedback on assignments. It will also include expected workload, such as the expected self-study time, and details about the general level of experience or status of the staff involved in delivering the different elements of the course;
- Overall method(s) of assessment for the course, for example by exams, coursework or practical assessments, or a combination of these;

In addition, wider information on fees and additional study costs as well as our Tuition Fees, Refunds and Compensation Policy and Complaints Policy are available on the website.

Our current approach to compliance with consumer protection law involves the following mechanisms of assurance:

City of London College continually monitors the following websites to ensure we are compliant in issues relating to consumer protection law:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/competition-and-markets-authority>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-guide-to-consumer-rights-for-students>

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en>

<https://www.aoc.co.uk/>

<http://www.oiahe.org.uk/>

Collaborative Meetings

The College has close links with a number of FE colleges and shares good practice across the sector in relation to consumer rights. In addition, the College enjoys support and guidance from a number of senior university practitioners who provide advice and guidance on key aspects of consumer law.

The College's Senior Management Team provides oversight for consumer protection law issues and the handling of student complaints, giving a strategic lead on all quality issues relating to HE provision and make recommendations to the Quality Enhancement Committee and Academic Board to ensure that all internal and external quality standards are adhered to;

Training and Dissemination of staff

CMA information is shared with all academic and support staff and where appropriate, training sessions for relevant staff involved in the delivery and quality monitoring are implemented. Monitoring of compliance is carried out by the Director of Operations who reports to the Senior Management Team.

The College holds an Annual Quality Enhancement Conference, supported by key external professionals, where a range of external issues, including consumer rights are discussed. In addition, the College reviews and audits its policies over a formal three-year cycle.

Student Engagement & Awareness

The College ensures that students are engaged with, and made aware of, their consumer rights at induction and via printed and web-based material as confirmed above. Engagement is also achieved via Student Representative involvement in policy making and review and the Student-Staff Committee meetings. Further details on our principles for Student Engagement can be found in the CLC Code of Practice on Governance, Administration and Academic Procedures (July 2019) (See Pages 21 and 22 section, "Student Engagement and Enhancement of Learning").

Your approach to providing information to applicants and students: research and application stage, offer stage and enrolment stage

The College underwent a QAA HER Review in July 2017 confirming that the College's admissions policy adheres to the principles of fair admission and is underpinned by appropriate organisational structures and processes. The College has a history of working closely with awarding partners to ensure that processes align with their requirements and that admissions decisions are based on agreed entry requirements. Admissions staff are aware of the admissions policies and procedures and confirmed that the College supports them to fulfil their role through internal training, workshops with external experts, access to resources including UCAS webinars and guidance on judging new or non-traditional qualifications

Students are informed that they are required to undertake language and maths tests where appropriate and all undertake an interview to confirm both academic suitability and motivation to their course.

At enrolment stage, applicants are fully informed of the requirements of enrolment prior to their actual enrolment day, i.e. payment of fees, and the College Tuition Fees, Refunds and Compensation policy. This is achieved through the sending of standardised letters to all applicants which is overseen by the Director of Operations and Admissions Officer.

Enrolment is undertaken in the College, overseen by the Head of Student Services where further information relating to their programme such as the finalised timetable may be given.

Where previously unforeseen changes in course information occur (for example, an increase in cost of an external visit), these changes are communicated to students via letter, email and in person to ensure the message is received. Responsibility for this process lies with the Course Leaders and is overseen by their relevant line manager.

Your contract terms and conditions

Terms and conditions are held on the College website and as with all policies, terms and conditions are subject to review and audit to ensure information is clear and accessible to all stakeholders

Your complaint handling processes and practice

The College has a defined internal complaints and appeals procedures which students must follow in the first instance. Subsequently, the College manages referrals of formal complaints and appeals within the procedures determined by its formal agreements with relevant awarding partner.

All students are required to engage with the College's complaints procedure if a formal issue is raised. If there is no satisfactory resolution at local level, the student has the right to engage with the procedures of the College's awarding body/organisation.

When delivering University accredited programmes, the College refers all formal complaints from students enrolled on these programmes to them after undergoing an internal process. Complaints from students on Pearson accredited programmes are managed internally.

If the issue remains unresolved, the complainant retains the right to pursue the matter further directly with the OIA.

Before bringing a complaint to the OIA, a complainant must complete the college's internal complaints or appeals procedures. If the complainant is not satisfied with the college's final decision and would like the OIA to review their complaint, they should complete an OIA Complaint Form and submit this, along with the Completion of Procedures letter. The OIA must receive the signed OIA Complaint Form within 12 months of the date of the Completion of Procedures Letter; otherwise they will consider the complaint to be out of time.

The complaints and appeals procedures are clear and accessible to students via handbooks and the VLE, and explained during induction. Students are made aware of how official complaints can be made during their initial induction session with the College. In addition, they are informed that they can raise issues informally with staff at any time. Student Services provide advice and support for any students making a complaints or appeal within the College's processes.